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A Specimen Letter.

(Supposed to have been written by a child of four years old.)

Cousin Dorothy, dear,
The thoughts are so queer,
That tumble about in my mind.
So tangled they get,
Like the basket upset,
And the spools Kitty tried to unwind.
For I always keep thinking—
Things bob up like winking—
I can't keep them down if I will;
And, when I am sleeping,
In dreams they come peeping—
My mind it won't ever sit still.
Then it sets my tongue going,
And the words they come flowing;—
Where they come from I never can find.
To be sure, I asked Dolly,
But she says "it's all folly"—
I think they come out of my mind.
But both Dolly and me
In this fully agree:
We must hurry and write you a letter;
For we've read your words through,
And we hope they're all true,
For we're sure they couldn't be better.
On my birthday I wondered
If my mind was a hundred
Years older than poor little me;
I think it was grown up
Before it was sewn up
In my body,—but where I can't see.
But we won't talk about ages,
For my doll it enrages—
She's too old any husband to please;
Though maybe he'd love her,
If he didn't discover
That her legs stop short at her knees.
It would be the hardest thing
To put on her marriage-ring.
For truly of arms she has none;
He will surely make a miss,
If he tries his bride to kiss,
For her head from her shoulders is gone.
I don't mind about her looks,
For she's very fond of books,
And I read to her nearly all day;
So my dearest doll and I
Will be happy till we die.
That's all.
—From your loving little May.
[J.]

A Pneumatic Boy.

"What is that," asked Ned's father, looking up from the newspaper, "that you are saying about Tom Roderick's 'safety'?"

"Why, you see," answered Ned, edging up to his father so as to get into short-distance communication with him, "it has a pneumatic"—

"Didn't I get you the latest pattern of tire that was made?" his father broke in upon his explanation. "I cannot afford to throw away a brand-new wheel just because some inventor has come out with an improvement on it."

"It is not the tire, papa," broke in Ned eagerly. "My tire is all right. She is double-lined with fiber-rubber, and I ain't a bit afraid of puncturing her. But, you see, it's a pneumatic seat that Tom Roderick has on his, and that's ever so much better than the old-fashioned, steel-spring, leather seat."

"A pneumatic seat?" echoed Mr. Wilson. "Well, I wonder what in the world is coming next. There is just one thing more somebody ought to invent," he mused, with a half-smile upon his lips, "and that is a pneumatic boy to ride the pneumatic tired safety with a pneumatic seat. I think in this age of the world, when everybody seems to be trying to avoid jars and shakes in every other way, that it would be a fine thing to have a boy about the house built on that plan. I'll see about the pneumatic seat for your safety after we have some evidence that there is a pneumatic boy to sit on it. I don't think it's fair that one member of the family should have all the smooth riding, and his baby brother, mother, and the rest, be continually jolted and jarr'd by his ill-temper and poor memory."

Ned knew it was of no use to argue the matter, and so went away doubtful as to whether his appeal had done any good; yet with a half-formed idea in his

mind that his father would swap a pneumatic seat for his "safety" for a pneumatic boy, whatever that meant. The more he thought about it, the plainer it became to his mind that this was the situation of affairs. The figure of speech in which his father had likened him to a safety stuck in his fancy.

"I guess I am a little rough and crusty sometimes," he admitted to himself in an undertone. "Maybe I do make some jolts about the house. I guess papa must have heard me snapping at baby Dick this morning for scratching my school slate. I did make it pretty rough riding for the little fellow—that's a fact. And mamma says I come home from school every night as cross as a bear."

Ned sat still on the porch settee for five minutes without even whistling or whittling at a stick, and that was something unusual for him. Presently he heard steps coming through the library. He pricked up his ears in an instant, and then said to himself:

"There's mamma coming to remind me about that errand down street. I'll slip right off before she gets a chance to tell me the second time. I suppose it does worry her to have to keep jogging my memory." And with an "I'm going, mamma; I didn't forget," he scampered off as fast as his feet could carry him.

His mother thrust her head through the partly-open door, and watched him disappear in a half-surprised way, and then remarked aside to Mr. Wilson:

"That's encouraging. I didn't suppose Ned could possibly remember to do anything from being told once."

"Ah!" responded Ned's father, "maybe he's trying to relieve your mind of some of the jolting his forgetfulness gives it. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd taken the hint I gave him, and you'll have pretty easy times—for a day or two at least."

Mrs. Wilson didn't understand, and so she had further occasion to be mystified over Ned's unusual thoughtfulness and generosity before the day was gone. He came home bringing a stick of candy.

"Here," he said, holding out the larger half to baby Dick.

This was quite an innovation on his usual procedure. Ordinarily, the baby teased and the mother coaxed, and finally commanded, and then Ned acquiesced in a division by grasping three-fourths of the stick in his hand and requiring baby to break the short end off.

"That's a great deal nicer," approved his mother, "than letting your brother worry and cry over it."

"I guess it does ride smoother than the other way," agreed Ned within himself. "I'm going to see how still I can go upstairs, now, and hang up the clothes I left scattered around my room."

He started off, tiptoeing up the stairway as carefully as he could, muttering to himself: "I guess papa'll think that is pretty smooth riding. He always says I make as much noise as a whole livery stable, going up and down stairs. And then grandma won't have to tell me about hanging up my things either, and that'll save her some jolting. She's always jolting over something I do, and I guess her bones are old, and she has plenty of trouble with her own children."

Down in the library, Ned's papa smiled to himself as he noted the whole proceeding, even though he kept busily at work. "I think," he said, casting his eye over a catalogue of bicycle dealers' supplies which Ned had with a good deal of forethought left at his elbow, "that the price of that pneumatic seat may prove one of the best investments I ever made."

Something in his father's scanning the catalogue encouraged Ned wonderfully, and it was not long before he mustered up courage enough to approach his father's elbow and demurely suggest, "I guess it's been a little smoother around here lately—ain't it papa?"

"Don't know but it has," answered his father. "It seems to me that I haven't heard Dick fretting quite as much as



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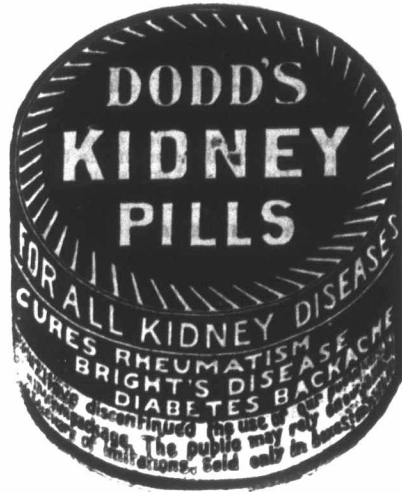
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LONDON, ONTARIO.

An Irishman who was tortured with toothache walked into a dentist's surgery one evening and inquired of the extractor of molars: "How much do yer charge for pullin' out wan tooth?"

"One shilling; five shillings with gas," replied the expert on ivories.

"Five shillin's with gas!" gasped Pat. "Begorra, then, I'll come round agin early in the mornin' when it's daylight."



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