

A PAGE FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

CURRENT TOPICS

The principal event of this week is, as many of you have read, the murder of the king of Portugal and his son. The king and queen with their sons had been paying a visit to Villa Vicosa some distance from Berlin. They had returned by train on Saturday, Feb. 1. In was feared the royal party might be attacked and they were not only attended by an armed guard but a watch was set at every spot where danger was feared. As the carriage was being driven into a large square a host of men who had been ordered suddenly dined their carbines and at the first volley the king and crown prince were fatally wounded, while Don Manuel the younger prince was injured. The queen in some marvellous way escaped unhurt.

Three of the murderers were killed on the spot and three arrested. In the confusion many escaped. What events led to this terrible tragedy, which was intended to destroy the whole royal family of Portugal?

Perhaps the real cause lies in the ignorance of the people. There are in Portugal, which is about half the size of the United States, about five and a half millions of people. Only eighteen out of every hundred of the inhabitants of Portugal have gone to school. Every man over the age of twenty-one who can read or write has a vote, but as so many of them are ignorant it will be seen that very few have any voice in making the laws. The others must submit to the few. For many years the electors have been divided into two parties, so nearly equal that neither could rule. There were many changes and at last the king and a powerful leader named Franco dismissed the cortes, or parliament, and ruled alone. Then the people determined to govern the country without a king and the country seemed peaceful. Whether the ammunition waited their opportunity. Whether the murder was committed by men in the employ of the republicans is whether it was the result of blind unreasoning hate is not known by the outside world. The man who seems to have been the most to blame has resigned and another premier has taken his place. The young prince Manuel who does not appear to have been badly wounded, is king. For the moment the king has been spilled will bring the people to their senses and that all parties will unite to help the king and premier to govern the country. Although King Carlos allowed himself to be persuaded to rule tyrannically he was not a cruel man. He was well educated, loved science and art and took a keen interest in sports.

While it may be quite true that Premier Franco knew what was going on, he did not know that the quarrelsome members of the cortes, neither the nor the king had a right to rule without the advice of parliament. Queen Amelie is a very beautiful and accomplished woman. She belonged to the Bourbon family which ruled France for many centuries. It is only a few weeks since the king and queen of Portugal were visiting King Edward and Queen Alexandra and it is said the King of England warned King Carlos of the danger he was in.

The English government has trouble in India as well as in Ireland. England has done much for India. The people of that empire who were oppressed by their rulers, have, under British protection enjoyed peace and safety. The government has built great irrigation works and in time of famine and of plague has spared no effort for the relief of the sufferers. Roads and bridges and many other useful public works have added to the comfort and convenience of the people. Education has spread through the country. But the people of India have very little part in their own government. They have grown discontented and English statesmen are anxiously considering what is best to do. For many years the best and best of Englishmen have been sent to govern India. The task before the present rulers is one that needs all their tact and judgment as well as firmness.

The Russian generals who surrendered Port Arthur have been tried by court martial. The judge advocate has declared they should be punished by death. Failure in a general is looked upon as a crime.

The people of Austria want to build a railway from Vienna to Athens, but their German neighbors object. Turkey and the little kingdoms to the north of it are a source of great jealousy among the countries of southern Europe. Either Austria, Germany or Russia could conquer any or perhaps all of them but the others would allow it. A railroad would give Austria an advantage that the other nations would not be willing to allow.

According to the newspaper reports many Japanese will go to the countries of South America as there is need for them there, and the people are willing to employ them. Many of the countries are very rich but the people are idle and ignorant and though the land is very fertile and the climate good little is produced. There are people still living who can remember when the greater part of North America was a trackless wilderness and Africa an unknown continent. What changes will take place during the lifetime of boys and girls now at school would be hard even to imagine. It is certain that the successful men of the future must be even wiser, braver and more skillful than those who are now at the head of affairs.

There has been some distress and much disorder in Ireland. For many years the Irish people have been saying that if they had a parliament of their own they would be better governed. The majority of the people in Great Britain think that one parliament is enough to rule the two islands, and that there is no more need for a separate government for Ireland than there is for Scotland. This question of home rule, as it is called, has been talked about a great deal during the last twenty years or more, and the best of statesmen have spent much time and thought in studying what ought to be done. The land in Ireland, like much of that in England and Scotland, formerly belonged to great lords and nobles. Much of it has been bought from the owners and sold to the tenants as those who rented the land from the landlords used to be called. There are still large tracts of land held by rich men and the tenants are poor and oppressed. Many people, among whom are members of the British parliament, think that much of this and is wasted. They want to cut in up into small farms and sell these to men with families. If these men owned five acres or more it is said they could turn their little farms into market gardens and live happy and contented. Those who know most about the country believe it would be wrong to punish severely the people who are annoying the landlords by driving away their cattle and refusing to have anything to do with them. They think that the poverty of the people causes their discontent and that if they get a chance to earn a good living for themselves and their families the country will become peaceable and orderly.

The C. P. R. is going to bring the Empresses from the Atlantic to the Pacific and very likely send our boats to Australia. It is said that the larger, handsomer and faster than the great ships that ply between here and China and Japan. But when you see the new Empresses you will see that the new ships are much better than the ones we have now. As the harbor at Esquimalt is much larger and deeper than Burrard Inlet many people think that these big ships should stay there to unload their cargoes in order of crossing the Gulf of Georgia. If they did there would be more docks built at Esquimalt and it would be a busy place.

There have been many rumors that the warships were coming back to their old station. There are few people who would not welcome the bluejackets back among us.

There are few, prettier places in British Columbia than Burnaby lake, a few miles from Westminster. The lake lives two families of English gentlemen named Hills. They settled in the neighborhood some years ago and have been very successful farmers. Their homes are within sound of the tramcars and a highroad runs past them. In this settlement there was a startling adventure on Sunday evening in which a Norwegian named Nansen proved himself a worthy successor of the old Vikings. Bernard Hill and George Clayton, two schoolboys, had gone out skating on Burnaby lake. A Nansen had been sent to look after them. All three were returning home when Bernard Hill, who was leading the little party missed his footing in a huge bear. The bear, startled and angry, leaped at the lad with a fierce growl, but before he could reach him Nansen put his arm into the bear's mouth and wrestled fiercely and Clayton tried to stab the brute with a large knife which he carried. Young Hill ran for help, but before he returned the bear loosened his hold and escaped to the woods. Nansen's arm was terribly mangled in the encounter. Bernard Hill owes his life to the heroism of the brave Norwegian.

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE TWINS

The Twins were five years old, and on a certain beautiful September afternoon of their happy, busy little lives, they wandered, hand in hand, to their father's room as he sat writing. They waited for a few moments, because mother had always told them not to disturb him in his work. It was a wonderful book he was writing, and when it was finished he would read to them why the flowers have colors, and where the wild birds build their nests, and how the salmon sometimes live in the salt water and sometimes in the fresh.

Presently he looked up at them and smiled. "Well, kiddies," he said, "what is it now?" Cynthia spoke: "Mother says we've been very good today, so may we go where we want to?" "Of course you may, you quaint little people," he answered, "and as soon as I've finished, I'll come and look for you. Good-bye."

Perhaps it would have been wiser if he had asked where their desired haven might be, but he was intent on finishing a chapter, and supposed that their mother knew.

But Cynthia and Arthur left the library, their little hearts beating all the faster for the joy they felt. A mile away, on the hill, stood a great grey house surrounded by a high wall. It appeared so remote to the tiny children, and so vast, that all the fairy tales they heard seemed to have for the inevitable mysterious castle, this great grey house on the hill. They had peeped it with prisoned princesses, and the grounds, where the country folks said mastiffs roamed at night, were full of dragons and other strange animals. They had often begged for permission to explore this fascinating house, but had never been allowed to do so for fear of the caretaker's dog, and now, quite unwittingly their father had given them the key to the mystery.

Outside the library door they discussed the situation. "I shall take my sword," said Arthur valiantly, "girding on a tiny blade, mother says dragons always live underneath castles."



Cynthia's blue eyes sparkled. "Oh, yes," she cried, "cos then you can rescue me when I'm carried away to the dungeon."

There was plenty of milk, now almost cold, in the silver jug, and he handed a cup to the boy, who gave a wry gasp on tasting it. "Sugar," was his brief command. They finished the milk between them, and enjoyed some dessert. Then, when he was beginning to doubt whether the key would open the door, he went home through the darkness unprotected, they made a fresh demand.

"Now," said Cynthia, dragging him to a big chair, "Arthur will sit on the tiger rug, and I will sit on your lap."

"But what shall I do?" cried the dismayed old man. "You shall tell us a nice story, and then we will go home."

Arthur lay at his feet, resting on the head of a tiger, and Cynthia, in no wise afraid of him, twined her little arms around his neck.

And as he looked at their fresh faces so near his, he knew that he had missed that great pleasure which only the love and knowledge of little children can give to men. For a minute he could not trust himself to speak. Then, with an effort, he said, "But I don't know any stories."

"Then tell us something real," said Cynthia. "Something about engines," interjected Arthur. "The old man looked at the boy in a kindlier fashion. 'Engines?' he said, 'do you like engines?'"

"Father says he's perfectly ridiculous about them," said Cynthia. "But the old man made up the most wonderful engine story they had ever heard, all about the strange things that are inside locomotives and what makes them go, and he captured Cynthia's heart by making the engines bring carloads of dolls to a beautiful princess who lived in a tower."

As he neared the end of his story, he was aware that he was asking fewer questions, and when he came to a triumphant finish he saw they were both asleep. He had never experienced a keener gratification than that which now took possession of him. His financial triumphs seemed trifling beside his success with these children. Had he not given them milk, told them an interesting story, and so won their confidence that they slept without the slightest fear?

A few minutes later, he heard a step on the garden path, and a man entered by the open window—a tall pleasant-faced man of five and thirty, with hair thinning and turning gray at the temples. "I must apologize for entering thus," he began, "but I have lost my two children; they were seen by the lodge-keeper to enter your grounds, and I picked up my little girl's hat outside this window. Are they here?"

The brilliantly lighted room for the moment obscured his sight, and he saw neither the boy sleeping on the rug, nor the girl gathered in the old man's arms. "I have them here, Richard," answered the old man in his deep, gruff voice; "be quiet or you will wake them up."

Arthur agreed readily. "It wouldn't be fighting fair," he said. Then without taking any more notice of him, the twins commenced a thorough exploration of the room. There were furs, and bronzes and ivories, and things more wonderful than they had ever dreamed of, and as they exclaimed over the wonder of it all, the old man watched them in silence.

"Curious animals, children," he thought, and his mind went back to those days thirty years ago, when his only child had been a boy about the age of this little stranger who made himself so much at home. Then he thought about the boy as he grew up; and, finally, the last scene came back to him—when he drove the boy, a grown man then, penniless from his home because he chose to marry another woman than the one his imperious father desired. When his son went, happiness closed its door to him, and even the amassing of money was losing its charm.

He was awakened from these reveries by Cynthia's voice. "Poor old man!" she said, "poor old man!" He pulled his hand away, not roughly, but decidedly. "Why do you say that?"

"You've been crying," she returned gravely: "look!" "Tut-tut!" he exclaimed, "nonsense."

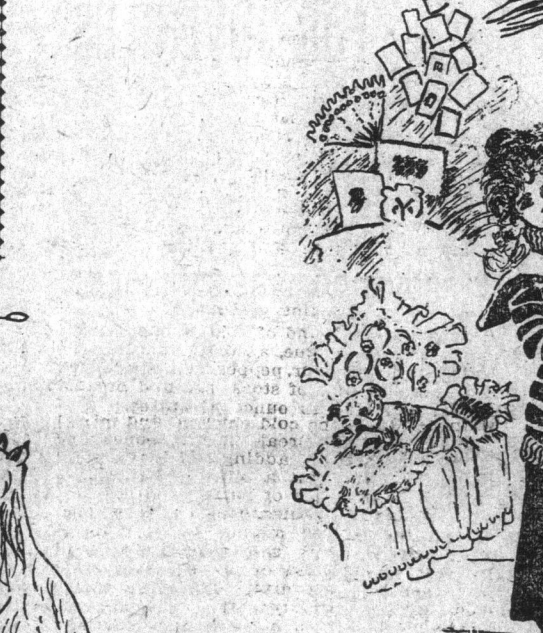
But all the same there was a telltale tear on his sleeve. "You haven't told me who you are," he said. "I am Cynthia, and this is Arthur."

She shook hands gravely, and Arthur followed suit. He discarded his tin sword for a priceless Chinese ivory scimitar.

It was a very difficult conversation, the old man thought. He was utterly at a loss what to do or say. But Cynthia, after a whispered conversation with her brother, broke the silence. "Please, can we have some warm milk?" she asked.

It was the old man's first impulse to ring for the servants, but he hoped to get rid of his visitors without letting the servants know of their intrusion. He determined to give them milk and send them home, for he saw nothing strange in sending such young children into the growing darkness.

They pulled chairs to the table, and sat one each side of him.



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The younger man started back in astonishment, his face wearing a sterner look. "When you drove me from your home, sir," he said, "I swore never to enter a house which sheltered you; and I had no idea that you were within a thousand miles of me. I came for my children and—"

"And found your father," the old man smiled grimly. "You are in luck, Richard."

The younger man commenced to speak, but was waved down impatiently. "Don't talk loud. You don't seem to understand that children need sleep."

The father stared in astonishment. Here were his children sleeping happily, and his father telling him he did not understand their needs.

"He's going to be an engineer," said the old man a minute later, indicating the sleeping boy; "that's what I wanted you to be, instead of studying birds, insects, and that kind of rubbish. Sit down Richard. There's cold black coffee. I gave the children all the milk."

"You gave them milk?" said the other incredulously. "And why not?" snapped his father. "Are you the only one to understand children?"

There was triumph in his tone as he added, "I may tell you that they both said I prepared it better than even their mother did."

His son smiled. "How many lumps did you put in?" he asked. "Seven in Cynthia's cup and nine in Arthur's."

"Good heavens!" cried their father: "two is all they are allowed."

"To think," said the old man, apostrophizing space, "that he doesn't know how to feed his own children! Richard, you never had much sense. Tell me this much: are you sorry for your disobedience?"

"I'm proud of it," said the other. "I did the first good thing in my life when I married my wife."

The old man did not answer him for a time. When he did, he spoke of another subject. He pointed to Cynthia's ears. "Did you ever see anything so shell-like?" he asked. "I don't know where she gets such pretty ears from. All the women of our family have ugly ones."

"They are her mothers," said the other briefly. "Has your wife the same eyes and expression?"

"Yes," said his son. A few seconds later, the old man stood up, very carefully, lest he should awaken the child. "You take the engineer," he told his son, "I'll take the little princess."



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trusted, from the colonel down to the drummer boy. I have heard men in the barrackroom upbraid K. of K. in no measured terms for his harshness, only to confess a few moments later that he was the best man in the service. But some there are—a favored few, perhaps—who will remember many little touches of human nature the great soldier has betrayed. Those who were at Komatipoort in the late war will remember one. The guns had stuck in the mud. Neither horses nor men could move them. Kitchener, dismounted, the "Tommy" looked up amazed, for the great K. of K. had got his tunic off, was at a spare place against the limber, and was pushing like grim death. The gun creaked, moved, and a moment more was out of the mud. It was not Kitchener's strength that moved it, but the climbing down of this man to their level put fresh heart into the troopers.

A Short Way With Shirkers. Kitchener was a wholesome horror of shirkers. During the late war he heard that a certain number of officers had decided to remain at a hotel at Cape Town till the roughest work was over, instead of going up to the front. He accordingly strolled into the hotel one afternoon, and asked to see the register. This at first was refused, but, learning who he was, the manager gave way. Kitchener took note of the names, and then went upstairs, three steps at a time. He found a whole bevy of officers playing cards. "Now, then," he said, "the troop train goes at 10.30, the boat for England at 4 a.m. Take your choice."

Another pet aversion of his is effeminacy. During the war a certain colonel came to him with his eyes glassed. Kitchener spotted it at once. "Colonel X," he said, "is it necessary for you to wear that eye-glass?" "Absolutely, sir," replied the other. "That's a pity. I was going to offer you a place on my staff. As it is, you must go down to the base. I want no short-sighted men here."

What country in Europe would you carve at Christmas? Turkey. What country in Europe describes the perpetual condition of the small boy Hungary? Turkey. What city in southern France would be dangerous to meet in the desert? Lyons. What country in Europe would you use on the griddle before making your omelette? Greece. What two towns in France remind a person of a small boy with his father's trousers on? Toulon and Toulouse. What sea in Europe would make a good sleeping room? Adriatic. Why should old malds go to Ceylon? Because the inhabitants are all Singalese (he's).

What island in the Irish sea is in great demand because of its scarcity at summer resorts? Man. What bay in New York should be served with pepper and salt? Oyster. If you were commencing a dairy business what summer resort in the south of England would you buy? Cowes. Name two islands representing the breed you would select? Jersey and Alderney. What country in South America describes your feelings on a winter morning when all the fires are out? Chili. What geographical features would then be desirable? Capes.

IN LIGHTER VEIN

One and One Make Two

The drawing teacher had been giving a lesson on cubes, and some of the pupils had given examples. The teacher wanted more, but no one could think of any. Finally, a boy said: "I know a good cube—half a pound of butter."

"Why, that is exactly," cried the teacher. "Now, who can give me another example, as good as Henry's?"

Then she saw a hand waving wildly at the back of the room. "Well, Willie, what is it?"

"Why, the other half-pound of that butter," said Willie, triumphantly.

"That's All!"

A well-known humorist, one night at the theatre fancied he saw a friend some of the first of him. Turning to his next neighbor, an over-dressed youth, he said: "Would you be kind enough to touch that gentleman with your stick?"

"Certainly," was the reply, and the thing was done. When the individual in question turned round, the humorist saw he was not the man he took him for, and became absorbed in the play, leaving the youth with the cane to scold matters with the gentleman in front. As he had no excuse ready at hand, was no done without considerable trouble. When the disturbance was over, the victim said: "Didn't you tell me to tap that man with my cane?"

"Yes." "And what did you want?" "Oh," said the other, with imperturbable gravity, "I wanted to see whether you would tap him or not, that's all!"

WITH THE POETS

Sunset

By Ruth Livingston, Aged 9. (Silver Badge Winner.)

The royal sun sinks slowly down Behind the purple hills so tall, And children look with wondering eyes Up at the glowing ball. And all the world is still.

And now appears a lordly troop: In splendor great comes dressed the qteer With all her lords and ladies garbed In robes of silvery sheen— A fairland of clouds.

The birds now sing their evening psalm And cuddle in their soft, warm nests. The mother sings her child to sleep, The weary peasant rests, God's busy day is done.

—St. Nicholas League.

A Skating Song

Hurrah for the wind that is keen and chill, As it whips the snowflakes down from the hill; Hurrah for the pulses of swift delight, That tingle and beat in the winter's night, When over the crystal lake we glide, Flying like birds o'er the frozen tide.

Hurrah for the lad with the sparkling eye, For the joyous laugh and the courage high; Hurrah for the health that is glad and strong, So the life is gay as a merry song. For the motion fearless, smooth, and fleet, When skates are wings to the flying feet.

Hurrah for the landscape broad and fair Spread boldly out in the brilliant air; Hurrah for the folds of the sheeted snow, On the mountains high, in the valleys low; Hurrah for the track where the skaters glide, Fearless as over a highway triad!

Hurrah for the girls who skate so well— Dorothy, Winifred, Kate, and Nell! Hurrah for the race we're bound to win, And the curves and figures we mean to spin! Hurrah for the joy that wings our feet, When like gay dancers we pass and meet.

Who chooses may boast of the summer time, Hurrah we cry for the frost and rime, For the icicles pendant from roof and eave, For snow that covers the next year's sheaves! Hurrah for the gleaming, glassy lake, Where the skaters hold their pleasure stake! —Harper's Young People