

# LITTLE FOLKS

## Paul's Goat Team.

(*'The Congregationalist and Christian World.'*)

Paul Gophet went to bed nine years old, and when he awoke he was ten. But he wished he was not as old, when his three brothers gave him each ten slaps to begin the day with.

'Love pats don't hurt,' said his sister Sallie, and she gave him ten kisses to make up.

Mother and Father Gophet had always some nice surprise in store. Paul came right in the middle of the family, which was like a long flight of steps, from Tom, who was very proud of his neckties and downy upper lip, down to Baby

fragrant as could be, with its big mows chock-full of hay. There was a real floor for the second story, that lifted up in the middle, when the hay was put in, just like the draw to the bridge that spanned the broad river a mile away. There were real stairs leading to the upper story, not a ladder like those in the other barns in the neighborhood. Way up in the 'cock-loft' were Tom's pigeons, and the pretty 'pouters' and 'fantails' were so tame that the children could catch them and hold and pet them to their heart's content.

Down in the basement were guinea pigs, rabbits and cages of white mice, besides toads and other

tossed their heads, and rattled their shining harness as if they were proud enough of it all. The old barn rang with the shouts of delight and surprise, as the tribe crowded around the little turn-out. But Paul still stood in the doorway, staring with eyes and mouth wide open, but never uttering a sound.

'Go see your birthday present,' said Sallie, giving him a little push.

'Is that mine?' gasped Paul, drawing a long breath.

'Read the placard,' said Sallie, pointing to a big card that was fastened on the harness. And Paul read, 'For little old Faithful.'

'Is that me?' he gasped again.

'Who else can it be?' asked Sallie. 'Who gets the kindlings every night? Who runs the errands, when all the rest shirk out? Who does all the chores, when the other boys play hooky?'

'And who cuts wood for poor Ma'am Gallop?' cried Tom.

'Who digs out the paths for her when the snow comes?'

'And who always gives up the biggest piece, and gives me the biggest bite of his apple?' chimed in little Claire, whose heart lay very near her mouth.

Paul's joy was unbounded when he at last realized that the whole outfit was his own. He had trained the goats to work in harness from the time they were tiny kids; though his harness was made from bits of string, and his waggon from a soap box, ingeniously combined with the wheels of a cast-off baby carriage. But this harness was a 'sure enough' one, of shining red leather, all studded with brass. And this waggon was a miniature express, strongly made, and gay with bright paint. Was there ever such a lucky boy!

'O, my—O my!' screamed Paul, his blue eyes shining with delight. 'It's—it's—it's just—goluptious!' and that to Paul expressed the height of appreciation.

Paul never was happy unless he could share his pleasures, so Elsie and little Claire were politely assisted into the back seat of the waggon, and Teddy and Paul took the front, and off they went for a ride.



Bunting, whose one-act performance of putting his chubby toe into his mouth delighted the whole tribe, and convulsed them with laughter.

'Does any one know of a birthday?' asked Father Gophet, solemnly, at the breakfast table.

'I've got one!' cried Paul eagerly.

'Now that is strange,' said his father. 'There was something out in the barn for a boy with a birthday. Are you sure you are the one?'

Yes, Paul was sure, there was no other Gophet birthday in that month.

Off to the barn flew the whole lot, Tom's long legs leading the mob, while Sallie brought up the rear, with Baby Bunting's head bobbing over her shoulder.

That big old barn! There never was another such place! No cows or horses were there, or had been for years. It was as sweet and

reptiles and cats—cats everywhere, of all sizes and colors. For the Gophets were all enthusiastic lovers of any and every living thing.

In the stalls were four goats. Lily was a snow-white African goat with long black horns. Nannie was a common gray goat, with a wonderful appetite for all sorts of indigestible things, from the children's dresses to nails and old tin cans. But the prettiest sight of all was the twins, Lily's kids, Jettie and Gypsy, who belonged to Paul. They were so exactly alike that no one but he could tell them apart. They were black and white, and spotted beautifully.

But we shall never get to the birthday surprise if we try to describe all the barn pets, so I will tell you now what it was. There in the middle of the floor stood Jettie and Gypsy harnessed to the prettiest little waggon! The goats