

## Our Young Folks.

### A Christmas Carol.

They tell a lovely story, in lands beyond the sea,  
How, when the King of Glory lay on His mother's knee,  
Before the Prophet-princes came, bringing gifts in hand,  
The dumb beasts felt the miracle men could not understand!

The gentle, patient donkey and the ox that trod the corn,  
Knelt down beside the manger, and knew that Christ was born.  
And so they say in Sweden, at twelve each Christmas night,  
The dumb beasts kneel to worship and see the Christmas light!

This fancy makes men kinder to creatures needing care;  
They give them Christmas greeting and dainty Christmas fare;  
The cat and dog sup gaily, and a sheaf of golden corn  
Is raised above the roof-tree for the birds on Christmas morn.

—MARY FIELD WILLIAMS.

### Worth Winning.

The following story of an honest boy is told in *Good Words*:

There was a boy who "lived out" named John. Every week he wrote home to his mother, who lived on a small farm away up among the hills. One day John picked up an old envelope from the kitchen wood-box, and saw that the postage stamp was not touched by the postmaster's stamp to show that it had done its duty and henceforth was useless.

"The postmaster missed his aim then," said John, "and left the stamp as good as new. I'll use it myself."

He moistened it at the nose of the teakettle, and very carefully pulled the stamp off.

"No," said John's conscience, "for that would be cheating. The stamp has been on one letter; it ought not to carry another."

"It can carry another," said John, "because, you see, there is no mark to prove it worthless. The post-office will not know it."

"But you know," said his conscience, "and that is enough. It is not honest to use it a second time. It is a little matter, to be sure, but it is cheating. God looks for principle. It is the quality of every action that He judges by."

"But no one will know it," said John faintly.

"No one?" cried conscience. "God will know it, and that is enough, and He, you know, desires truth in the inward parts."

"Yes," cried the best part of John's character. "Yes, it is cheating to use the postage-stamp a second time and I will not do it."

John tore it in two and gave it to the winds. And so John won a victory. Wasn't it worth winning?

### The Jaguars of South America.

We measured the jaguar—an old male—before taking off the skin; five feet and seven inches from nose to root of tail, the tail added would bring the total length to nearly eight feet. This was a good deal above the average, though I have seen skins quite six feet long, not including the tail. The body weighed, I suppose, not less than three hundred pounds. This was the variety of species called *cangussú* by the hunters of Matto Grosso; on the Amazons it is the *urianúra*, or dog-jaguar. All over South America three kinds of jaguars are distinguished: naturalists at present regard them as varieties, but I confess I am inclined to side with the hunters who laugh at the idea that these three are the same. The *cangussú*—the kind Bert had shot—is confined to the higher lands, never straying over the great swamps of the Amazons and Paraguay. The ground-color is pale tawny, almost white at times, and is irregularly covered with small black spots, which tend to run into stripes along the back. Besides having longer legs and tail, it is altogether a more slender animal than the *onça pintada*, called by the Amazonian Indians *yauareté-pacóra-sororóca*, or "jaguar of the wild plantain," because it frequents swampy places where that plant grows. This is the common jaguar of the great river-plains, though also seen occasionally on the highlands. It has a deep tawny coat, with large black spots so arranged that they form little circles or "roses" on the sides, but sometimes

run into stripes on the back. The *onça pintada* often attacks alligators and turtles, and it lives largely on fish.

There is a curious story about the jaguar's fishing, which many travellers have told, though most discredit it. I have heard it from reliable woodsmen, who say that they have watched the whole performance; and, for myself, I can see nothing incredible in it. The jaguar, it is said, lies on a projecting log and strikes the water gently with its tail; certain fruit-eating fish, as the *pacu*, come to the sound, imagining that a fruit has dropped into the water, and the jaguar scoops them out with his paw. That these fish below follow sound I know, for I have often caught *pacús* with a palm-nut bait, dropping it gently on the surface of the water two or three times; the fish, attracted by the noise, soon appear, and even leap after the fruit as trout leap to a fly. This is the common method of *pacú*-fishing on the Paraguay, and very good sport it is.

The *onças pintadas* swim well, as I can attest. I have seen one swimming across the river Cuyabá where it is a quarter of a mile broad. It is said that they cross even the Paraguay and Amazon.

The third variety or species is the black "tiger," very rare on the Matto Grosso highlands but common in the Amazonian and Orinoco forests. This is the largest and fiercest of all. At first sight the skin appears quite black; but on closer inspection still darker spots, similar to those of the *onça pintada*, can be distinguished.

I may add here that the puma—our North American species—is also found all over South America, and in many places is very common. It is a pest to the cattle-men, from its propensity for carrying off young calves; but otherwise it is little feared, and for size and fierceness will bear no comparison with the jaguars. South America has also a number of smaller species, ranging from the spotted *jaguaritica*, nearly as large as a puma, down to the little gray and striped kinds hardly bigger than a domestic cat.—Herbert H. Smith, in *St. Nicholas*.

### Two Points of View.

We all have heard boys and girls comment on each other's queer ways. The following verses from *The Youth's Companion* furnish another evidence of their one-sided observations of each other:

ODD OR EVEN?

*The girl speaks:*

I think you will hardly believe it true,  
The curious things he contrives to do.  
A needle, the biggest that ever can be,  
And a thread so fine you can scarcely see,  
With never a thimble to make it go;  
And that is the way he tries to sew!

*The boy speaks:*

Well, well! at the thought of it words 'most fail.  
She doesn't know how to drive a nail.  
She holds it crooked, with finger and thumb,  
And she pounds her hand till the bruises come;  
And what do you think she takes to drive?  
Her own hand-mirror, as I'm alive!

### An Illustration.

The incident lately related in *The Interior* of a young man who dated the beginnings of his fortune from the enforced consecration of a tithe to religion, shows how in one way religion often lies at the foundation of financial success. But it brought to mind the case of a well-known business man who was relating to us how he made his wealth by going to prayer-meeting. In his very first employment he was called upon to choose what one evening of the week he would take as his night "off" from business. Young as he was, and fond of a good time as others of his age, it required a strong conviction of duty to choose, as he did, prayer-meeting night, and to give his one evening to the worship of God. But not so very long after he was offered the controlling interest in the business itself, could he raise sufficient money to control it. With many a misgiving, knowing well that he had not the slightest security to offer, he applied at the bank, and was told, "Any young man who goes to prayer-meeting as regularly as you do can be trusted," and he

was. In a few months he was able to discharge his debt, and he has since been continually a partner, and is to-day a still rising man. Business men know how to estimate the worth of character when they see it.

### Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
Singeth through the crowded street,  
How it rings up from the pavement  
Trod by eager, busy feet!  
Each to each the bright contagion  
Passes, as they swiftly move;  
Arms so full of precious bundles!  
Hearts so full of happy love!

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
Gayly peal the festive bells;  
Swiftly back the echo flashing  
All the earth with music swells!  
Little snowbirds hopping blithely  
Chirp in ecstasy of joy,  
Chattering with whirling snowflakes  
Dancing from the frosty sky.

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
Shout the evergreen and pine!  
And, replying, sing their comrades  
Now bedecked in splendor fine.  
With the toys all ranged about them,  
Gay with lights, they honored are  
As a depot for dear Santa  
And his heavy-laden car.

Oh, this dear old Merry Christmas!  
Was there ever such a time!  
Gladdest poets oft despairing  
Fail to give thee fitting rhyme.  
Better speak these merry children,  
Romp, rushing through the hall,  
"Merry Merry, Merry Christmas,  
Unto you, and unto all!"

—SELECTED.

### The Runaway Horse.

That horse must have been astonished. He was frightened and running away. He tore along the street, with a lot of boys and men running after him and screaming "Whoa!" I did not wonder that he kicked until he had torn himself loose from the waggon, and then ran faster than ever to get away from the screaming crowd. There, right in front of him at the corner, was an open door. Perhaps if he got in there he could get away from the crowd. He turned quickly and dashed through the door. There was an awful crash. He turned about, still more frightened, and there was another awful crash. The horse was in a crockery store. The clerks ran at him. He tried to get out, but every move he made was followed by the crushing and grinding. He kicked up his heels and knocked over a table; this gave him more room, and he turned and got outdoors, where he faced the screaming crowd. Poor fellow! He was trembling and so bewildered that he did not know which way to go. Some one caught him and held him until his owner came up. His owner patted him and spoke soothingly to him, as if he understood just how he felt.

But the owner of the store! I walked down the street and left him talking. He acted as if the dear horse had started out to get into his store and destroy things, and the horse looked over his shoulder as if he would like to explain to the angry man that he did not mean to harm him, and that his dear master, he knew, would pay for the mistake he had made.

### They Will Sing in the South.

What a desolate land it must be where there are no birds! Quite as desolate as a land without flowers. In South Africa, where a number of English families have settled, there were no birds, and the people grew homesick for them. They missed not only their songs, but the life they gave the woods. What do you think they did? They sent to England for the birds they loved—the lark, the thrush, the nightingale, the robin, starlings, and many of the other home birds, and they have now reached Africa. There is a park owned by an Englishman near Cape Town, and there these birds are to make their home. It is expected that they will be so well cared for that they will build nests, and lay eggs, and bring up their children in this new home, and make the English people there happy.