

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

Not many sent me an account of how they spent St. Patrick's day. I am sure you all enjoyed last week's paper which told you how we celebrated the day in Montreal. Of course we are pretty lucky here, with full liberty to hold processions and demonstrations, which cannot be said of all the other cities and towns, still, I thought your different schools would have had some kind of a feast, in order to keep alive your spirit of patriotism and to bring to your minds all the great and glorious things which were done in order to keep the faith. I have been thinking of a plan which might encourage you to write to the corner regularly. Perhaps I will tell you about it next week, that is if you are interested. Those who are will write me. Let me tell you all again that your letters should be in not later than Monday morning in order to be published the week they are received.

Your loving AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I presume that by this time you are thinking that I have forgotten you; but no! I certainly have not, I was waiting to give you the particulars about how I spent St. Patrick's day, so as to comply with your request of the last edition. I shall begin by telling you I attended at Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. M. A. Meunier. I then spent the rest of the day at my uncle's place and enjoyed myself greatly. I am attending the village academy, and like it well; my professor is Mr. A. M. Dupuis. I study English and French grammar, history, geography, and arithmetic, and consequently have not much time to spare. And now, dear auntie, I shall conclude, trusting that my letter will not be put in the waste basket.

MAY.

Sherrington, March 21, 1906.

WHAT A BOY CAN DO.

A boy can make the world more pure By kindly word and deed; As blossoms call for nature's light, So hearts love's sunshine need.

A boy can make the world more pure By lips kept ever clean; Silence can influence shed as sure As speech—oft more doth mean.

A boy can make the world more true By an exalted aim; Let one a given end pursue, Others will seek the same.

Full simple things indeed, these three Thus stated in my rhyme; Yet, what, dear lad, could greater be— What grander, more sublime?

USED MEN AT THE OFFICE UP AND TIRED OUT

Every day in the week and every week in the year men, women and children feel all used up and tired out. The strain of business, the cares of home and social life and the tasks of study cause terrible suffering from heart and nerve troubles. The efforts put forth to keep up to the modern "high pressure" mode of life in this age wear out the strongest systems, shatter the nerves and weaken the heart. Thousands find life a burden and others an early grave. The strain on the system causes nervousness, palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, sleeplessness, faint and dizzy spells, skip beats, weak and irregular pulse, smothering and sinking spells, etc. The blood becomes weak and watery and eventually causes decline.

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PETRO'S AVE MARIA.

How a Little Italian Singer Found a Home.

(By William Clyde Fitch, in Catholic Columbian.)

Petro was alone in the great city, of the New World. The man who had brought him across the broad ocean, so far away from his sunny Italy, had deserted him; and now the woman who had let his master their lodging told him money was money and she could keep him no longer for nothing. He thought the grief in his heart would burst it; neither voice nor tears would come; he gave one look around him and then went out, bare-headed and empty-handed.

He was a very little fellow, with short dark curls clustered about a sadly sweet face, with large deep eyes that told you his story without need of words.

On the doorstep Petro sank, his head in his arms, and so for a long time he remained without moving. A small, sorry-looking kitten, coming inquisitively along the hall, was stopped in her way by this little heap of humanity. She paused a moment and then made a gentle dab at it with her paw; not attracting his attention, she became more bold and brushed by his little shoulder softly purring, with that dumb look of sympathy in her eyes which raises the animal so near to the human being. But Petro did not move. Then puss, still purring, climbed upon his arm, crept underneath his wrist close to his drooping head, where, curling up, she nestled. Petro lifted his head and saw her; took her up in his arms—to her great discomfort—held her tight to his breast and burst into tears.

"Ah! mio piccolo," he sobbed, "vieni sul mio cuore" (ah! my little one, come to my heart), and rocked himself to and fro on the step. By degrees he became calm, even comforted, and softly sang, under his breath, snatches of melody his mother had sung over her flower stall in that dear far-away land. And later, when a coming crowd of noisy boys threatened his peace, he gathered the kitten miscellaneous into his arms, and starting up, trudged on, straight ahead—anywhere.

In a large church an organist was sitting, dreaming, at the organ. It was late in the afternoon of a busy day; the stained glass was growing deeper-tinted, somber and indistinct; only one window showed clearly and that was in line with the spiking sun. Besides the colors in this window were lighter—against a pale blue sky, the figure of the Good Shepherd in a robe of white, holding a small ewe lamb tenderly in his arms. It stood out from the surrounding dimness and gloom, and even caught the eye of the tired man at the organ. "Beautiful window," he murmured half aloud, and then with a sigh ran his fingers over the keys, running one familiar strain into another, or composing out of his own mood, playing the care and weariness away through his fingertips. And the melody stole through the great church, sweet and lovely, filling the shadowy nave and aisles and chancel—stole away down to a tiny figure standing awe-struck just inside the doors, and filling his little heart to over-flowing.

Petro had heard in the street outside the faint sound of the organ, and, hungry for the music he loved, had dared to push between the half-closed doors, into the church. There opposite the window of the Good Shepherd he stood, rapt and motionless, with the kitten clasped tightly in his arms, and bathed in the soft colors that fell upon him, he seemed almost a little reflection of the sun-illumined figure in the memorial window.

Petro was drawn nearer and nearer to the music, and slowly and softly he went up the long aisle, his head barely reaching the top of the old-fashioned pews. Only once he stopped, to re-arrange the kitten which was slipping down, and had been for some time in imminent danger of death by suffocation; then he went on. A great longing came to him to sing, and, as if in answer, the organist commenced to play something familiar to the child. It was only an Ave Maria often sung in the little church at home, the same he had heard in the great Cathedral, and suddenly he opened his lips and sung himself again:

"A-ve-Mar-i-a! A-ve-Mar-i-a! O-ra-pro-no-bis."

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LET PORTAGE, October, 1905. I was troubled for about two years with kidney trouble, so common among railway men. I doctor in the regular way and took a great deal of medicine, but received no benefit. My friend recommended Gin Pills, and I am pleased to state that after taking the first box I got relief, and while I am not taking them regularly, I feel any indications of a return of the trouble, a few doses puts me all right again.

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THE BOLD DRUG CO. - WINNIPEG, MAN.

on to the end. He let his arms fall and freed the kitten! How his heart beat! how his breast swelled as he sang, with two big tears ready to fall from his full eyes.

The organist had half turned, startled at the first note, but had continued playing, fearing the singer would stop when he did. The child, however, seemed unconscious of his surroundings, singing in his clear, sweet soprano through the last repetition:

"A-ve-A-ve-Mar-i-a," and then stood motionless, hands clasped, eyes wet, behind the organist.

The man drew him toward him, and his own voice was not of the strongest as he asked who had taught him to sing.

"My mother, in Italy, before she died," Petro said, with a faint smile which touched the musician inexpressibly. He had picked up English quickly after his arrival in America, and now could speak it well, and he answered a few questions about his short life earnestly and quietly.

The organist was impressed strongly by his story, and ran his fingers over the keys of the organ for a few minutes without speaking, trying to think of some way to help him. He could not himself offer him a home, for his own household was already crowded; but he would take him back with him for the present, until some other plan could be determined on.

He had made up his mind already that Petro should sing at Easter.

It was when they started to leave the church that Petro remembered puss. In great distress he commenced an arduous search for her, and she was finally found at the foot of the pulpit fast asleep. The organist was much amused at this, and said he should tell the rector the effect of his pupil even upon dumb animals. He himself did not at first see the need of taking the kitten with them; but Petro wished it so strongly he consented. At the end of the aisle, where he had stood when he first entered the church, Petro paused. It must have been the simplicity of the window that attracted him. He had seen much more splendid ones in his own art-perfected country.

"That window is in memory of a little boy," said the organist—"a little boy like you. The Lord took him up in his arms, and his mother is left here alone, and she gave that window in memory of him."

Tears came into the child's eyes. "Has he him so?" he asked, pointing to the window, and then, without waiting for an answer, he added: "But Petro, he is alone, and his mother he has so." His fingers closed tightly about the hand of the organist, and they passed on, out through the porch.

Petro's new life was very strange to him; but he grew more and more accustomed to it, and tried to show his gratitude in a bashful, boyish way. He won the hearts of all the family; and the organist's wife even pleaded to keep him with them until he grew old enough to care for himself. He was one of those little souls a true woman loves to guide and foster. They had both watched him closely at first, for it was not a little dangerous, this taking a strange child into one's home; but the boy, in a short time disarmed them of all suspicion.

Every day he went with his new friend to the rehearsal, and made friends in a quiet, odd little way among the other choristers.

So the few days before Easter passed quickly by. Rumors of his progress and his beautiful voice, the organist purposely started, hoping to

excite an interest which might lead to something; and in his heart he had an especial hope, of which, however, he said nothing.

The day of the great feast came, with its music and flowers and gladness; and Petro thought he had never been so happy as he stood in his white robe, at the end of the first row of the choristers, ready to sing—alone. He was not frightened. The organist had trained him well, and the boy was unconscious of everything save the music. He was to sing the first of the special anthems, and the last of the preceding responses had been said. He watched for his signal, and when it came, he only clasped his hands a little tighter under his cotta, and lifted his head and sang.

There were many tearful eyes turned towards the little chorister when he had finished, and the organist gave a long sigh, and said, half aloud to himself, "Ah! that voice was not given to him for nothing."

His eye wandered over the crowd of familiar faces, all earnest and wondering now, toward a little woman who sat on one side, underneath the window where Petro once had stood.

She sat quite still, her eyes fixed longingly on the boy, who was standing, motionless as she, with his lips parted and his head thrown slightly back. She could see his little breast still heaving, while in her own ears and heart there seemed to ring again.

"Sacrificed for us, for us, for me," she added—"sacrificed for me. Let us keep the feast—the feast—ah! how?" she asked, and drew the heavy black veil she wore over her face, and sank down upon her knees.

After service question after question was asked and answered about Petro, and the organist was content, and waited.

The next morning's mail brought him a letter which he seemed to have expected; it was a square envelope with a small black seal upon it.

"From Mrs. Holland," he said, in answer to his wife's look of inquiry, and hastily reading, added: "It is as I hoped."

In a few moments more he started to go out. His wife helped him on with his coat.

"I am so glad," she said, "and so happy. You're always helping some one, and me most of all, you dear boy!" She was leaning up to fasten the top button of his coat; he bent down and interrupted her. Then he laughed.

"Boy! pretty old boy, at forty-two. What'll I be at eighty?" "Still a boy; always a boy to me."

Late the same day, he and Petro went into the library by themselves and there he asked the little fellow how he would like to live with a dear, kind lady, who would care for him and love him as if she were his own mother.

"Does she sell flowers?" Petro asked.

"No," answered the organist, smilingly; "but she buys them. She is not poor; she lives in a large house with beautiful things about her; a piano"—The boy's eyes were sparkling.

"Oh!" he exclaimed—then suddenly his eyes grew sorrowful—"would I have to leave you?"

His friend explained to him how it was impossible for them to have him with them always, although they wished to, and should always love him. But this lady was kind and good; she had lost a little boy like Petro, and was lonely; she had heard him sing, and had seen him, and she wanted him to come and live with her, and try to love her.

Petro finally consented. He bade the family a rather tearful good-bye and left them, for remembrance, the one thing of his own he had been fond of, his only possession, the kitten.

"This is your little Italian singer," said the organist to Mrs. Holland; and then he went away and left them, together.

Returning later, and going in unannounced, as he had been asked to do, he instinctively stopped a moment in the doorway of the room where he had left his charge.

"My other mother sang them to me," Petro was saying slowly and sweetly, "and now Petro will sing them to you." And listening his friend heard him singing some Italian flower songs; they were the same as he had sung to the kitten that day he wandered into the church. He stood by the lady as he sang, leaning against the side of her chair; and when he had finished, she clasped him in her arms, and he, standing up on tip-toe, reached his little hands about her neck and laid his cheek against hers.

The organist turned and went out, closing the door softly behind him

MY GRANDMAMMA.

Grandmamma wears a soft gray gown, It's silky when I smooth it down. I hope I'll wear a soft gray gown, When I am old like her.

Grandmamma's hair is snowy white, It almost sparkles in the light, I hope my hair will be as bright When I am old like her.

Grandmamma's smile is very sweet; My papa says it "can't be beat." I hope my smile will be as sweet When I am old like her.

Grandmamma knows I love her well, I love her more than I can tell. I hope little girls will love me well When I am old like her.

THE EMPTY BARREL.

"What shall we play at this morning, Dolly?" inquired Billy. He and his little twin sister had just run out into the garden after their mother had washed their faces and dressed them up neatly.

"Oh, I don't know," exclaimed Dolly. "Suppose we play touch wood!"

"No; that's only a kid's game!" cried Billy, who feels quite grown up when he has his hands in his pockets, like papa. "Let's try jumping instead. See me jump right into that barrel. You couldn't do it, because you are only a girl, and girls don't count when there's any jumping to be done."

"Don't they, though!" exclaimed his sister. "I'll jump into that empty tub quicker than you will, so there!"

One-two-three! Splash! Down came Dolly right in the middle of the tub, but, oh, what a surprise was there! Instead of being empty, as it was the day before, the tub was now full of tar—that horrid, black, sticky stuff which spoils pretty dresses and gets you into trouble. You know what tar is, don't you? Well, so does Dolly—now!

GAME OF CASTLE KING.

Choose your king by some counting out rhyme. Then he must stand on a high place and shout defiance to his foes. He taunts them with abusive epithets as:

"I'm the king of the castle; Get down, you cowardly rascal! He is then assaulted by the other players, every one a claimant for his position of eminence, and alone he must try to maintain it.

Fair pulls and pushes are allowed, but the clothes must not be pulled under penalty of being set aside as a prisoner of war, which really means expulsion from the game.

Sometimes the king is permitted to have an ally, who merely stands by to see fair play and to capture any one breaking the rules.

The odds against the king are so great that he does not long retain his position, and the one who de-thrones him takes his place and possession of the "castle."

KEYS THAT OPEN HEARTS.

Many of our young readers have seen the little verse that runs: "Hearts, like doors, open with ease, To very, very little keys; And don't forget that two are these; 'I thank you, sir,' and 'If you please.'"

Now, there is a great deal of truth in these four lines, as we will all acknowledge, if we but stop to consider a moment. The little key that unlocks our doors, an instrument scarcely more than three inches long, is a wonderfully ingenious contrivance. And how much we rely upon it! But is its accomplishment any more to be admired than that of the keys that are suggested in the poem for opening hearts? No brass, no iron, only a little courtesy and love.

"I thank you, sir"—that means appreciation of services rendered or of some kind word or deed. Appreciation of kindness goes far toward opening the hearts of others, but there are many who acknowledge a courtesy only by cool words or by the curt monosyllable, "Thanks." There are even some who make no acknowledgment at all of the little kindnesses of every-day life. It requires effort and watch-care to render acknowledgments, but we are all human, and a cordial "I thank you" expressing appreciation of what has been done, brings a pleasant sensation of warmth to the heart and causes it to open towards the one who speaks the gracious words. More than this, a cold acknowledgment checks further acts of courtesy on the part of the one thus treated.

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Entry may be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land is situated, or if the homesteader desires, he may, on application to the Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, the Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, or the local agent receive authority for some one to make entry for him.

The homesteader is required to perform the conditions connected therewith under one of the following plans:

- (1) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land as each year for three years. (2) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of the homesteader resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by such person residing with the father or mother. (3) If the settler has his permanent residence upon farming land owned by him in the vicinity of his homestead, the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by residence upon the said land. Six months' notice in writing should be given to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Ottawa of intention to apply for patent.

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W. W. CORY, Deputy Minister of the Interior.

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