

THE LITTLE FOLK.

THE NEW UMBRELLA.

Oh, Ella !
 With her first umbrella !
 She walked abroad like any queen.
 She held it proudly for display,
 Admired its handle, stroked its sheen,
 And never little girl more gay.

Dear Ella !
 Such a wee umbrella !
 One dry upon the market-place
 I met her, dripping were her curls,
 She looked, despite her sunny face,
 The most forlorn of little girls.

"Why, Ella !
 Where's your new umbrella ?"
 Said I ; "the storm has drenched your hair !
 Just see your frock ! just see your hat !
 And what is this you hug with care ?—
 A broom, a fiddle, or a cat ?"

Oh, Ella !
 With her first umbrella !
 She looked at me and shyly spoke,
 The rain drops pelted on her yet ;
 "I have it here beneath my cloak,
 Because you see it might get wet !"—"St. Nicholas."

A GOOD JOKE.

It was early in the year for sunflowers, but a sunflower party it must be—so said Mary Johnson, and she usually had her way, for, as the school children said, "Everywhere that Mary went, Bessie and Frances were sure to follow."

"You know," said Mary to her friends, "our mammas have pink and violet teas, and why shouldn't we have a sunflower party ?"

"But where, and when ?" exclaimed the girls.

"Down by Willow Brook, and Saturday, of course," said Mary.

"But where shall we get the sunflowers ?" asked Bessie. "It is only a little time ago that the pussy willows crept out of their 'cat skins' as my baby sister say, and only the early flowers are out yet."

"Well, can't we make sunflowers out of tissue paper, I'd like to know ?" retorted Mary.

"So we can," said Frances, "and it is in better taste my big sister says, to carry one flower than more, so three will be enough, and I will make them, as I have both yellow and brown paper, and sister Ellen will help me. But shall we have only our three selves ? It don't seem like a party, for we are always together, anyway."

"We might invite Genevieve Graham," said Bessie, "and perhaps she would take us in her dog-cart with her Shetland pony," suggested Bessie.

"Let's do it," said the others.

Just then there passed by them a little girl whose face was brown and freckled. She swung her tattered hat in her hand instead of wearing it on her head, while her dress was long and scanty, and twisted about her ankles as she walked, and her shoes were not mates, one being of cloth, while the other was of some kind of coarse leather.

"What a looking thing Nellie Adams always is," said Mary. "I don't suppose she ever went to a party in her life," suddenly exclaimed Bessie.

"Suppose we ask her—just for fun," added Frances, as she saw the look of surprise on the other girls' faces.

"It would be a good joke," said Mary ; "but what if she should come ?"

"Of course she wouldn't," said Bessie. "You, Mary, write the invitation in your best writing, and let Frances paint a sunflower on the paper, and I will give it to her to-morrow at school."

The girls laughed over their good joke, which was carried out the next day, but they were greatly surprised to receive an acceptance, written on a nicely folded piece of wrapping-paper.

"Well, we are in a nice fix, that's a fact," said Frances, to Mary and Bessie, when they met to talk the matter over. "Rob says it's just good enough for us, and sister Ellen declares that if she were in our place she would make it a good joke for Nellie, by giving her the best possible time at our sunflower party." "All right ; let's do it," said Mary and Bessie,

who were not intentionally unkind, only thoughtless and liked fun.

"And I," said Frances, "as I got into the joke, will call for Nellie, so we can all go to Willow Brook together."

Nellie lived outside the village, so Frances had some little distance to walk, but what a good time they all had at the sunflower party ! Sister Ellen, for her part of the good joke, brought them at noon a basket of luncheon.

Nellie was so happy and so full of pleasant ways, and the girls, helped by Ellen, tried so hard to make a good time for her, that the three declared that night, after parting with Nellie, at her gate, that Ellen's kind of joke was much better than their own.

"Let's always play this kind of jokes," said Mary to Bessie and Frances.

This they agreed to do, and each kept her sunflower as a reminder of her pledge, while Nellie treasured hers as her most precious possession.

"In memory of the pleasantest day of my life," as she told her mother, when she went to bed at night, almost too happy to sleep.

It was a good joke, wasn't it ?

THEY ASTONISHED THE QUEEN.

An amusing story is going the rounds, which has Queen Victoria and three little girls as its dramatis personæ. One day the Queen was out driving near her palace at Balmoral. Her attention was attracted to three little girls who were playing together outside the manse. She sent one of her attendants to invite them to call upon her in the afternoon. The children were naturally delighted, but also somewhat puzzled, their parents happened to be away from home and they had no notion of court etiquette except what they had imbibed from their story books. However, they decided to treat the Queen as queens were treated in their literature.

They were dressed in their best by the nurse, and taken to Balmoral. Go sooner had they entered the presence of the Queen than they greatly astonished her by falling on their faces and saying in chorus :

"Oh, Queen ! live forever !"

It is to be supposed that the Queen did not graciously raise them, in approved Arabian Nights fashion, for she is much too old, but however they got up again. The story goes on to relate that they had a glorious time, and that when the time came to go home they again prostrated themselves before the Queen, and said : "Oh, Queen ! live forever ; and won't you please invite us again ?"

HIS JOURNEY BY WATER.

On the south shore of Long Island is a sheet of water known as the Great South Bay. On the neck and island salt grass grows that is valuable for bedding for cattle. A farmer took his horse over in a boat when he went to gather the hay. He loosened the horse to let him feed while he was getting the hay ready to use him in drawing the load. Whether the horse got homesick, or disliked the island, or did not care to do that kind of work, no one knows. When the farmer was ready to use the horse, there was no horse there. Where had he gone ? He could not hide on the island ; there was no place to hide. The man got into his big flat-bottomed boat and rowed ashore. He found some men greatly excited. A strange, huge animal had been seen swimming across the bay. No one had ever seen such an animal in the bay before. What could it have been ? The farmer could not help them, for he had not seen the animal. No one had seen his horse that he had left on an island four miles across the bay. The farmer went home. There was his horse in the barn, dripping wet. He had swam across the bay ! And then the farmer knew the name of the strange, huge beast the men had seen swimming in the bay.

Humility is a beautiful grace. Never put yourself before other people. Let them put you forward. Never, never boast of what you have done or could do. Self-praise goes but a little way.