

Our Young Folks.

GRACIE'S MISSION.

BY FAYE HUNTINGDON.

Miss Dorothy Dean lived alone at the Dean Homestead; her old schoolmate, Miss Marilla Baker, lived a mile away at the Baker homestead, but not alone. She was "Aunt Millie" to half a dozen nephews and nieces, and dozens more who were not her nephews and nieces, but who had adopted her into the relationship. No one over thought of calling Miss Dorothy Aunt Dorrie! No, indeed! She was Miss Dorothy to everybody. Her nephews and nieces never made the old Dean homestead ring with childish glee, and the boys and girls who munched "Aunt Millie's" seed cakes, and tramped down the grass in her meadows in their search for the earliest strawberries, voted Miss Dorothy a "cross old thing." When Miss Dorothy visited her old friend, she would say:

"I don't see, Marilla, how you stand it to have such a lot of young ones tramping over your clean floors! I declare, the floor would be clean and white enough to eat off if you didn't let them go galivanting across it with their muddy boots and littering up with trash!"

"O, now Dorrie!" Miss Baker would say; "how you do exaggerate! In the first place, my floors are not clean enough for a dining-table. I do calculate to file 'em off once a week so as to keep kinder decent. Mother always allowed that everything should be be spickspan for Sabbath; but I don't do so much scrubbing as some."

"La, now, Millie," said Miss Dorothy, falling into the use of the old pet name, "you needn't take that round-about way to compliment me!"

Miss Baker smiled; she knew by the tone of her voice that Miss Dean had swallowed the compliment, if such the hint of constant scrubbing could be considered, and she continued:

"And as for the muddy boots, why, I think the children are for the most part very careful about bringing in mud, and their trash is always clean stuff. They like to bring me bright leaves and mosses, because they know I like to have something green and bright in the house."

"But I don't see how you keep your cookie jar filled. I have seen you bring out three plates full since I came!"

"O, well, this is an unusual day. Mrs. McFinn has gone away, and her five are spending the day by themselves, and that is how they have need of so many cakes," replied Miss Baker, laughing.

"Millie Baker, you just allow yourself to be imposed upon! You never did have any spirit! You ought to have some one to take care of you!"

Miss Baker laughed, and shook her brown curls, which were well streaked with grey, and then she said, soberly enough:

"You are partly right. I have been thinking that the time may come when I shall need to be taken care of, and I have about decided to adopt a girl and a boy, if I can get hold of those which seem to be the right ones."

Then was Miss Dorothy Dean perfectly agast! She had no word to express her astonishment and her disapproval! It seemed to her the most absurd scheme that ever entered the mind of woman, and she felt it to be her duty to try and argue her friend out of the notion.

"Think of the expense of bringing up two children! And nowadays, when girls must have so many furbelows! Why, Millie Baker, you will be ruined if somebody does not interfere!"

Miss Baker smiled again:

"I am that thankful that no one has any right to interfere, except with advice, for which I am always thankful."

And then both women laughed.

This conversation took place in early spring. Six months later I want you to look into Miss Dean's large old-fashioned kitchen. She evidently has a party, and a children's party, too! What can it mean? The table is loaded with all sorts of good things; great pitchers of creamy milk, the whitest of bread, the brownest of cakes, and the flakiest of pies, as well as the fattest of turkeys of the flock, and the juiciest apples and pears! Evidently Miss Dorothy had forgotten that even children's stomachs have a limit as to capacity! Miss Baker is there, and among the group is a bright-eyed boy who seems to consider her as his espe-

cial property. Apparently Miss Baker has found someone to take care of her, and she asks roguishly of her friend:

"What do you think, Dorrie? You see I have taken your advice, and secured some one to take care of me. Do you think he will do?"

And Miss Dean pats the boy on the head, and says:

"Yes, he will do! Only suppose when they grow up he should take a notion to want to take care of my Gracie—what would become of us?"

And Miss Baker answers, laughing:

"Oh, we could fix that! We could all live together, and you and I would sit in the chimney corner with our knitting work and croon away to our heart's content. Don't you see?"

And Miss Dorothy, laughing, turned away to answer the call of a little flaxen-haired sprite who daunced up to her, said—

"Please Auntie Dorrie, tie my apron! It all comed untied!"

II.

How did it come about? Away back in the early summer Rev. Mr. Grant received a letter from the committee of the "fresh air" enterprise. Now you all know what that means, I suppose? Perhaps some Pansey who lives out in Dakota, or off in California, may not have heard of this New York scheme. Briefly, it is a work carried on by benevolent people in sending the children of the poor in the city out into the country for a few days. Children who live in close, narrow tenement houses, who have never seen the country, some who never saw grass growing, who have scarcely had a glimpse of the blue sky, are given the enjoyment of two whole weeks of pure air and green grass and trees, flowers and fruit. The country people open their homes and their hearts to these little ones, and others furnishing the funds for travelling expenses, the matter is easily arranged.

The letter which was addressed to Mr. Grant was a request for homes for a company of fresh air children. Mr. Grant hesitated a little before asking Miss Dean to take one of the children into her well-ordered house, but finally concluded that he would give her a chance. I do not think he was more surprised at her consent than she was at herself. Whatever in the world possessed me? She repeated this question to herself many times, without getting any satisfactory answer. Once she had her bonnet on to go and tell the minister that she could not entertain the child as she had promised, and that he must find another place; but the truth was, she was ashamed to take back her promise. She laid awake nights, thinking what a simpleton she was to get into such a scrape. She was sure she would not have a carpet left on her floor, a whole window in the house, a flower in the garden, nor an apple in the orchard. It seemed to her that a dozen calamities were sure to follow in the train of that one small girl.

The day came, and with it the children. Miss Dorothy was never more embarrassed in her life than in receiving that mite of a girl. A neighbor had offered to bring the child up from the station, and Miss Dean stood in the doorway to receive her. Should she offer her hand? Would the "Ragamuffin" know what that meant? Neighbor Brown lifted the child from the wagon, and set her down at the gate, saying, "There's Miss Dean in the door; run right in."

The little maiden came shyly up the walk, and as she reached the step, she said, "Are you the lady I am to stay with?"

"I suppose I am," was the reply, in a not over-cordial tone.

"Please let me kiss you," said the child. I do not know of anything she could have said which would have astonished Miss Dean more. "My name is Gracie Linn," continued the child; "papa said I must be very careful about making trouble, so you must let me help you. I am quite a nice little housekeeper; papa said so himself."

Remembering this remark the next day, Miss Dorothy asked, "Do you keep house for your father?"

"Well, ma'am, I did; but papa had to be taken to a hospital, and I staid with my aunt lately."

"Where is your mother?" asked the hostess. "Oh, she went away quite a while ago. I think she did not like papa and me very well," and the little voice took on a pitifully sad tone. "Anyway, she wasn't much of a hand to take care of children. Now, papa is different; he used to comb my hair always, until he got too sick."

"Did you go to Sunday-school?"

"Oh, yes; that's where I learned to sing *Jesus loves me*. Do you know *Jesus loves me*?"

Did she? Miss Dorothy had been a church-member for years; but what had she known of that love that reaches out and takes hold of the suffering and sorrowing, and gives health and comfort; that brings the lonely within the circle of companionship and love? Miss Dorothy had not been a happy Christian, but here was a little child sent to lead her into the light of love.

Steadily day after day the child won her way, until at the end of two weeks Miss Dorothy, now "Aunt Dorrie," concluded to keep her. Finding this to be possible arrangements were soon made, and little Gracie permanently established at the homestead, could joyfully sing with her good friend, *Jesus loves me*. The Thanksgiving party was the scheme of dear little Gracie's, heartily endorsed by Miss Dorothy, and carried out by her orders. The guests were the poor children gathered in from the neighborhood and from the village. Those who had always known Miss Dorothy were at a loss to understand this new order of things; but Miss Baker understood her friend, and she said to herself, "That little Gracie has done a wonderful work. She has found a key to the children's chamber in Dorrie's heart, and opened the door."—*The Pansey*.

Coal in the North-West.

A report will shortly be issued by Mr. George M. Dawson, the Assistant-Director of the Geological Survey, on the coal fields of the North-West. Some of the advance sheets have already appeared, and these go to show that the report will demonstrate very clearly that the North-West possesses abundance of coal of excellent quality, and therefore that the fuel problem is practically solved.

According to Mr. Dawson's report, it would appear that the coal and lignites of the North-West are of the tertiary age, and not like those of the East, of the carboniferous system. The district which has been most explored, and with the most satisfactory results, is that in the proximity of the Bow and Belly Rivers, extending eastward from the base of the Rocky Mountains to the 111th meridian. Mr. Dawson says that the fuels in this district vary from lignites, but slightly superior in quality to those of the Souris region, to coals containing a very small percentage of water, forming a strong coke on heating, yielding abundance of highly luminous hydro-carbons, and precisely resembling highly bituminous coal, though of the cretaceous age.

Estimates have been made of the quantity of coal underlying a square mile of territory in several localities. These estimates go to show that the quantities vary from 5,000,000 to 9,000,000 tons. These are enormous figures, and they should dissipate all nervous apprehension of a "coal famine" in Canada for many years to come. Mr. Dawson states that the coal-bearing rocks developed so extensively on the Bow and Belly rivers, and their tributaries, are known to extend far to the north and west, though up to the present time it has been impossible to examine them at more than a few points. On the North Saskatchewan several seams of lignite coal, resembling that of the Souris River region, outcrop at Edmonton. The most important is about six feet in thickness, and has been worked to some extent for local purposes. Thirty miles above Edmonton a much more important coal seam occurs. It has a thickness of eighteen to twenty feet. It is of excellent quality, and much resembles the "Coal-Banks" coal from the Bow River. In other parts of the territory there are indications of large deposits, and thus the prospect of opening out the Canadian North-West is of the most encouraging nature. Canada may be congratulated upon its immense treasures, and its brilliant prospects. —*The Scotsman*.

In every well regulated fish market the scales have the right of weigh.

A miss is not as good as a mile, for a Miss has only two feet, while a mile has five thousand two hundred and eighty. Shoot the maxim maker.

A woman who is kissed by mistake in the dark always screams and makes a great row about it, but one can wager she is provoked in another way when the man commences to offer excuses and says he wouldn't have done it if he had known whom it was.

The Girl That Everybody Likes.

She is not beautiful—oh, no! Nobody thinks of calling her that. Not one of a dozen can tell whether her eyes are black or blue. If you should ask them to describe her, they would only say: "She is just right," and there it would end. She is a merry-hearted, fun-loving, bewitching maiden, without a spark of envy or malice in her whole composition. She enjoys herself, and wants everybody else to do the same. She has always a kind word and a pleasant smile for the oldest man or woman; in fact, I can think of nothing she resembles more than a sunbeam, which brightens everything it comes in contact with. All pay her marked attention, from rich Mr. Watts, who lives in a mansion on the hill, to negro Sam, the sweep. All look after her with an admiring eye, and say to themselves: "She is just the right sort of a girl!" The young men of the town vie with one another as to who shall show her the most attention; but she never encourages them beyond being simply kind and jolly; so no one can call her a flirt; no, indeed; the young men all deny such an assertion as quickly as she can. Wonderful to relate—like her, too; for she never delights in hurting their feelings, or saying spiteful things behind their backs. She is always willing to join in their little plans, and to assist them in any way. They go to her with their love affairs, and she manages adroitly to see Willie or Peter, and drops a good word for Ida or Jeanie, until their little difficulties are all patched up, and everything goes on smoothly again—thanks to her. Old ladies say she is "delightful." The sly wits—she knows how to manage them. She listens patiently to complaints of rheumatism or neuralgia, and then sympathizes with them so heartily that they are more than half-cured. But she cannot always be with us. A young man comes from a neighboring town, after a time and marries her. The villagers crowd around to tell him what a prize he has won, but he seems to know it pretty well without any telling, to judge from his face. So she leaves us, and it is not long before we hear from that place. She is there the women everybody likes. —*Christian Advocate*.

Bric-a-brac.

"You ought to see our moon," said the young lady from Texas at the boarding-house table. "Why we have moonlight nights all the time, not just once in a while as you do here."

There was a painful silence over this and the empty boarder at the foot of the table called for more pancakes.

"And you should just see our stars," pursued the fair astronomer. "They are much larger and brighter than yours and they look as if they were just pinned to the sky!"

"We nail ours on," said the thirsty youth next to the milk pit, her, and closed the discussion for the season.

"Yes," said he, apologetically. "I said the policeman was drunk, but did not mean to state it as a fact. I merely made the remark on general principles."

The attempt to steal the body of the fat girl who was buried at Baltimore the other day will probably be blamed on the printers, as it is known that they are fond of a fat lady.

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