

THE LITTLE FOLK.

WHAT A CHILD WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

BY MARY F. HUTTS.

Would I were wise enough to know
How the little grass blades grow ;
How the pretty garden pinks
Get their notches and their kinks ;
How the morning glories run
Up to meet the early sun ;
How the sweet peas in their bed
Find the purple, white and red ;
How the blossom treasures up
Drops of honey in its cup ;
How the honey-bee can tell
When to seek the blossom cell ;
Why the jay's swift wing is blue
As the sky it soars into.
I wonder if the grown folks know
How and why these things are so.

A PARABLE.

A certain prince went out into his vineyard to examine it. He came to the peach tree, and he said, "What are you doing for me?"

The tree said,

"In the spring I give my blossoms and fill the air with fragrance, and on my boughs hang the fruit which presently men will gather and carry into the palace for you."

And the prince said, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And he came to the maple and said, "What are you doing?"

The maple said, "I am making nests for the birds and shelter for the cattle with my leaves and spreading branches."

And the prince said, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

He went down into the meadows and said to the waving grass, "What are you doing?"

And the grass said "We are giving up our lives for lives for others—for sheep and cattle, that they may be nourished."

And the prince said, "Well done, good and faithful servants that give up your lives for others."

Then he came to a little daisy that was growing in the hedge-row, and he said, "What are you doing?"

And the daisy said, "Nothing! nothing! I cannot make nesting places for the birds, and I cannot give shelter to the cattle, and I cannot send fruit into the palace. I cannot even furnish food for the sheep and cows; they do not want me in the meadow. All I can do is to be the best little daisy I can be."

And the prince bent down and kissed the daisy, and said, "There is none better than you."

THE BOY AND THE MUSIC BOX.

It was in a Broadway cable-car on Saturday afternoon. The car was crowded, and the conductor seemed to push through the car more often than usual, because so many passengers got on at the front end of the car. Everybody was cross and seemed to take up more room than usual. Perhaps this was in part due to the big sleeves, which seemed bigger than ever before, and there were more of them.

The conductor had pushed through the car once more, and the people standing were pushed closer to the people sitting, when two boys and their mother got into the car. It was evident that they had been shopping for Christmas, their bundles were so many and such queer shapes. The boys were radiantly happy. Their "tams" were pushed back on their heads, their overcoats were open, and altogether this world grew a more comfortable place because these happy, well cared-for boys were in it. The crowded car came to a standstill. Something had happened ahead, for there was a long line of cars on the tracks in front of us. Instantly everybody grew restless. The lamps were lighted in the stores, the street lamps were lighted, and the people in the car

frowned harder and harder at the gripman and the conductor.

Suddenly "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle," sounded through the car. Music soft and soothing—one of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words"—filled the car. Everybody looked surprised, then delighted, and then settled contentedly into his place. One of the little boys had untied one of his parcels—a music-box was in it. He had wound it up, and stood holding it in his hand with a look of such happy good-fellowship that it seemed as if he were the very spirit of music come to soothe the restless crowd.

FOR INKY FINGERS.

A little girl I know has made a wonderful discovery, which she thinks all other little school-boys and girls should know, too.

"It's so useful, mamma," she says. "All little boys and girls get ink on their fingers, you know."

"Surely they do, and on their clothes, as well," said her mother.

"I can't get the spots out of my clothes, but I'm sorry when they get there," responded the little girl. "I try very hard not to. But I can get the ink spots off my fingers. See!"

She dipped her fingers into water, and while they were wet she took a match out of the match safe and rubbed the sulphur end well over every ink spot. One after another the spots disappeared, leaving a row of white fingers where had been a row of inky black ones.

"There," said the little girl, after she had finished. "Isn't that good? I read that in a house-keeping paper, and I never knew they were any good before. I clean my fingers that way every morning now. It's just splendid!"

So some other school-girls and boys might try Alice's cure for inky fingers.—Harper's Young People.

UNCONSCIOUS HUMOR.

Debate in the House of Commons is ordinarily conducted in a low conversational tone. Not long ago a military member, who was not accustomed to public speaking, delivered an excited harangue on the exile of the Guards to Gibraltar, and nearly emptied the House by the violence of his shouting. It was like the breath of a roaring blast furnace, and every word seemed to crackle with explosive energy. Members in the benches were at first amused by his unnecessary fervor, and finally wearied by his noisy, ear-splitting declamation. Drawing himself up to his full height and speaking in tones which were fairly deafening, he shouted.

"If I may be allowed to whisper in the ear of the Government—"

He was not allowed to go on. The members burst into a loud guffaw of laughter, which drowned his voice and seriously disconcerted him. When it was perceived from his look of astonishment that he was unconscious of the real cause of amusement, they laughed again, even more heartily than they had laughed before.

Unconscious humor is not always appreciated. When Herr Rickert, not long ago, turned contemptuously toward the German ministers and cried out, "We hear nothing upon the ministerial benches, nothing but profound silence!" no member moved a muscle, and nobody laughed; yet whispering in thunder tones was scarcely more ludicrous than hearing profound silence.

O'Connell's most famous Irish bull was delivered at a public meeting in London, and passed unnoticed until the speech was in print. He asserted that the birth-rate in Dublin had diminished at the rate of five thousand a year for four years, and added, solemnly:

"I charge the British government with the murder of those twenty thousand infants who never were born!" Nothing could have been more absurd, yet there was not a sign of appreciation from the audience that the great orator had been unconsciously funny.