

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

We were just beginning to feel that spring had set in and that all the dirty city streets would be so clean for St. Patrick's day; but, here we are having a small edition of a snowstorm to add to all the muck we have had to come through. This little flurry must have been tucked cozily away somewhere, and unfortunately some little rumpus up above caused it to get jostled, slip over the edge of the fleecy clouds and tumble right down on our heads. Oh, well, there is no use grumbling, for accidents will happen, and, then, we have just a little way ahead to look for happy summer, with its green fields, and fruit and flowers galore. I am happy to learn that Joseph is getting stronger. I hope this will continue, and that he will be able to enjoy the fun of sugar making. Lucy M. promises to send an account of an entertainment to be given at the convent which she attends. We will be glad to hear about it.

Your loving AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

My sister wrote to you last month so it is my turn now. We have plenty of snow and I have been snow-shoeing lately, but I like skating best. I and my sister go to the convent, which is about a mile and a half from where we live. It is a long walk, but we don't come home to our dinner. On St. Valentine's Day our teacher allowed us to send one another a valentine. It was great fun. Of course we only sent the comic valentines. My big brother goes to the college. The Irish boys are preparing an entertainment for St. Patrick's night, and the convent girls intend doing likewise. I will tell you all about it next time I write. With love I remain, Your little friend,

LUCY M.

Birklands, Sherbrooke.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I am pleased to see the little cousins write you again, although I have been as careless as any. Santa Claus brought me ever so many presents. It would take too much space to name them all, and I received many nice books, too. I am getting better, can walk pretty well with my crutches. My sisters took me for a ride to-day. I often wish to go out and play with my sled. I wish I would be able to go out when sugar time comes. I like to help tap the trees. I have lots of fun with my dog Nip, while my sisters are gone to school. They come home every evening. Well, I have made my letter rather long. Trusting I will write again soon.

Your loving nephew, JOSEPH.

Granby, Que.

BAKING DAY.

On Saturdays we always bake. Biscuits and tarts and jelly cake, Or else a pudding rich and good, Or pies and other kinds of food.

I help mamma with right good will And make believe my stove to fill With wood and paper laid just so To bake my tins all filled with dough.

It matters not how hard I try, My dough turns black, I wonder why?

But when papa comes home, You see, I have my table set for tea.

He says that everything is "prime," And helps himself a second time, But, do you know, I half believe, He slips the pieces up his sleeve!

THE KING AND THE GOOSE.

One summer day, Maximilian Joseph, King of Bavaria, was reading in his park. The heat was so great, and the place so quiet, that he fell asleep. Waking a little while afterward, he thought he would take a stroll.

The path which he chose led to the meadows, gently sloping down to a large sheet of water called "The Lake." When there, he remembered that he had left his book lying on the bench. "Pshaw!" he said to himself, "some passer-by will see it,

and the book will be lost." However, as he did not want to retrace his steps, he looked about for some one who might fetch it to him; but the only person he saw was a boy tending a flock of geese.

"My boy," said the king, approaching him, "on the bench under the large elm, in the park, you will find a book which I have forgotten; fetch it to me and you shall have a florin as a reward." The boy, not knowing the king, cast a glance of distrust at the one who offered a florin for such a trifling service.

"I'm not a fool," said he, turning his back. The child's manner amused the king. "Why do you think I'm making fun of you?" asked he, smiling. "Because you offer me a florin for so little work; money isn't made so easily. I'm thinking you're from the castle yonder," pointing, as he spoke, to the royal mansion, which was shrouded by the magnificent trees of the park, "and those people promise more than they carry out."

"Well, here is the florin before hand; now run, and fetch my book." The boy still hesitated. "What are you waiting for?"

The boy took off his cap and scratched his ear. "I should like to do it, but I dare not," said he. "If the people find out that I left my geese, I will lose my place."

"I will take care of them while you are away," rejoined the monarch.

"You?" said the boy, surveying the king from head to foot. "You don't look as if you knew how to keep geese! Why, they would run off into the fields, and I should have to pay more for a fine than I could earn in a year! Do you see that goose there with the black head? It belongs to the gardener at the castle. Well, that is a good-for-nothing bird! If I were to go, he would show off finely. No, no, that won't do!"

The king with difficulty repressed his laughter, and assuming a grave air, said: "Why, I think I can keep a flock of geese in order, since I succeed in doing so with men." "Do you?" replied the boy, scanning him anew. "Ah, I suppose you're a school-master; well, scholars are more easily managed than geese!"

"Perhaps so; but be quick; will you fetch my book?" "I should like to, but—" "I will answer for anything that may happen, and will pay the fine if the owner of the field is angry with you."

The scruples of the little keeper of geese were finally overcome. He caught the king to look well after the goose he called the "court-gardener," which always headed the entire flock; gave him the whip, and then ran off as fast as his legs would carry him. But suddenly he stopped and came back.

"What now?" inquired the king. "Crack the whip," said the boy. The king obeyed, but without producing any sound from it.

"I thought you couldn't," said the boy. "Here is a schoolmaster who wants to keep geese and doesn't know how to crack a whip!" So saying he snatched it out of the king's hand and showed how it ought to be used. The king received the lesson with great gravity, and when he was able to make the whip sound passably, the boy begged him to make good use of it, and departed at full speed.

It really did seem as if these winged subjects of the king felt that they were no longer under the yoke of their youthful but severe master. The "court-gardener" stretched out his neck, cast a glance on all sides and gave a sonorous "quack quack." All the flock responded to the call, clapped their wings, and like a heap of feathers lifted up by a hurricane, the greater number flew up into the air, and finally settled down in different parts of the field.

The king shouted, but in vain; he tried to crack his whip, it would scarcely sound; he ran to the right, and to the left, but only succeeded in hastening the desertion of the lagards. Overcome with the heat, he threw himself down on the trunk of a tree, and left the birds to follow their own will. "Ah, well," he said, at last, "the child is right; it is easier to govern some millions of men than a single flock of geese. However, it's the 'court-gardener' that has been the leader of the insurrection."

Meanwhile the young herdman, having found the book, was joyously retracing his steps. But as he drew near to his royal substitute and saw the mishap he had caused, he burst into tears. "I said you did not understand it," cried he; "I can never get them together again myself. You must help me." After having taught the king how he was to call, and to stretch out and wave his arms, the boy ran after the geese which were farthest off.

The good-natured king did his best and, after a long chase and great trouble, they succeeded in making themselves masters of the whole flock. Not till then did the boy break out: "I will never trust my whip again to a gentleman like you. If the king himself should try to get me to leave my flock, I would refuse."

"You are right, my boy," replied the other, bursting into laugh, "for I assure you he would do it as badly as I have done, since I am myself the king."

"Tell that to whoever will believe it; take your book, and go where you come from. You, to call yourself the king, and be so awkward!"

"Do not be angry with me," said the monarch holding out to the child four more florins. "I promise you for the future I will never undertake to keep geese!"

The boy reflected for a moment, and then said: "Whoever you are, you're a very good gentleman, and I wish you hadn't so much trouble; but," he added, meditatively, "they tell me everybody ought to mind his own business; and I suppose it's true!"

JULIA SANDERSON'S COAT.

Julia Sanderson gazed doubtfully at the stylish figure reflected in the long mirror.

"Yes, it fits well," she said, "but it isn't the cut that I wanted. I don't know—I suppose that I could exchange it if I don't like it?"

"We are always willing to exchange garments if they haven't been worn," the salesgirl replied, "but I'm sure that you would like this. It is of the best material made."

Something—some expressed eagerness in the voice—made Miss Sanderson glance at the other girl. She saw a meagre little creature with troubled eyes and a shy, nervous manner—the worst kind of a manner for her work. Julia's friends called her "too impulsive," and one of her impulses moved her then.

"I'll take it," she said, with sudden decision. "Oh," the girl cried, with a soft color flushing her face. "I'm sure you'll like it!" She just caught back in time the "I'm so glad!" on the tip of her tongue. The lovely young lady could not guess what it meant to her to make a good sale.

Julia had seen the look and went home in a comfortable glow of self-approval, but when the coat appeared the glow faded to doubt. "I believe—I'll slip it on and see what Dell Armstrong says about it," she resolved. "That won't be wearing it—it will only be deciding whether I'll keep it."

It was a long way to Dell Armstrong's, but Julia returned decided. Dell had agreed that the coat did not become her and must go back. Julia was folding it up to put into the box when a spot on the inner side of the sleeve caught her eye, and with a rush of dismay she remembered that Dell's little daughter had climbed into her lap with candy in her hand. For a moment she hesitated, then she closed the box resolutely. She did not know that the spot was not there all the time, and, anyway, they know how to clean things at Bernard's. It would not make any difference to them.

So Julia carried the coat back. The little salesgirl grew white when she saw her, but she only asked, mechanically: "It hasn't been worn, of course?"

"I merely tried it on to decide," Julia answered. The girl's face irritated her—as if exchanging things was not part of their business! When the credit slip was given her she hurried away with a sigh of relief; the disagreeable business was over at last.

But it was not quite. That night the girl known as No. 6 was called to the office. A cloak sold by her had been returned damaged, the forewoman reported; the firm could not keep saleswomen who were so careless of their interests. No. 6 without a word took the envelope with her week's wages and turned away. She staggered on the way out, but there was no one to see.

Over at Dell Armstrong's Julia Sanderson was discussing the kind of coat she really needed.

A GIANT LOBSTER.

The record lobster was recently caught in the Pacific Ocean. It weighed no fewer than 38 pounds, and was actually 45 inches in length. With its two claws it could easily encircle a man's waist. For food lobsters like nothing better than meat, and the baskets in which they are caught are baited with dead fish. This monster gave his captors a great deal of trouble before he could be landed. Smaller lobsters get right into the basket, but such a big one could not do so. He had evidently managed to have a good feed off the bait, and then became so entangled that he was unable to extricate himself from the basket. When the basket was dragged into the boat a fierce struggle commenced, and it required the united efforts of the fishermen to secure their prize, and they had to take good care that they were not injured in the conflict. The previous largest lobster caught was 3 feet long and 34 pounds in weight.

TO REMEMBER THE APOSTLE'S NAMES. A contributor of The Ecclesiastical Review gives, in Latin, a plan by which the names of the twelve Apostles may readily be committed to memory. The plan works equally well in English, if one pays attention to the fact that the letter J is only another form of I, the two forms having once been used indifferently. Even nowadays we pronounce the J in hallelujah as if it were I. To recall the apostles, then, all we have to do is to think of the word "Baptism," which contains the initials of the twelve names, thus: B—Bartholomew. A—Andrew. P—Peter and Philip. T—Thomas. I. (J.)—James, John, James the son of Alphaeus, Jude, and Judas Iscariot. S.—Simon, "who is called Zelotes." M.—Matthew—Ave Maria.

THE SWIFTEST BIRDS. Evidence has been collected recently which shows that the blue-throat flies from Central Africa to the shores of the North Sea, a distance of 1600 miles, in less than a day and a night, and makes it, moreover, in one uninterrupted flight. The storks which spend their summer in Austria-Hungary and their winters in India and Central Africa are also marvelous travelers, and make their journeys twice a year in unbroken flight each time. From Budapest, in Hungary, to Lahore, in India, is 2200 miles in an air line and the storks make the journey in twenty-four hours, thus travelling at the rate of 100 miles an hour for the whole distance. The storks which spend the summer in central Europe and winter in central Africa travel with the same rapidity.

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A SILENT TOAST. Upon his return to Hawaii after an extensive European trip a banquet was tendered to Bishop Boynens by the prominent people of Honolulu. The principal address was made by the Governor, George H. Carter, in the course of which he said: "As I see the luxury of the table, hear the tinkling glasses, I am reminded of a place far away from here. I am reminded of those true heroines who are toiling among the afflicted ones at Molokai, and I ask you to drink a silent toast to those devoted Sisters and Brothers who toil there so faithfully. There is a great deal in the history of Hawaii to be learned from the work done by the Catholic Church in these islands. One of the greatest lessons is its silent work; no retrogression but steady advancement, and with but one object in view always." Governor Carter is a Protestant and a son of a New England missionary.

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THE DREAMER. Fortune and fame and ease may pass me by, Swift youth that no man sees, I care not I; Sorry may be the hold wherein I live, Scanty may be the gold the world may give, Yet still my poverty my plenty seems— God gave great gifts to me, giving me dreams.

Though by the waning fire alone I sit, Failing my heart's desire to brighten it, Still in the heart of me, too fair to name, Burns one dear fantasy like golden flame Fairest that face I see, lit by such gleams— God gave great joy to me, giving me dreams.

Young eyes and laughing lips too soon have passed; Youth's clinging finger tips unloose at last: All of the bliss men gained fails them in time, Only the unstained lives life sublime; Mine still that ecstasy no grief redeems— God gave all good to me, giving me dreams.

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A CHILD'S ADVICE. One morning a Sunday school was about to be dismissed, and the youngsters were already in anticipation of relaxing their cramped little limbs after the hours of confinement on straight-backed chairs and benches, when the superintendent arose, and, instead of the usual dismissal, announced: "And now, children, let me introduce Mr. Smith, who will give us a short talk."

Mr. Smith smilingly arose, and, after gazing impressively around the class, room, began with: "I hardly know what to say," when the whole school was convulsed to hear a small, thin voice back in the rear hiss: "They amen and thit down!"

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