

LITTLE FOLKS



The Winning Doll.

(By Ella Beecher Gittings, in 'The Congregationalist and Christian World'.)

The Sunday-school was giving an entertainment to raise money for a new library. For over a month the teachers and children had been practising and planning and going to rehearsals. Catherine wished she could speak a piece on the beautifully trimmed platform before all the people, as Sister Fannie was going to do, but they said she was too little. Her class was to do nothing but sing some little kindergarten songs that were 'as old as the hills'—so teasing Brother Rob told her.

Even Rob had a piece to speak all by himself, and was going to wear a splendid soldier's uniform, with brass buttons and a tin sword with red tassels on it, and say some verses about 'fighting for the right' and being a soldier in 'an army of the Lord.'

As for Fannie's part—O! that was too splendid for anything. There were six little girls in it and each was to take her favorite doll and dress it up just as beautifully as she possibly could—and each doll was to carry a cute little basket on its arm. They had to pin the sleeves up to its waist so the basket would not slip off. The six little girls were to stand on the platform with their dolls in their arms, and each one recite a verse about her own particular doll. This was Fannie's verse:

'My dolly has come straight from Paris;
Her name is Annabel Lee,
And that she is perfectly lovely
Is as plain as plain can be,

Though dressed in the height of fashion
She isn't the least bit proud,
Although she sees fastened upon her
The eyes of all this crowd.
She carries this dear little basket,
That all who like her looks,
May drop some money within it
To buy our Sunday-school books.'

When each had spoken her piece the little girls were to march down from the platform with their dolls in their arms and stand them in a row on the table in front. Then the people of the audience were to come forward and put their money in the basket of the doll they liked best. Fannie was perfectly sure that her doll would get the most money, for how could any one help seeing that she was the most beautiful doll in town.

'Isn't it lovely, Annabel,' she said to her as she tucked her into her beautiful brass bed the night before the entertainment. 'Isn't it lovely that you can help buy our new library? I just know you will have a basket full of money, won't you dear?'

But Annabel's eyes were shut; she was probably asleep. At any rate she did not answer, but only smiled—as she always did. Fannie said her prayers and jumped into bed beside Catherine, who had not gone to sleep, but lay looking very sober, with her favorite doll, Nokomis, clasped in her arms.

'I should think,' said Fannie, putting her pillow into place, 'that if you must sleep with that horrid Indian doll, you would at least have a clean nightgown for it. Ugh! put it on the other side of you. I don't like that leathery smell.'

'Nokomis isn't "hawid" either. And Indians don't wear "night-

gowns." She's got a nice beady dress, lots prettier'n Annabel's, and I fink she might have some "libery" money too.'

'The idea!' exclaimed Fannie; and Catherine and Nokomis turned over with a flop, just as Mamma came in to say good-night and put out the light.

No one could quite understand why Catherine loved her Indian doll better than all the rest. Certainly no one but Catherine thought her beautiful. She was made of buckskin, with a queerly painted face and straight black hair with a feather sticking up in it. Sometimes the feather got lost out or broken, but Catherine could always find another in the chicken yard or Mamma's duster. Indeed that was the only thing about her wardrobe that needed care.

Her buckskin dress, leggings and moccasins were embroidered with gayly-colored beads and trimmed with buckskin fringe, and all was sewed tight so that she was ready to go with Catherine at a moment's notice, wherever she chose to take her—and she could take her anywhere without mussing her clothes. If the wind tipped her buggy over when she went out to ride, there was no hat to blow off or earthen head to break or curls to muss. Altogether she was a very comfortable doll, and Catherine loved her better every day, in spite of the fun that Fannie and Rob made of her.

The next day Catherine spent more time than usual with Nokomis and talked to her a good deal. In the afternoon she carefully brushed the buckskin dress and picked out