

The hard coal men asked for an increase of 20 per cent. wages.

It is estimated that the British coal strike, which lasted over a month, cost the United Kingdom \$50,000,000 a week. Although not wholly satisfied with the minimum wage bill, the men returned to work, owing to the distress and privation caused by the strike.

The arrangement by which France, Germany, the United States and Great Britain were to loan China a sum of \$300,000,000 has fallen through, owing to President Yuan Shi Kai's injudicious action in arranging secretly for a loan of \$5,000,000 from Belgian bankers. It has been represented to him that he has not kept good faith. The root of the objection is, probably, that the Belgian loan is suspected of being backed by Russian interests, a stipulation being that part of the sum is to be applied to extension of railways in Mongolia, a district over which Russia is anxious to gain commercial control.

The Beaver Circle.

OUR SENIOR BEAVERS.

[For all pupils from Senior Third to Continuation Classes, inclusive.]

Spring Song.

By Miss Lucy Wheelock.
Old Mother Earth woke up from sleep,
And found she was cold and bare;
The winter was over, the spring was near,
And she had not a dress to wear!
"Alas!" she sighed with great dismay,
"Oh, where shall I get my clothes,
There's not a place to buy a suit,
And a dressmaker no one knows."

"I'll make you a dress," said the springing grass,
Just looking above the ground;
"A dress of green of the loveliest sheen,
To cover you all around."
"And we," said the dandelions gay,
"Will dot it with yellow bright";
"I'll make it a fringe," said forget-me-not,
"Of blue, very soft and light."
"We'll embroider the front," said the violets,
"With a lovely purple hue";
"And we," said the roses, "will make you a crown
Of red, jewelled over with dew."
"And we'll be your gowns," said a voice from the shade,
"Where the ladies' ear-drops live—
Orange is a color for any queen,
And the best that we have to give."

Old Mother Earth was thankful and glad,
And she put on her dress so gay;
And that is the reason, my little ones,
She is looking so lovely to-day.—Sel.

The Garden Competition

Dear Beavers,—As it will soon be time to dig in the garden, I want to remind you of our garden competition. The terms will be the same as those of last year, except that you must yourselves choose the things that you wish to grow. You must, however, plant at least three kinds of vegetables and six kinds of flowers. The prizes will be given to those who, next fall, send us the best letters, with photos of the garden made, accompanying. The prizes will be as before, \$5.00, \$3.00, \$2.00.

I suppose you were all interested in the picture, shown in a recent Beaver Circle, of Lois Edmonds, the little bread-maker and corn-grower of Iowa. Now I hope you will show your mettle as Canadian girls and boys, and let us see what you can do in this garden contest.

Already there are a few names on our list for the competition: Arthur Halstead, Cashtown, Ont.; Oscar Oxley, Canfield, Ont.; Stewart Allen, Oak Ridges, Ont.; Fred White, Humber Bay, Ont.; Frank Morton, Rosemont, Ont.

Will the rest of you who wish to compete kindly notify us as soon as possible? There will probably be so many names that we cannot publish them, but we will keep the list here in the office.

Don't be afraid of this competition.

Beavers. Even if you should win a prize you will have the vegetables and flowers—and the fun of growing them—anyway.

Don't forget the address to put on the envelope when sending your application—"The Beaver Circle," "Farmer's Advocate," London, Ont.; and remember that no one over sixteen may compete.

Now, just for inspiration, I am going to give you Frank Morton's letter to read.

"Maple Grove,"
Box 66, Rosemont, Ont.

Dear Puck and Beavers,—If it is not too late I would like to enter for the garden competition that you were speaking of in "The Farmer's Advocate" some time ago. I am sorry I have not told you before now, but I have only just made up my mind. Since then we have moved to a nice farm which is called "Maple Grove," and uncle says there is a nice spot for a garden. Last year I had a fine garden, and took some prizes at the local fair with things I grew. Our farm has a row of maple trees all round it, and is very pretty in summer. There is also a large orchard; uncle is talking of spraying it this year. I must not forget to tell you we have some beautiful black squirrels in it. They come right up to the window, and I gave them some apples which they carried into the trees and ate. We also have an owl and pigeons in the barn. All our cows have come in, and we have dandy calves. Someone asked us did we curdy them. I said "No, but we do the cows." We have also a lovely colt which we call Paddy; he is just three days old. Uncle is still going to grow corn, although none of our new neighbors grow any. He is going to grow alfalfa too.

I am going to tell you what our cat will do. She will put her head into my pocket for a mouse or sparrow, and get it too. Our dog is a dandy. He will not see anything fighting, no matter if it is steers or hens, he will always part them. Another good thing, he never leaves the farm. Many a time he has aroused uncle in the night, when other dogs have been at the sheep, and so saved them from being killed altogether. Well, now, I must close.

FRANK MORTON
(Age 13, Sr. 3rd.)

Senior Beavers' Letter Box.

THE BROWN WREN.

Dear Puck and Beavers,—I suppose that the most of you are acquainted with our little friend, the Brown Wren. This bird is very useful, because it eats the larvae of the moths that fly around at night, and also the moths themselves. As with a great many other birds, only the male can sing; the female, however, makes a curious noise when disturbed, and also at other times. The song of the male bird is very sweet.

The color of the birds is brown. They are about three inches long and rather slender, and they are spotted on the wings with a darker shade of brown. They have a sharp beak, which is about three-quarters of an inch long. Their breast is gray, the female being a little lighter on the breast than the male. They have sharp claws, and they can go up a tree easily. They are so slender that they can go through a hole about an inch and a half in diameter. They are good fighters, and I have seen them drive sparrows away from their nest.

The wrens come in May and stay until about the middle of August or later. They start to build their nest soon after they come.

The place that they like for their nest is a deep hole, but it must be quite roomy. For the past three or four years I have used the crooked-necked summer squash, hollowed out and a hole put in it not very far from the top. I have hung this up in a tree in front of our veranda. But I have found that this is not substantial enough, so this year I have put up a box which is one foot long and six inches high. I have bored a hole in it one and a half inches in

diameter and about one inch from the top, and I hung this up in the tree. I think that this will be better than the squash. It would not matter if the box were longer; however, this was the best one that I could get. A stick should be placed so near the hole that the bird can hop on it just before going in the box.

The nest is made of twigs and lined with horse-hair or anything soft. They build a network of twigs, and underneath this they lay their eggs. It is amusing to see them get the twigs. Sometimes the twig falls and the bird darts down very quickly after it. If the stick will not go in easily they will work and work to get it in, turning their head sideways, and thus putting the stick in endways. I have heard the bird sing with a stick in his mouth. The nest is built almost entirely by the male bird, although the female bird sometimes helps line it.

I have not seen the eggs of the wren, because they are so far down in the nest that I could never see them. When the birds are hatched their parents fly continually to them with grubs and moths; not hairy caterpillars, for the cuckoo is the only bird that I know of that eats hairy caterpillars, and if you examine the inside of the crop of a cuckoo you will find hairs on it. The wrens seem very fond of making sham nests.

I have not a book on birds myself, but I like to watch them and learn all that I can about them. Those of you Beavers who put up a box or squash will find the wren will find it a good little friend. Be sure, though, to put it where the cat will not reach it. As this is all I know about the wren I will close, hoping that this will escape the w-p-b.

FREEMAN ELLIOTT

Culloden, Ont. (Age 13, Jr. 4th.)

This is a most interesting letter, Freeman. I wish all of our Beavers were as observant as you and as fond of the birds.

Puck and Beavers,—Ena Simpson, you don't mean to say you know Miss Montgomery, authoress of the "Anne" books, do you? Oh, how I envy you! You have often visited the "Lake of Shining Waters"! Oh, you must be "Anne" yourself. (I just imagine I see Puck curling his upper lip, and next I hear him say, "Such foolish talk!") I shall be out with it all the same, though. Ena, you are one to be envied, if anyone is. How I should like to know you. Won't you be good for once and write to me? I should be so flattered!

Well, well, Puck. It really is too bad to keep you "mad" any longer, but if you read those books you would, I am sure, join in with me and have a good jolly talk with Ena.

Puck, you said I was to imagine you a—(shall I say it), a monkey. Shame on you! Now, if I were going along the road and met you and said, "Hello Monkey," you'd be pretty mad about it I know. You'd chase me, and feel like giving my ears a good boxing.

My birthday has passed now, Ena. I was fourteen. I had a birthday party, and all had a good time they said. Well, good-bye, and Ena, don't forget to write to EFFIE GROH.

West Gravenhurst, Ont., Muskoka.

My dear Effie, an elf isn't a monkey. You'll have to make a trip to your dictionary I think.

Dear Puck and Beavers,—There are four of us going to school now. In the winter time we go across the ice to school, and in the summer we go across the bay in a punt and walk the rest of the way. The inspector, Mr. Scovell, came to our school on Monday and went away in the afternoon. I got five bulbs last fall, and they are coming into blossom now. They are very nice, but I have to prop them up, for they are top heavy.

We had so much cold weather that we did not go to school very often during the winter. I think I have written enough for this time.

DORIS PENNEY

Port Carling, Ont. (Aged 11 years).

Dear Puck,—I received your letter some time ago requesting me to tell you and the Beavers how my dialogue came off. The one who was to play the part of

Katrina was sick and we didn't have it. It was too bad, for we did a lot of practicing at school.

We had some very cold weather here this winter, but I didn't mind it. My brother and I go to the woods on Saturdays and cut stakes. We had to cut about 200.

I have a mile to go to school. I go almost every day. I am in Grade 8, and I hope I will pass to the "D" this summer. There are about 225 acres on our farm. My father cut a few logs in the winter. They intend to cut some more, and also some furnace wood. I would like to correspond with one or two boys and girls about my age.

I am filling quite a space of room by this time, and as I should like to see this in print I will close.

H. ST. CLAIR CUTTEN, ESQ.
Lower Truro, N.S. (Age 14).

Dear Puck,—This is not my first letter to the Beaver Circle. I have a great mind to think that the first did not escape the w-p-b., but as the saying is, "Try and try again, girls, you will succeed at last." I will try again. I just have a little way to go to school, and I come home for my dinner. The name of my school is "Pleasant Valley." The name of our teacher is Miss Crosthwaite. We like her very much. We had a lovely time on Valentine's Day. Teacher told us to make some valentines for the children; so at 4 o'clock we had two postmen who delivered the valentines. Well, I will close, wishing the Beaver Circle every success.

GLADYS SMART
(Age 11, Sr. IV. Class).

Norwich, Ont.

Dear Puck,—I live with my uncle, Henry Jackson. We take your paper, and like it very much. We live two miles from school. I have two brothers, their names are George and William. We live on a farm of two hundred and thirty-three acres, two miles from Glenallan post office. Our house was burned to the ground on July 29th, 1911. We intend building a red brick one in the summer. There are about twelve in my class. I hope my letter is not too long. Wishing the Beavers much success.

JOHN C. HARPER
(Age 11, Book Sr. III.).

Glenallan, Ont.

Dear Puck and Beavers,—My teacher's name is Miss Kennedy, and her home is in Granby, Quebec. I live in Huntingville, Que., and am five miles from the City of Sherbrooke. For pets I have two cats, whose names are Timothy and Tiger. I have five brothers and no sisters. My brother Floyd has taken "The Farmer's Advocate" for quite a while, and we all like it very much. Wishing the Beavers every success.

BERNICE A. HUNTING
(Book IV.).

Huntingville, Que.

Beaver Circle Notes.

Several letters which were written on both sides of the paper had to go to the w-p-b.

Emma Runge (age 11), Kurtzville, Ont., would like if some of the Beavers would write to her.

ALL MADE CLEAR.

A woman missionary in China was taking tea with a mandarin's eight wives. The Chinese ladies examined her clothing, her hair, her teeth, and so on, but her feet especially amazed them.

"Why," cried one, "you can walk and run as well as a man!"

"Yes, to be sure," said the missionary.

"Can you ride a horse and swim, too?"

"Yes."

"Then you must be as strong as a man!"

"I am."

"And you wouldn't let a man beat you—not even if he was your husband—would you?"

"Indeed I wouldn't," the missionary said.

The mandarin's eight wives looked at one another, nodding their heads. Then the oldest said, softly:

"Now I understand why the foreign devil never has more than one wife. He is afraid!"—Western Christian Advocate.