

LITTLE FOLKS



A Prayer.

Keep my little voice to-day, Keep my feet the whole day long;
 Keep it gentle while I play; Keep me all, O Jesus, mild,
 Keep my hands from doing wrong, Keep me ever thy dear child.

A First Ride on the 'Engine Cars.'

(By J. L. Harbour, in the 'Congregationalist and Christian World'.)

I was a boy of twelve when the railroad first came to the little town of Byford in which I lived. My! what a day that was in the history of the new little Western town! It was the very first time most of the people had ever seen what some of them called the 'engine cars.' Everybody for miles

around drove or walked into the town to see the first passenger train come in over the new track stretching away to the eastward. I remember how timid some of the people were about getting too close to the noisy engine because they felt that it might 'blow up' at any moment. There was a good deal of merriment when one old lady rebuked her husband for poking at the engine with his cane when explaining some of its workings to her.

'Be careful!' she said, pulling

back the hand in which he held the outstretched cane, 'you might make the thing bu'st right here and then where would we be?'

Several old ladies were firmly of the opinion that they 'couldn't be hired' to ride behind 'that pesky thing,' and one little girl shrieked with terror when her father thought to give her pleasure by lifting her into the cab of the engine. Some of us boys thought that we were wonderfully brave and our parents rebuked us sharply for crossing the track in front of the engine when it was standing still, and little Billy Bowker really believed it when he said,

'If the ingine should start up, a man on the track a quarter of a mile away would hardly have time to get off before it would be upon him.'

The engineer, in a spirit of fun, opened the steam valve and made the engine give a terrific whistle while it was standing with a great crowd around it, whereupon the people fell back so suddenly that a number of them came to the ground. One very large old Negro aunty in the starchiest of purple calico dresses became so excited that she dropped to the ground and almost out-distanced the whistle in screaming. Yes, that was a great day for Byford.

From that day forward the railroad station was a favorite lounging place for the boys of the town, and they were sure to be there when the trains came in. We used to climb on top of the freight cars standing on the side tracks, and we endangered our lives by jumping on the cars when they were being switched from one track to the other. We were foolish enough to think that it was very smart to jump on trains when they were in motion, but we were more cautious about falling into this folly when poor little Billy Bowker fell between two moving cars and had his right leg cut off.

But we continued to play around the station and would run wild and foolish races on top of the freight cars when there was no engine attached to them. Byford became quite a shipping centre as soon as the railroad was completed, and there were nearly always freight cars on the side tracks.

One day after school ten or twelve of the boys went down to the station to play. I was among them, and after the five o'clock passenger train had given the vil-