



A PAGE FOR JUNIORS



The Boy at Shanty Gulch.

BY GEORGIA G. WINKLER.

IT was Christmas eve, and a dark, wet night. The wind howled in the mountain and clamoured at the door and window of the operator's cabin on Shanty Mountain. The operator, himself, had driven into the village for supplies for their Christmas dinner, leaving the office in care of his little twelve-year-old son, Joey. There would be no train through Shanty Gulch until the arrival of the eight-twenty express, and the operator expected to be home long before that. The wet roads had delayed him, but he was not worried, for he knew that even if the Express did arrive, that Joey could give the orders as well as he.

It was nearly seven o'clock and the boy was sitting with his little face pressed close to the dripping window, watching the tall trees as the wind bent them to and fro.

"It will be an awful dull Christmas," he mused. "Last year mother was here, and she made things brighter, but this year Dad and I will be all alone. Oh, dear! I wish Dad would come, I'm so lonesome. . . . Hark! What is that?"

The boy sprang to his feet in terror.

The noise increased, and soon it sounded as if the whole mountain was rushing down into the cabin. In a moment it flashed across his mind what had happened. It was a land-slide, and maybe the earth and stones would block the track. Snatching a red lantern from a nail he hurried out into the wild night. Carefully he picked his steps to the track, but could see no signs of wreckage, then he thought of the bridge that spanned Shanty mountain, two miles east of the station. And stumbling and falling over the wet and slippery rails he hurried on. The wind howled like a pack of angry wolves let loose in the mountains, but the brave boy struggled on. Soon, and even above the wind, he could hear the rush of angry water. And—as the moon emerged from behind a piece of flying cloud, he saw that his surmise had been correct. For where there had once been a stout iron bridge, nothing was left to span Shanty Gulch but one frail plank.

Half dazed the boy stood, and looked down the seething mass of water. What would he do? That question was answered for, for above the clamour of the wind, there came a loud, long, shrill whistle. The eight-twenty express was approaching.

Without a moment's pause, without a backward glance, the lad stepped onto the plank. It shivered and shook, but the boy dropped to his knees, and with a muttered prayer went on, creeping inch by inch, over that frail pathway of death. At last it was accomplished, and not a moment too soon, for as he climbed the incline he could see the glare of the approaching train. Fear lent wings to his feet, and clutching his precious lantern tight, he waved it high above his head. Would they see it? No: the train came on. But see, it slackened and then slowed down, for the engineer, knowing that he had a perilous trip to make, was on the watch for danger signals.

Kind hands lifted the exhausted and water-soaked boy into the train. In almost incredulous amazement they listened to his story of how he had crept over the bending plank, and then as, tears, thanks, and gold were showered on him, he slipped into unconsciousness.

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Playthings of the Past.

ONE of the sad sights which follow Christmas time is that of broken toys, but the children are not always to blame; the toys are, for the most part, very flimsily constructed, and cannot be expected to last. In the old days there were no special toy-makers, and no demand for cheap playthings. The gold or silversmith would sometimes get a special order for a toy for some young nobleman, or a fine piece of furniture would be ordered for a mansion, and the grateful workman would make

a piece in miniature for the doll's house of his master's little daughter. In the same manner the potters did not disdain to make toy dinner sets for dollies' use, and these are found in museums and private collections all over Europe.

The history of the world is shown in the children's toys. An Egypto-Roman rag doll stuffed with papyrus was found during the excavations in 1896. As this toy dates from the third century before Christ, its red-woolen band is probably the earliest example of doll-dressing. Two thousand years before Christ there were toy water-carriers and kneaders of bread—one of these works by a string by which its arms are made to move. We find toy chariots and game-birds among the playthings of ancient Greece and Rome, for we may be sure the little boys and girls fought toy quail and played chariot races to imitate their fathers and big brothers.

Each great war leaves soldiers in the nursery cupboard dressed correctly to cap the button. As each age of history goes by, the weapons of that age have passed to the hands of boys as toys. There are in our museums, miniature cross-bows, spears, shields and toy armor; and old pictures show boys

playing with them, even the children of the French Revolution had their guillotines. The army of Frederick the Great was the first complete lead army to be placed on the market for purchase. The army of Napoleon followed; then Wellington and his generals; the heroes of the Crimean and Peninsular war came; in turn to be replaced by the Khaki of South Africa and the little Jap heroes.

It is only the dull child that needs an elaborate toy to amuse him. John Ruskin says that his knowledge of balance and construction in architecture came from the fact that he was allowed no toys in his childhood except a number of rough hewn wooden bricks which had been made by sawing a plank into squares.

Costliness in toys is no new thing, however. King Louis XIV., of France, paid 6,000 francs (\$1,200) for an army of cardboard soldiers for his son. After a time these were joined by an army of silver soldiers complete with horses, guns and machines of war, designed by one of the king's silversmiths. It is pathetic to know that this toy army was afterwards melted down to pay real soldiers who were fighting in the king's wars.

In the seventeenth century, magnificent doll's houses were constructed; fortunately a few specimens remain to show how complete was the mansion of the nobleman of that day.

It is strange that nearly all the old dolls are grown up. It is very rare to find a baby doll earlier than the nineteenth century, though occasionally one may be seen in the arms of a nurse-doll. A

young child doll was made in Paris when the little son of Napoleon was a baby, and since then child dolls have been more popular, in fact, it is now the exception to see a grown up doll. The clothing of historic dolls show the costumes of the period, particularly when the dolls belonged to little princesses, and no expense was spared in their wardrobes. The Duchess of Orleans, in 1722, gave to the Infanta of Spain a doll and clothing costing twenty-two thousand francs, but I know the Infanta did not enjoy it half as much as if she had dressed it herself.

If we take care of our dolls and toys, they will give a great deal of pleasure to the children of future generations when the fashions have changed. It was my great delight as a child to be allowed to play with a big wax doll that had belonged to my mother, but I played with it once too often, I regret to say, and it will gladden a child's heart no more. Though I cannot hold myself up as an example in caring for my own toys, let me put in a plea for the plaything and may they live long and happily!

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Suburban Life.

I HAVE read with interest the letters on the topic, "Which is preferable, city or country life?" The city and the country both possess good qualities, but both have their faults. For instance, it is said for the country that the pure air and the open fields are a good deal better for healthy boys and girls than the noise and bustle of the stuffy city streets. Also it is said that in the country you cannot get a good education, and if you are sick it is hard to get a doctor, that you often have to go a long way to get fresh water, and that there are no neighbours within reasonable distance.

In my opinion the best place to live is in the suburbs of a large city or town, here you have all the advantages of country life together with the conveniences of the city. You have water, gas, and electric light, as in the city proper, and even from the most obscure point you can get into the centre of the city quickly.

Montreal.

E. B. JOYCE (Age 17.)

COMPETITION.

For boys and girls under eighteen.

Subject: "Our Pets."

Six books (the titles to be selected from our Library List) will be awarded as prizes for the best stories, letters, poems, drawings or photographs about this subject.

All entries must bear the name and age of the contributor, and be certified as original by parent or guardian. The contest closes January 1st.



Mistletoe.

BY ESTELLE M. KERR.

Underneath the mistletoe,
(Little one I love you so!)
Kiss me, clasp me, hold me fast,
All our longing waiting's past,
Christmas time has come at last,
But there'd be no Christmas joy
Without you, my baby boy.

When the Druids long ago
Found the pretty mistletoe
Growing on their sacred tree,
('Twas a wondrous sight to see)
Then they whispered reverently,
"God hath sent it." It is true
Just as He has given me you.

Now it brings its Christmas cheer
Hanging from the chandelier,
While the merry bells are ringing
And the joyful voices singing,
Boughs of mistletoe are swinging
High above us, to and fro,
(Little one I love you so!)