

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

I am expecting every day letters telling me all about Santa Claus's visit. I know, of course, that he did not miss one of my little friends, because it is only the naughty boys and girls he passes by, and mine are not among the naughty ones. Now, I hope you have all made resolutions to write me oftener than you did in the past year, and let us all try to make the corner bright and interesting.

Your loving
AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I thought as I have not written to you for some time I would write you a few lines. Our school stopped Friday; we are having our Christmas holidays now. We had a nice entertainment. We are going to have a Christmas tree home. We are quite busy making the things to put on it. We are having lovely weather now, the sleighing is fine. I hope it will keep that way all winter. I guess I will close, wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

KATIE F.

Pogwash, Dec. 23, 1905

(Many thanks, Katie, for kind wishes and pretty card.)

A FLOWER UNBLOWN.

A flower unblown, a book unread,
A tree with fruit unharvested,
A path untrod, a house whose rooms
Lack yet the heart's divine perfumes,
A landscape whose wide border lies
In silent shade beneath silent skies,
A wondrous fountain yet unsealed,
A casket with its gifts concealed—
This is the year that for you waits
Beyond to-morrow's mystic gates.
—Horatio Nelson Powers.

A CHRISTMAS FOR SALE.

Hetty was cross, or she would not have said it, and Max was teasing—Max was usually teasing. He loved his pretty sister, but he could seldom be made to see that her small tribulations were anything but funny, and he was more inclined to be aggravating than sympathetic.

It was the day before Christmas, and their father and mother had been unexpectedly called away from home to meet an old friend who was about to sail for Europe. The thought of spending the holiday without them seemed forlorn enough to Hetty, especially as a friend of hers, who could usually be depended upon to brighten what Max called "such orphaned occasions," was too sick to come to them.

Never mind, my dear Mehetabel, accidents will happen," said Max, in the serene tone of one who had no appreciation of artistic labor, or of what such a loss meant. "I suppose another soap-dish, painted another day, will answer."

"It wasn't a soap-dish, and you know my name isn't Mehetabel," answered Hetty, shortly.

"Well, then, my Hetty without-any-able, be consoled by the remembrance that to-morrow is Christmas."

"It won't be worth calling Christmas," she said petulantly. "I'd sell my share of it very cheap."

"You would? Advertise it, then," advised Max. "That's the surest way to get rid of what you don't want to keep."

But Hetty was in no mood to be laughed at, and she responded very promptly when Bridget summoned her from the room. Left to himself, Max looked about the pretty place which Hetty secretly called her studio, and presently an idea flashed into his mischievous head, which he acted upon in hot haste. He printed a large placard—"Christmas For Sale, Cheap"—and hung it in the window where the shade would hide it from within, but where it could be plainly read from the street. Hetty would be sure to go over to her friend's in a few minutes, and then she would discover it, her brother thought, laughing to himself as he pictured the look her face would wear when she saw it.

He snuffed off, and Hetty, returning to the quiet room, did not go out that afternoon. Two hours later when Max returned, he had forgotten his joke in fresher interests. He and Hetty were chatting beside the fire when the door-bell rang, and Bridget brought a little boy into the room.

"I can't rightly make out what he wants," she said.

"I want to buy a Christmas," said the little fellow, looking at Hetty.

He was not more than six or seven years old; his toes were peeping out from his worn shoes; all his clothing was poor and thin, but the childish face was bright and intensely earnest.

"Buy a Christmas," Hetty repeated, wondering.

"Yes'm; I don't know whether you'd sell one for a dime, but that's all I've got, and the sign in your window said you'd sell 'em cheap."

Hetty stepped to the window, whirled the card around, and flashed a look at Max.

"Oh, I've got nothing to do with that," she said. "It is this young man who attended to selling the Christmases. You must talk to him about it."

Max looked confused, but the small new-comer did not notice it as he turned to him.

"I don't know much about 'em, for we never had any at our house, but I would like to get any kind of a one for the children, who would like it," said the little boy. "Ted earns some money, he's twelve years old, and there's only him and mother to earn. Mother makes stockings. Ted had planned to give the babies a good Christmas, but he hurt his foot, so he feels awful bad, 'cause he can't buy 'em anything. I earned ten cents myself, running errands for folks to-day, and when I see your sign, I come in."

He was such a sturdy little figure, his blue eyes so honest and eager, and the small hand which held out the treasured coin was so rough and red with cold! Max's throat swelled and he looked appealingly at his sister.

"I'm afraid I haven't any of that kind of Christmases left on our shelves," he said, "but maybe we can find something that will do. Can't we, Hetty?"

Hetty arose without a word, produced a market basket of goodly size, and into it went packages from pantry, cellar and wardrobe, with candy and nuts to make it "look Christ-mas-y." Then Max gravely pocketed the dime, because, as he said, he "wouldn't for anything deprive the little man of the satisfaction of feeling that his Christmas was honestly bought and paid for with his own hard earnings."

"We don't usually deliver our goods," explained Max, "but as we have no other customers just now, and as the basket is too heavy for you, I don't mind going along to carry it."

The early dusk had fallen, and Hetty threw a cloak around her, and donned her hat.

"I think I'd better go too, and carry this pie," she said. "It would be a pity if it should fall off the basket."

At a shabby little house which stood by itself at the end of the lane the child stopped. Hastily depositing the basket on the steps, leaving him to make his way in alone, Max and Hetty retreated. From the shelter of a tree across the road they could see through the uncurtained window, and catch a glimpse of hurriedly moving figures.

"Wouldn't I like to hear him tell his story," laughed Max. "The older ones would think he had invented it, if it were not for the basket."

The last trace of despondency was gone from Hetty's glowing face, and her eyes were shining with something more than mirth.

"To think of all we have, Max. I don't believe I'll ever be cross and ungrateful again!"

"I think we might do quite a business in this kind of Christmases. If I live till another year, I mean to manufacture a stock of them," declared Max.

But Hetty understood the earnestness under the fun.

"O little town of Bethlehem, how far its light shines!" she said.

ELEANOR'S LUCK.

"Eleanor has such luck!" said one of Eleanor's friends to me. "Miss Stanley has hired her for her private secretary, and Eleanor can go to school and do her work there in the evening. Did you ever hear of such luck—she is getting an education and earning a salary at the same time!"

As I knew Miss Stanley very well, I inquired one day about Eleanor's "luck."

"Oh," said Miss Stanley, laughing, "I hired my young secretary on one recommendation, and that was a speech that I happened to overhear. I had been wanting a secretary, and

weighing the merits of the girls that I knew. I was walking on the street, behind Eleanor and another girl one afternoon, when the other girl told a bit of scandal about a schoolmate.

"I hope it isn't true," said Eleanor, "I don't believe it is, and, of course, while there is a doubt, we must not talk about it."

"I immediately decided that she was the girl I wanted. When I made inquiries, I found that she was qualified for the place, and that the money she could earn would be very welcome. I hired her, and she has not disappointed me in any way."

This was the story of Eleanor's "luck." She had been true to the highest ideals in her inner life, and her speech, even in the unguarded moments when she was alone with an intimate friend, revealed this fact.

How many of us are willing to be judged by a chance speech overheard?

MABEL'S FAULT.

It is often true that the failings we criticize with the utmost freedom and severity in our friends are but duplicates of our own faults. We are, however, singularly blind to these same defects in our own characters, and we are most uncharitable in our criticism of failings that would become apparent to us as harmful possessions of our own, if we ever took ourselves to task for our own shortcomings.

"I don't like Hattie B—at all," Mabel said, in an irritable tone, to her mother.

"Why not?" was the reply.

"Oh, she's so very sarcastic; and if there is anything I do dislike, it's sarcasm!"

A few minutes later, Mabel's brother exclaimed in a tone of triumph:

"Hurrah! I have every one of the ten examples in arithmetic given me for my home lesson!"

"Oh, how very smart we are!" said Mabel, in a tone of extreme irritation caused by the fact that none of her problems were solved and she doubted if she could get them.

Five minutes later her sister Marion held up a hat she had been trimming for herself, and said, brightly:

"There! I think that looks very neat and pretty, don't you, Mabel?"

"Oh, it's a perfect work of art!" was the reply. "Why don't you offer it to Madame Vireote as a pattern hat?"

Marion, who was a sweet-tempered girl, only laughed, although the sarcastic fling hurt her not a little.

Letty, another sister of Mabel's, spread a tidy she had just completed on the back of a chair and asked:

"Isn't that lovely, girls? I'm quite proud of it, for you know that it is entirely my own design."

"You ought to have it patented, or copyrighted, or whatever is necessary to keep the world at large from imitating your triumph of genius," said Mabel.

Even Harold, the "baby" of the family, a little fellow of eight or nine years, came in for a share of his sister's merciless sarcasm. He had produced a wonderful "bouquet" on a sheet of white paper with his box of paints.

"See my flowers!" he cried, with childish delight. "Aren't they beautiful?"

"Oh, marvelous!" said Mabel. "You're bound to be the chief artist of your day."

Jane, the cook, had made some delicious rolls for tea, and the other members of the family were kindly praising them in her presence, when Mabel said acridly:

"There never was anything quite like them, Jane. If Delmonico should hear of you, we would soon be minus a cook."

"Mabel," said her mother, "didn't you say before tea that you disliked Hattie B—?"

"Yes, I did, and I shall never like her. Her sarcasm is simply unendurable."

"Then you ought to like her, for you have much in common. Everything you have said this evening has fairly bristled with sarcasm. It is your chief fault. It crops out every day of your life. I wonder that you are not aware of so marked a failing in yourself, when you see it so clearly and condemn it so sharply in others."

WHY NEW YEAR'S DAY FALLS ON THE 1ST OF JANUARY INSTEAD OF MARCH 1 OR APRIL 1.

Why is New Year's Day Jan. 1? On the face of it the Chinese method of beginning in April, when nature wakes up from the winter, appears more appropriate. The Romans in the earlier days of the Republic were of the same opinion and commenced their year on March 1. September, October, November and December were then in actual fact the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months.

DOES YOUR HEAD

Feel As Though It Was Being Hammered?
As Though It Would Crack Open?
As Though a Million Sparks Were Flying Out of Your Eyes?
Horrible Sickness of Your Stomach?
Then You Have Sick Headache!

BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS

will afford relief from headaches no matter whether sick nervous, spasmodic, periodical or bilious. If cured by removing the cause.

Mr. Samuel J. Hibbard, Belleville, Ont., writes: "Last spring I was very poorly, my appetite failed me, I felt weak and nervous, had sick headaches, was tired all the time and not able to work. I saw Burdock Blood Bitters recommended for just such a case as mine and I got two bottles of it, and found it to be an excellent blood medicine. You may use my name as I think that others should know of the wonderful merits of Burdock Blood Bitters."

their names would still have them. Nevertheless the present reckoning of the year is of respectable age. The change was first made in the year 153 B. C. simply because the consuls assumed office on Jan. 1, and it was the custom to call each year after the consuls than in power.

The January convention fell into disuse in the time of the Merovingians, who returned to the 1st of March. Under Charlemagne, as had been formerly the case with the Gauls, the year began at Christmas. In England March 25 became New Year's day soon after the Norman conquest and remained so until the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752. Indeed the Chancellor of the Exchequer and those who depend upon him still observe the old Chinese year.—Pearson's Weekly.

EACH DAY A WHITE PAGE.

The new year is not present with us, only a new day. So it will be continually; we shall see but one day at a time. If each day is lived aright the whole year will be right; if each day is wrong, the year will be wrong. Each day is a white page to be written. Write it beautifully, and the book of the year will be beautiful.—J. H. Bliss.

STAINED GLASS WORKERS WALK TIPTOE.

Three good looking workmen passed down the long length of the art gallery on tiptoe.

"Why do they walk on tiptoe?" said a patron.

The proprietor, smiling, answered: "I'll tell you why, and the reason is so strange that you will hardly credit it."

"Those men are stained glass workers, imported from Paris, for my new stained glass department, and they walk on tiptoe because they have worked so much in churches and cathedrals that the gait has become habitual to them."

Practically all their working hours have been spent in the repairing of the magnificent old painted windows of the churches of Europe. Since these churches are always open, since services are always going on in them, work must be conducted quietly, and all walking must be done on the toes.

Hence these three excellent artists, whenever they enter a spacious and quiet place like this gallery of mine, rise up on their toes involuntarily, from a subconscious notion that they are in church.

"This is odd, but true—true of all European stained glass workers."—Minneapolis Tribune.

Ignorance is a Curse.—Know thyself!

is a good admonition, whether referring to one's physical condition or moral habits. The man who is acquainted with himself will know how to act when any disarrangement in his condition manifests itself. Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is a cheap and simple remedy for the eradication of pain from the system, and for the cure of all bronchial troubles.

WHERE IT ALWAYS RAINS!

There is a group of islands to the south of New Zealand called the Sisters of Seven Sisters, which are reputed to be subject to a practically constant rainfall. The same may be said of the islands and mainland of Tierra del Fuego, save for the difference that the rain often takes the form of sleet and snow.

The darkest shadows of the are those which a man himself makes when he stands in his own light.

Whoever has watched the development of character cannot have failed to note that individual responsibility alone brings out all a man's powers.—Sir Charles Gavan Duffy.

THE REAL TREASURES

They Are the Homely and Simple Things of Life.

By Leigh Mitchell Hoopes.
Life is such a play in so many ways! It displays so many different actors in so many roles, and it varies so as to plot and plan and motive that the relationship between it and the mimic stage is close and interesting.

And there is so much "make believe" about it that one cannot be blamed for mistaking the artificial for the real. And yet behind, its scenes and all the acting that is done on its broad stage there exists a whole other world of reality, where in things are what they seem, and which is the same in any light or when seen from any side. It is the world of our own simple being and loving and having. It is the treasure house of all that is best and most worth having.

The real treasures of life are locked up in ourselves. The key to them is in our own keeping. We can if we choose sail off and search in strange places for something to take their place; but I fear we will always come back empty.

The real treasures of life are not the great happenings, the high events, the costly jewels and the splendid things in the sight of man. These, as a rule, are like the scenery on the stage—they look well, and are good from only one side. On the other side they are propped up and dabbed with paint and held in place by hand-driven spikes. Thus the frowning fortress on the summit of the majestic crag is easily taken down and carried away by two men, who set up in its place a beautiful castle. How often are our fears just such frowning fortresses for our enemies, and our imagined joys as flimsy and insecure as this castle!

The real treasures of life are the homely things—I would rather write it homely, so as to emphasize the "home." I know we are, for the most part, dissatisfied with the lot we have, and somewhat discouraged over our prospects, or, more properly, speaking, our lack of prospects, and a bit envious of the success or comfort of some one else, and fairly sure that we have put up with just a little more than nearly any one else but if we would only count our own treasures as carefully as we count those that we think belong to others—we never know—I imagine we would have less complaining to do.

The Necessity of a Scale on the Farm.

We believe that most farmers realize the necessity of owning a good reliable scale. Selling and buying so much by weight he must realize that a little inaccuracy in his dealer's scales means considerable loss to him. We don't believe that prosperity makes him so reckless of his own interests that he cares not whether the grain buyer cheats him or gives him full value, but the average farmer figures that he cannot afford to buy a farm scale when the crop is light or prices low.

Under either conditions the necessity of a farm scale is plainly evident. When prosperity smiles on the farmer a little inaccuracy in his dealer's scales means a big loss, and when light crops or low prices prevail, though his loss is less all told, he can less afford to lose the amount.

One of our contemporaries has figured out the cost to farmers of slight errors in the weighing of grain and stock. It shows that a scale need not be very much off balance to make a big loss for the farmer, and gives the following illustrations:

"Suppose a certain farmer sells thirty hogs weighing 200 pounds each, receiving for these five cents a pound. If the scales are out of the way 1-20 it will mean a loss to him of \$15 on the lot. This same farmer sells 2000 bushels of wheat at 75c per bushel. If the scales are out 1-40 it will mean a loss to him of \$37.50.

Now the above examples are by no means gross exaggerations, and it will be seen from the above figures that the total loss incurred would be \$52.50, enough to purchase a good set of scales to guard against all future loss. It is never an equitable proposition to measure farm produce when selling it. Hay measured in the stacks is so much guess work, although the most infallible rule is used. The same is true of grain. Sometimes oats will over-run one-fourth in weight, and the farmer who sells by measure is simply losing one bushel in every four."

These other reasons are given by a contemporary why a farmer should own a scale.

The careful, progressive farmer wants to know which portions of his farm produce the best quality of grain. This can never be told by measure, but only by weight. The feeder of stock is also very desirous to know just what progress his animals are making as the result of his efforts. With a set of farm scales they can be weighed regularly, thus accurately determining the gain proportional to the amount of feed. If the results with one kind of feed are not satisfactory he can forthwith change the feed and note the result—with scales on the farm this is not difficult, but it is almost impossible without them. At any rate it is guess work, pure and simple."

Of course the scale must be an accurate, reliable one. We see that a firm in Chatham, Ont., is advertising a farm scale which is guaranteed by the Canadian Government. It is made in three styles, which are convertible into useful trucks. The firm sell them on very easy terms, in fact, so easy that what the scale will save a farmer should pay for it in the time. We are sure it would pay any farmer to investigate the offer this firm makes. A post card with your name and address on it sent to The Manson Campbell Co., Limited, Dept. 299, Chatham, will bring full particulars.

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CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND.

Christmas in Ireland, as in every Christian country, is a time of gladness and rejoicing. But in the little Green Isle it is especially a time when the deep religious faith of the people is seen. The Irish heart, too, always warm and kind, overflows during the holy season with good-nature and hospitality. In every city, town and village enthusiastic preparations are made for the coming of the great Yule festival. Indeed, the atmosphere of Christmas pervades for days and days before its arrival, nor is the happy excitement of the people soon lost when Christmas has passed.

The young people gather holly, string the leaves together and with mistletoe decorate their homes. The good Irish mothers, helped by their dark-eyed colleens, prepare the ingredients that make up the big plum pudding, which, surrounded by the burning flames of a certain Irish favorite sauce, will be carried to the dinner table on Christmas day. The Christmas dinner is a family reunion. The boys are home from college, and the girls from the convent, and father and mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, join hands in a happy family gathering.

In many parts of Ireland midnight Mass is celebrated. Whoever has been present at one of these Masses will never forget the wonderful faith and simple devotion of the Celtic people. Immense multitudes attend these midnight Masses. It is a pretty sight, on an early Christmas morning, to see the crowds of people winding their way over the hills or through the lanes to the Christmas Mass. After Mass the congregation gathers around the crib, and on bended knees, make their hearts' offering and adoration.

Every church in Ireland, no matter how poor or how secluded, has a crib. Sometimes these cribs are not artistic, nevertheless, they are always surrounded by believing hearts. There is one priest in Ireland, known to the writer, who takes much pains and not a little pleasure in putting together a small crib made of cork. This simple crib is big enough to rest on the communion rails. Yet it always attracts a constant stream of visitors who kneel on the communion steps and gaze with reverence on that little representation of the Savior's birth.

But, while the songs of the angels, that far-away long ago, is being re-echoed in the hearts of the Irish people at home, millions of her exiled children are thinking of Ireland on distant shores. Nothing so easily awakens in the hearts of these Irish exiles such tender memories of home and kindred as the thought of this glad holiday time.

Pale, sickly children should use Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator. Worms are one of the principal causes of suffering in children, and should be expelled from the system.

"The evil of a lie," says St. Augustine, "consists in this, that one thing is hidden in the heart and another brought forward in speech."

Why is a man kind? Why, because he can forget himself at least occasionally. Because he is willing to render services; because he will even go the length of sacrifice.