



A PRIZE FOR THE CHICKS.

## A Baby in a Balloon.

(Ada Melville Shaw, in 'Michigan Advocate'.)

'If you will be jolly good boys,' said Uncle Arthur, to Carl and Jo, 'and play inside the garden all the day, and get into no mischief at all, I will make you a balloon,—a real one.'

'Oh, goody ! goody !' cried the boys in chorus.

'Will you promise?'

'We'll promise, we'll promise—a real balloon?'

'Yes—a real—small—one !' answered Uncle Arthur, mischievously.

'But it will go up, won't it?' asked Joe, anxiously.

'Clear up, Joe, out of sight, if you let go the rope.'

That was almost too much to be true, and the boys promised a great deal more than was required of them in their overflowing delight.

The next morning Uncle Arthur brought the balloon — 'a perfect

little beauty,' the 'car' being a wicker basket that would swing 'so lovely,' through the air when the balloon was inflated.

The two boys and their sister were visiting Uncle Arthur and Aunt Jane. Sister — they rarely called her by her 'given' name— had to be fitted to glasses for a very near-sighted pair of blue eyes, and uncle and aunty were to take her into the city to visit the oculist. Only Katie, the housekeeper, was to be left at home, with the boys, but she was too busy to take up much time looking after them. It would have been 'after,' indeed, if they had once stepped outside the garden gate !

Katie was shown how to inflate the balloon, the boys charged not to bother her about it too many times, their honest promises given, and uncle and auntie went away with Sister, whose last word was:

'Oh, please, boys, don't tease my grey kitty !'

Kitty, indeed ! Who cared for a

pussy cat when there was a balloon to play with.

So Katie skillfully filled the pretty red silk globe with 'gas,' and the boys played out the 'rope' and nearly dislocated their necks watching their toy floating nearer and nearer to the sky. Then they hauled 'her' in, and then — what made a pretty grey kitten, with a red collar set with jingling bells, come up and put out a tiny paw toward the wicker basket?'

'Oh, I say!' cried Joe ; 'let's — let's put her in and give her a ride ?'

'Let's!' echoed Carl, enthusiastically.

In two more minutes the gentle little thing was inside the basket — just big enough to hold the bit of grey fur—and the balloon went up, up, up. Startled kitty did not try to jump till she was too far away for any escape.

What fun it was. Never once did the boys think they were teasing the pet animal. All they