

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## The Clock on the Stairs.

(Henry Taylor Gray, in the 'Christian Intelligencer.')

The clock on the stairs stands ticking away  
The minutes e'er steadily on,  
It measures the time, as day after day  
The hours follow those that have gone.

Its face keeps the same while minutes go fast  
The hands ever showing the time,  
It ne'er can recall the hours that have passed  
With the ever repeating sweet chime.

It ticks all the day and all through the night  
While we are all sound asleep,  
It marks off the time in its tireless flight  
And bids us a watch ever keep.

A watch that no moment of time we should waste,  
But our work most faithfully do,  
Like the clock on the stairs we never should haste  
But carefully carry it through.

Accomplishing something, performing each task  
With a steadfastness unto the end,  
With conscience within, no assistance to ask,  
But a helpfulness ever to lend.

Like the clock on the stairs with an object in view,  
Our everyday comrades to guide,  
In the way that is old, yet every day new,  
Like the ebb and the flow of the tide.

The clock on the stairs like a sentinel stands  
Watching out as the hours go by,  
The pendulum swings, the slow-moving hands  
Mark the minutes as around they fly.

The quarters and halves, with musical chime  
Tell us each that onward time rolls,  
And the seconds tick out the flight of the time  
Till the bell, cathedral toned tolls.

Tolls the hour that's gone never more to re-  
turn,  
All its work and labor is done,  
Let us from the tall clock a good lesson learn  
And finish our tasks with the sun.

## The Cub's Plum Pudding.

In the New York Zoological gardens there is a young Canadian black bear that has become very haughty of late. Part of his biography has just been published. It appears that when the bear was a cub he was a farm pet, was as domesticated as a dog and wandered untethered about the yard and all over the farm. The sort of a life he led and some of the stunts he did are entertainingly written in 'The Frolics of My Black Bear Cub,' by Mrs. E. H. Baner in the March 'St. Nicholas.' The article is illustrated by photographs which show also a tame prairie wolf and a deer, play-fellows and domesticated companions of the cub Jimmie. We quote one of the 'frolics':

Jimmy's favorite chum and play-fellow was Romulus, a young prairie wolf. The fact that they were such good friends was due largely to Jimmy's good nature, for certainly Romulus teased him in every possible way. Even in the matter of food, Jimmy was disposed to be generous, and he seldom resented the attempts of Romulus, or of Actaeon, the deer, to take from him his bread and apples. There was, however, one particular kind of food which he insisted on having his full share of, and that was plum pudding. He would eat it at any time of the day or night, whether he was hungry or not, and if there was any limit to the amount he would eat, no one ever discovered it. No matter how much was given to him he never seemed to consider the quantity sufficient, and if either of his play-fellows attempted to force him to divide with him, the result was a fight. Not that Jimmy was really vicious, but he gave his companions to understand that on the subject of plum pudding his opinion was law. One day, after romping in the snow all the morning, Jimmy presented himself at the kitchen window, and several slices of bread were passed out to him. The

cub took them in his mouth, let them fall to the ground, and continued to peer into the room.

'I believe the little bear just wants a bit of something sweet,' said the housekeeper, and going into the pantry she soon reappeared with a saucepan containing a generous amount of plum pudding. Jimmy took the saucepan eagerly in his paws, and sitting up in the snow, proceeded to eat the contents as quickly as he could. Presently he heard an approaching footstep, and with an apprehensive look upon his face, drew his head from the saucepan and looked over his shoulder. It was Actaeon, who had heard the door open, and was hurrying around in order to get his share of anything that was going. But he was a little late, for Jimmy clasped the saucepan tightly to his breast, buried his nose in it, and began to mutter a series of warning 'No-no-no-nos,' which Actaeon had learned to respect. Seeing that he was 'out of it,' the deer uttered a plaintive 'ba-a-ah,' and walked away to nibble some browse. So absorbed was the cub that he did not notice the stealthy approach of the wolf, who circled around him several times, then sprang for the handle of the saucepan, and pulled it to the ground. Jimmy was evidently taken by surprise, but he held on to the rim of the pan with one paw, and planted the other paw firmly inside. During the struggle the pudding was scattered upon the snow, and Jimmy turned his attention to that, leaving Romulus to run off with the pan. The wolf, finding he was not pursued, dropped it, and returned to torment the cub. But Jimmy was ready for him this time, and claspings his stout paws about his tormenter's neck, bore him to the ground, and deliberately sat down upon his prostrate body. Of course the wolf kicked and squirmed, but this did not in the least disturb Jimmy, who, looking quite unconcerned, calmly finished his pudding.

## A Bird That Sews.

Would you not like to see it doing it? But as that is impossible as you are in America and the little tailor in India, Africa, or Australia, the best I can do is to bring the pretty spectacle before your mind's eye.

Imagine, then, that you are in India, which, with the Indian Archipelago, is the home of the genus 'orthotomus,' or tailor bird.

You have retired to the grateful shade of a grove of strange foreign trees, figs, palms, and mangoes; all round you stretch fields of rice dotted with the white turbans of the husbandmen; the buzz of myriads of insects rises and falls like the waves of the sea washing a distant strand.

A succession of loud, not very sweet notes, breaks in on the monotone, and a little brown and black bird runs nimbly out of the long grass, and seeing you, stops to reconnoiter. He is not in the least shy, for his kind like best to haunt cultivated regions, and consequently are accustomed to man's presence. He cocks his bright eye inquiringly at you for a minute, then resumes his wonderfully smooth, quick run, tilting his long, slender tail over his back in a very comical manner.

Another halt, this time to inspect a lance-leaved plant. Snip! goes his sharp beak, and one of the leaves falls; he plants a claw on it and strips the midrib clean in a trice.

Then off he flies, the vegetable string dangling from his beak, to an adjacent fig tree, where his mate is at work. She greets him with a cheerful note and snaps the fiber from his beak as if she had been waiting for it ever so long, but knew how to excuse the idle ways of such a beautiful bird as her lord.

And she resumes her labor, delighted to have him perch near by and encourage her by his warbling.

My lady has selected two leaves about nine inches in length, and growing from the tip of a slender bough; she is now actually sewing the edges together! Her beak is the needle, and the fibre brought by her mate is the thread. How deftly the polished spike drives tiny holes just far enough from the edge for strength, and draws the thread in and out, just tightly enough for elasticity!

When the green pouch is finished, both Lord and Lady Tailor Bird will hurry off and bring down of the whitest and silkiest, reft from

yonder cotton fields and from countless nameless plants; gradually the pouch will fill up and plump out until it will not hold another beakful. Then my lady will hop in on top, and stamp down the fluff and pack it close with her breast, turning round and round till she has shaped a cavity commodious enough to hold her own small body and the eggs she immediately begins to lay.

And here is one of Nature's quiet riddles: How does she know the exact time when the nest must be ready for the first egg?

She never makes a mistake; as soon as the nest is ready for the egg, the egg is produced.

She knows, too, that she and her brood are safe from the monkeys and snakes which fain would make a meal of them as long as the nest is hung from the tip of a slender outer birch, for there is no support for them.

There are many species belonging to the genus 'orthotomus,' all having similar habits.

There is the pine-pine, which builds a gourd-shaped nest of vegetable fibers, having an entrance like a spout and several knobs below it for the male bird to perch on while the female is nesting.

The color of the pine-pine's nest depends on the materials used. Sometimes cotton down has been the only substance at hand, and then the nest is snow-white, and presents a beautiful appearance.

The pretty little emu wren of Australia, builds its nest on the ground. It resembles a big ball of grass with a hole in the side; it is lined with down, feathers, and moss felted together to a texture of exquisite softness.

Space fails me, or I could tell of more relations of the tailor bird which are just as adept sewers as he is.—'Good Cheer.'

## The Little Girl Neighbor.

(John Mickerson, in the 'Home Herald.')

Three men gazed impatiently out of the window as the train drew into the station, and leaped to the platform before it stopped. They were equally prominent and engaged in equally weighty affairs. Also they were all church members and anxious in a general way to do what was right. It was late at night and the station was deserted, except for a tired looking little girl, who was sitting, wide eyed, in the corner, too tired to keep awake, too timid to allow herself to sleep. Two of the three pushed through the dingy waiting room, on to the platform and into their carriages and were whirled out into the dark. The third stopped and questioned the little one.

'I missed the train,' she said, 'and the man said another went to-morrow. I don't know what to do.'

The rear lights of the carriages of the first two men were just disappearing when the third carriage drove up. Only it had two occupants and they had held but one. The little one slept that night in the home of the third man and went on her journey in the morning, refreshed and encouraged and glad.

There were three men who rushed into the station that night and all of them were anxious in a general way to do the right thing.

But which, think you, was neighbor unto the little girl who had missed her train?

## Cyke's Guardian.

(Charles C. Tracy, in the 'Christian World.')

Did it ever occur to you that college presidents could have a sense of humor, and foreign missionary college presidents most of all? The following letter from the Rev. C. C. Tracy, D.D., president of Anatolia College, Marsovan, Turkey, opens up a sunny window in that good man's character.

Dear Dr. Forbush,—We are troubled with a serious question—what to do with Cyke. The young folks will think it very strange when a man of threescore and ten comes to ask their advice. Nevertheless, after some weeks of perplexity, I have determined to resort to the boys and girls for counsel. Not to keep them mystified, I will explain.

My seventieth birthday came the thirty-first of last October. On that occasion, among many other kind and loving expressions, an