

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

WHEN YOUR BOY IS AWAY.

"Don't you suppose we had better get a frame for the pictures in Ned's room? I mean those he brought home after the last term at school. There is the one of the football team he belonged to; and then, too, I think the one of the class would be nice framed. They are both good pictures. They are quite large, I know, and probably he did not expect them to be framed; and yet, I feel sure he would be pleased to find them all framed and hung in his room when he comes home at Christmas."

"Then we will have them framed, wife. I will take them over this afternoon. I remember once when I came home mother had standing on my table a bit of a card neatly set in a frame she had made herself. It was a little 'reward of merit' card—nothing more; and yet it never looked so good to me as after mother had fixed it that way."

"And you have not forgotten it yet? That is what I think about having these of Ned's framed. He will think of the old room here at home some day when perhaps he may not be able to come back, and the remembrance will lead to something else."

Something else? Oh, yes. Back to the hearts and the love of the dear ones who were there in the years gone by.

And so the pictures were framed. When Ned came back home at the mid-winter vacation, there the two hung, on different sides of the room. In the corner was his tennis-racket. On the wall by the side of the dresser, was his nose-guard, hung by its strap. Mother had not "fired these out," as Ned said some mothers would have done. There they were, reminders of the days when he played half-back on the school team, and saved the day by hard work.

"It is awfully good of you to think of a fellow this way, mother!" he said, sitting down where he could look the pretty room over, and see what had been done to make the room—his old room in the old home—as comfortable and cheery as possible. "I thank you for it. I shall think of it when I go away."

That is what we want, mothers. If we can keep the hearts of our boys glad when they think of the old home, we have gained a victory for home means father and mother, the bright family fireside, good things, kind words, a shelter from the world's storm, and all that makes for higher and better manhood.

And if we can help the boys to know that while they are away we think of them, it will mean something, too. When we write to them, why not tell them that we often go into their room, and sit down, just because it is their room, and when we are there we think of them, and wish for them all that is good and pure and true? Suppose we take our writing material in there and write our letter from that quiet place. It will touch a tender chord in the boy's heart as he snatches time away out there in life's busy highway to read the word from home.

We so little know what will be the thing which will strike the string in the young man's heart-harp! The other day I saw a letter in which a young man wrote home these words: "I read father's letter over two or three times, so that I can be sure that I have not missed anything he wrote!" Do you think it can be that a young man who wants to know every single word father writes will stray very far away?

A minister went not long ago to stay at a private house in the city of St. Louis for a day or two. He says:

"I knew the lady had given me the boy's room. How did I know that? Here were the things he had used when he was at home—the ball and the racket and the paraphernalia of the playground; in the bookcase were books the boy likes. Oh, yes; I could not help knowing it was a boy's room. In a little while the mother said to me: 'You saw that I put you in my son's room?' 'Oh, yes; I noticed that, and I wondered why.' 'He is away in Cuba with the army. I wondered if you would think of him when you prayed to-night. It would help him to know it!' Could I forget that request? No; I did remember the boy away across the water in a strange land. One day I learned that the boy had heard about my visit to his home, and what I had asked God to do for him. And he had written home such a letter, yearning for the old folks and the love he missed so much! 'I am so lonely and so homesick,' he wrote. 'I miss your love! I shall be so glad to be back home again! And, mother, when I come, it will be as a better boy, I hope, than I ever was before! Your love and His have found me, and brought me back to Him!'"

It pays to let the heart live with the boys when they are away from home—Church Messenger.

A SUNNY DAY IN JUNE.

I do not dread November drear,

With lowering skies and miry ways;
December's frost I do not fear,

When famished Winter grimly preys;
Nor shrink when January sways
The branches to a strident tune;

But not for them the song I raise;
Give me a sunny day in June.

I find in February cheer,

Though glistening snows the vision
daze;

And March's trump I seldom hear
Without exultancy and praise;

My shining Aprils, budding Mays,
Have read me many a mystic rune,

But for the year's divinest phase,
Give me a sunny day in June.

July more regal may appear;

And August vaster wealth displays;
September mild, October serene,

With gifts abound and trophies blaze;
But still my heart her homage pays

To Summer's Maid, departing soon,
And cries her 'Ave!' while she stays—

Give me a sunny day in June.

Apportioner of years and days,

Distributor of every boon,

Entrance with gold an earthlier gaze,
On worthier brows bestow the bays,

Give me a sunny day in June.

W. M. MACKERACHER.

USELESS FOREBODINGS.

What a vast portion of our lives is spent in anxious and useless forebodings concerning the future, either our own or that of our dear ones! Present joys, present blessings slip by and we miss half their sweet flavor, and all for want of faith in Him who provides for the tiniest insect in the sunbeam. Oh, when shall we learn the sweet trust in God our little children teach us every day by their confiding faith in us? We who are so mutable, so faulty, so irritable, so unjust; and He, who is so watchful, so pitiful, so loving, so forgiving! Why can not we, slipping our hand into His each day, walk trustfully over that day's appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that evening will bring us sleep, peace and home?—Selected.

VOLCANOES AS INDUSTRIAL
AGENTS.

It cannot be said that the idea of turning volcanoes and volcanic phenomena to account in the service of man is strictly new, yet it always suggests a certain admirable boldness when put into practice. Sulphur is dug from the bottom of the smoking throat of Popocatepetl, and the crater of Aetna might perhaps be made to furnish a supply of the same substance if ancient deposits of sulphur on the Island of Sicily were not available with less trouble and danger. In recent years an entirely different product of volcanic action has been brought into the industrial world, namely, carbonic acid gas. All travellers who have been at Naples remember the famous "grotto of the dog," so called because the air, to the height of a foot or two above the cavern floor, is so strongly charged with carbonic acid gas that a dog or other small animal entering it is in danger of suffocation. Similar gas vents exist around all active and many inactive volcanoes, and for some time past they have been utilized in Germany for the manufacture of liquid carbonic acid. This summer a similar enterprise has been undertaken in the midst of the extinct volcanic region of Auvergne in France. Not far from the remarkable peak called the Puy de Dome, which rises in plain sight of the plateau of Gergovia, where Vercingetorix inflicted upon Caesar the only defeat that the latter suffered in his Gallic war, there is a locally celebrated cavern from which carbonic acid gas issues at the rate of half a million litres a day. It is known as the "poisoned fountain," as many animals have perished while visiting it. This vent and others in the neighborhood are now being turned to account, after the manner of those in the volcanic districts of Germany, for the production of liquid carbonic acid. Doubtless there are other ways in which active or dormant volcanoes could be turned into industrial agents. Enthusiastic dreamers have even proposed to utilize the forces of a volcano for the production of mechanical power—but that is another story, not likely to be written in our day.—Garrett P. Serviss.

A HANDY TREE.

Did you ever hear of the thread and needle tree? Rather a handy tree to have growing in the back yard, don't you think? especially when there are boys in the house, with buttons coming off about every other minute.

This strange tree grows in nearly all tropical countries, and in some places nearer home, where the climate is warm and even. In Mexico it is found in great numbers, and the Mexicans call it the "maguety," which is pronounced "Magway." It gets the name by which we know it from the curious formation of its leaves. At the tip of the leaf there is a sharp thorn, which is the needle. If you grasp it firmly and pull it out, a long thread of fiber comes with it, and there you are—with a needle all ready threaded for your sewing. This fiber thread is very strong and the Mexicans use it for weaving a coarse kind of cloth as well as for sewing. The leaves of the tree they use for roofing their houses, instead of tiles, and a fine roof they make with them, strong and water-proof—just the sort of roof that is needed in a country where the rain pours down in sheets.

It is estimated that London's laundries use more than 750 tons of soap a week.