

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## He Gave Unto Me a Vineyard.

(Margaret Erskine, in 'Zion's Herald'.)

I worked all morn in my vineyard, sowing with skill and care.  
And I said (in my pride), 'No vineyard will ever be half as fair,  
For naught will be planted in it but shall please the eye and the heart;  
None but the costliest blossoms shall have in my vineyard a part.'

I came, in the noon, to my vineyard, to gather my harvest store,  
But the 'Seeds of Pleasure' I planted the 'Flowers of Trouble' bore.  
I cast my tools far from me; I shrieked aloud in my pain;  
'Cursed be the hour that bore me!' Nor came to my vineyard again.

I came, in the night, to the Master, to receive with the rest, my pay,  
For, I thought, 'I have suffered greatly, He will not say me nay.'  
But the Master eyed me coldly. 'I asked not for words, but deeds.  
You have wasted the years I gave you; your vineyard is choked with weeds.'

## How the Butterfly Won Its Freedom.

(Bessie L. Putnam, in the 'Universalist Leader'.)

A heavy thunderstorm was coming up and Nell and Dell ran to help Aunt Ruth gather the chicks into the brooder. This was not always quickly done; for the little downy tots had learned that bugs and grasshoppers were much more plentiful in the adjoining meadow than on their own grounds; and while they usually managed to get home about meal time they did not enough enjoy being shut up at all hours of the day to come back every time the clouds lowered. So, as it was a rainy season, the children were often called upon to help hunt them up.

As one was picked up from the tall grass something clung to its foot and then to Aunt Ruth's hand. She shook it off violently, thinking it but a weed, and was hustling the chick under shelter when a glance upon the ground showed a butterfly of strange coloring. Storm and chicks were for the moment forgotten, and the struggling insect, evidently just hatched, claimed undivided attention.

It was a beautiful combination of light and dark brown, lighted by creamy white with just a tinge of rose, and on each lower wing was a conspicuous rose-colored spot. When at rest the upper wings covered this, and only the soft browns which might belong to a dead leaf were visible. This coloring, Aunt Ruth explained, is a device often adopted by nature as a protection from birds and other enemies.

Aunt Ruth suggested sending it to Professor Lee, a friend of the family, who was making a collection of butterflies.

'But you must tell him not to kill it,' said Nell.

'That is very likely just what he would do,' was the reply. Aunt Ruth strove to reconcile the children with the thought that his method would be speedy and painless; that a butterfly is short-lived, even at best; and that this one might be saved from a more distressing end. Beside, if it proved a rare species, it would help the professor in his study.

'But I don't want you to send it if he is going to kill it,' was Nell's only reply. Dell was silent, but very sober.

The desire to help a friend in the study of science outweighed the disapproval of childhood—a disapproval based on the sympathy and common sense which are bound to creep into our so-called 'scientific' studies. The butterfly was captured in a glass tumbler, and a piece of cheese cloth tied over the top to allow plenty of air to go in but no butterfly to go out. There it hung all the afternoon,

by its bangs,' papa said, though really by its fore feet. The feathery 'feelers' or antennae proved it to be not a true butterfly, but one of the subdivisions known as a sphinx. Beside its wings were not folded lightly together in butterfly fashion when at rest, yet they overlapped enough to entirely hide the bright rose spots.

Toward mail time Aunt Ruth placed it in a small box lined with soft paper, into which she had slipped one or two clover blossoms. Some holes were then made with a fork through both paper and box to prevent smothering. The poor little thing was badly frightened, despite the most gentle care, and beat its wings frantically against the sides of the box until Aunt Ruth feared it would ruin them and be only a torn, ragged specimen, not worth preserving. Other duties calling her, the box was placed on the desk to await the coming of the postman.

Presently Nell slid into the room where she was at work and said softly: 'We could not think for a long time what that queer noise could be; it's the butterfly.' No more was said, for Nell was not a tease; but the mute appeal in her eye was forceful, and Aunt Ruth, who had no thought that the fluttering would be kept up after she left the box, returned to it in dismay.

'I've half a notion to let it go,' she observed, hesitating.

'We do wish you would,' was the earnest reply of both. Even Tom stopped his stick horse long enough to second the motion, and baby Tot teased to help 'let it go.' But as Aunt Ruth took the box to the door all was silent, as though her kind thought had come too late.

'Perhaps it has gone to sleep for the night,' suggested grandma. Cautiously the box was opened in the midst of the little group. Sure enough, it had crept up close into the corner of the box, as if to go to sleep. As the covering was removed it poised for a moment just above the top of the box, moving its wings with great rapidity, as though to test its power. It had been released in the midst of some potted plants, with the hope that they might prove an inviting shelter for the night. But instead, it fluttered to the shoulder of its captor and liberator, then rested upon her cheek; the children insisted it kissed her—was it in forgiveness or gratitude? Then suddenly it dashed away into the top of a tall cherry tree and was seen no more.

Four pair of bright eyes had gathered to see it liberated, and four little hearts beat as joyfully over the result as did the four released wings.

'Do you suppose Professor Lee will bring you any more candy after he hears about how he lost the butterfly?' asked Aunt Ruth.

'Well, I don't care,' said Nell; 'I'd rather have the butterfly free.'

'Yes,' added philosophical Dell; 'if it can only live a short time I am so glad we could help to make its little life happy.'

## By Experience.

(By Hilda Richmond, in the 'Sabbath-School Visitor'.)

'It doesn't seem to me that he is the sort of boy we want in our crowd,' said Helen. 'He is a good scholar, and all that, but somehow I don't want him. What do the rest of you say?'

The boys and girls of the neighborhood had formed a little circle for afternoon excursions to the woods with their Sunday School teacher, and now they were discussing whether the new boy, who had lived among them a few months, should be asked to join them in their next good time. It was only an informal little club, with no member older than fourteen, and none under eleven, but they had jolly times all the year round.

'What's that you're talking about?' asked Ben Tucker, who had been away for a week. 'Of course, we'll take Ray in with us. It's a mean shame we didn't do it long ago.'

'Look here, Ben. Last time we met you were the very one who thought we ought not

to ask him. Seems to me you're getting to be a turncoat,' spoke up one of the boys.

'I know it,' said Ben, 'but I want to tell you I've had a week of being alone. You never saw such folks as live round Aunt Fanny's in all the days of your life. They looked me all over as I were some sort of a freak, and never once asked me to play with them. I don't know whether it was my clothes, or what, that made them so cool, but they simply ignored me.'

'I suppose they treated you just as we have been treating Ray,' said one of the girls. 'I suppose the poor fellow has been lonely, but I never thought of it till just now.'

'You just go away to a strange place for a week, and you'll think of it a great deal more,' said Ben.

So Ray was voted in, and after he became well acquainted with his schoolmates, told them that the past few months had been the longest he ever had spent. 'You all seemed to have such good times, and there was no place for me,' said the poor boy. 'If ever another new boy comes into this neighborhood, I'm going to try to be very nice to him, for I know how hard it is to be alone.'

Did you ever think of that, you boys and girls who have your own little circle, and never open it to admit a stranger? Widen it a bit to receive the new boys and girls. May you never learn by experience what it is to be friendless and alone!

## Take Care.

You may keep your feet from slipping,  
And your hands from evil deeds,  
But to guard your tongue from tripping,  
What unceasing care it needs!  
Be you old or be you young,  
Oh, beware,  
Take good care,  
Of the tittle-tattle, tell-tale tongue!  
—St. Nicholas.

## The Untalented Girl.

'It seems too bad that such a girl as Beth should be simply buried alive in a little town like this! Why, with such talents as she has, it does seem as if she ought to be making herself felt in the world!'

Beth's friend, Alice, spoke with girlish enthusiasm and unbounded, loyal admiration. 'Just think of her music, to begin with—dear me! Wouldn't I feel too happy for words if I could play and sing as she does? You'd think that was talent enough for one girl's share, but that isn't half what she has! Her essays at school were so fine we always said she had a future before her in that way—some time she'd be making herself famous as a writer. And, as if that wasn't enough, what must she do but have a real, marked talent for sketching and painting, too! Why, Aunt Minnie, when our class went to the zoo and we tried drawing some of the animals from life, hers were so far ahead of the rest of us—well, you wouldn't look at ours in the same day with hers. She's really the brightest girl I know.'

'She's a remarkably gifted girl, I haven't a doubt,' smiled Aunt Minnie; 'but I know another girl who isn't excelled by anybody in one way at least, and that is a generous feeling for her friends. I believe you are as proud of her talents as if they were every one your own.'

'I'm so clumsy and commonplace beside her!' Alice snuggled up a little closer to her aunt. 'I haven't a talent in the world—positively I haven't!'

But Aunt Minnie smiled as she put her arm around the girlish form. 'I'm not so sure of that,' she said.

'Allie, Allie!' it was her brother Gordon calling in stentorian tones through the hall. 'Oh, Gordon dear, don't wake mamma!' Alice went toward him hurriedly. 'I just persuaded her to lie down for a little while—she was up so much in the night with Benny! But I don't believe you've wakened her,' she added, reassuringly.

'Say, Alice!' Gordon's voice was dropped now to a stage whisper, which gradually