

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Boys and Girls:

I was so pleased to hear from such a number of little ones. I am anxious to know how you all like this new department. Now, who would like, with the letters, just short stories, or one long one, or, again, a continued story. Let us put it to a vote. What a lot of pets you children must have. I hope you all treat them kindly, and that you will remember that to grow up noble men and women you must always remember the rights of the weaker.

Write often, little friends. I find your letters very interesting. AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I am a little boy of ten years of age. Mamma told me it would be nice to write you a short letter. I spent a very pleasant vacation at Portland, Maine. Mamma and my little brother George were also with me. I am now at school, and studying hard. Next week I'll send a longer letter.

HENRY.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I am a little girl of eleven years. I am attending school at the Convent of St. John the Evangelist, Point St. Charles, under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. I like school very much. I am in the third class, and study reading, spelling, grammar, Bible History, geography, drawing, Catechism, writing and French. Good-bye for the present. Will send you another letter next week.

MARY GERALDINE.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I liked the boys and girls' letters last week. I have just started school and don't like it. Good-bye.

WILFRED.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I saw in one of the letters by Nettie that she had a collic that followed her everywhere. I wish I had one, too, but we had one and it bit the baby, so mamma sent it away and will not get us another.

MAY.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I have not gone back to school yet 'cos we had measles. I'd rather go to school, 'cos when I'm in the house I have to amuse the baby.

LOTTIE.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I am the youngest of seven and the only little girl, so I'm let have my own way a good deal. I have some pet rabbits, a bird, a kitty, and a guinea pig. We play menagerie and bring in all the children in the street and have such fun.

FLOSSIE.

(What a lucky little girl you are, Flossie. I know you are always kind to those pets of yours.—Aunt Becky.)

Dear Aunt Becky:-

My grandma has got rheumatism, and I'm so sorry 'cos she can't take me out for a walk. I hope she will soon be better. Good-night.

MAY.

(Aunt Becky sincerely hopes grandma will soon be better.)

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I go to school every day. Papa bought me a dear little pony, and I drive him every day. He eats apples out of my hand and he likes biscuits and candy, too.

BILLY.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

My papa is way across the ocean, and I'll be glad when he comes for he'll bring me a doll, and he said he would bring a gramophone to Harry. My mamma teaches me at home.

ETHEL.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I'm a little boy of seven. This is my first year in school, and I guess I will like it, but I like recess best.

ARTHUR.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

We have a dear old aunt. She has lovely golden hair. She was born in Dublin, and is awfully nice to us children. When we're naughty she says she'll go home. We have an uncle Tom. He is away in Hong-Kong now, and when I am a big man I'll travel too.

FREDDIE.

THE HAPPIEST LITTLE BOY.

"Guess who was the happiest child

awoke. He was sober but his head ached woefully. Stumbling to his feet, he went straightway to the kitchen. There a cup of hot, steaming coffee awaited him.

"I would like two cups," he said in a shamefaced way to his wife. "Have you enough?"

His wife, however, only stared at him.

"What's the matter?" he said gently—the children's father was always gentle when he was himself—"I need brushing, don't I?"

"Did you tie it on?" breathlessly asked his wife.

"Tie it on,—tie what on, my dear, my head? I'm afraid it needs tying on sometimes," he said, jestingly.

"There on your coat. Look," replied his wife. There it was—a tiny temperance messenger securely fastened to his coat.

Her husband looked down at the garment. Then he sprang to his feet.

"Who put it there?" he demanded.

"Did you? Of course you knew I didn't and—"

At this juncture Denny and Minta, who were just outside the door, thought it was time to make their appearance.

"We did," said Denny timidly. Minta threw herself at her father's feet. "Don't be angry, papa," she pleaded. "It's only a little bow."

"Yes, but it stands for temperance," muttered her father, "and I have no right to wear it."

"He can earn the right, can't he, mamma?" queried Denny. "Aunt Mary said you weren't a bad man at heart, papa, only—"

"Don't say any more, child," interrupted Denny's father. "Let this little bow, pure and white, do the rest."

A glance at his father's face made Denny open wide his eyes with wonder. He looked at his mother and then at Minta in silence for a minute. Then impulsive Denny could stand it no longer.

"Oh, dear, if you are all going to cry, what shall I do?" he asked. "I never cry when I'm glad." But much to his amazement something which looked very like a tear trickled down his cheek and splashed upon his hand.

"I only cried one tear, anyway," said Denny one day months afterwards when it was an assured fact that his father had really reformed. Wasn't it proof enough that he no longer drank when there was plenty to eat and plenty to wear and "sunshine everywhere," as the children's mother said. She did not go out to do washing now.

"You look as happy as a bird," her husband told her.

"And to think it is all due to that little piece of printed cardboard with somebody's name attached," was her reply.

Now whose name do you little people think was signed to the card, and what kind of a card was it?—Kate Grey, in Union Signal.

CHILDREN'S WITTICISMS.

A YOUNG LOGICIAN.

Jennie's mother was expecting company, but just before train time, says What to Eat, a telegram arrived which read: "Missed train. Will start same time to-morrow." Jennie rushed home from school expecting to see the guest, but instead was shown the message. After reading it laboriously and carefully through she exclaimed, "Why, mamma, if she starts at the same time to-morrow she will miss the train again!"

GRACE.

Grace, aged five, had just recovered from measles, when her small brother took the same complaint. Upon becoming convalescent he was one day sitting up in bed munching a sponge cake while his sister sat looking on.

By various means she tried to induce him to part with a bit of the dainty, but the invalid took no notice.

He ate steadily on until the last

WHAT A LITTLE BOW DID.

The creeping twilight all but hid the forms of two children. The older, Denny,—a boy—crouched in a corner of the poor little room and anxiously watched the movements of his small sister, Minta.

"Pin it on him now, quick, before mamma comes," he cried. "I'm too clumsy to do it."

"But Denny, I'm afraid after all. Papa is pretty bad you know, to-night."

"Oh, go on," urged Denny. "He won't wake up. It will be such fun to surprise mamma—and maybe, Minta, it will really help."

Minta hesitated. Then over the child's face came a look which would have pained Denny's tender little heart could he have seen it. As it was, the darkness prevented, but his sharp ears caught the little choke in her voice.

"Minta, please don't think of all those bad times. Papa didn't mean it, you know. He isn't himself when he has been drinking. Why the day after that last time, Minta, mamma said he cried and cried at what he had done. He didn't remember anything about it. It's that old drink that makes him cross—and—and—"

"Denny pointed to a purple bruise upon his thin shoulder. A sound came from another corner of the room.

"Hush, Denny," said Minta, "Papa's waking up."

But the father only turned on his side and fell again into the drunken stupor in which he had lain since early afternoon.

The children held their breath until all was quiet again.

"Now," said Denny, "do it this minute. Mamma will soon be home from her washing."

This time Minta did not hesitate. She walked quickly to the side of her sleeping father and with deft fingers tied a fresh white ribbon bow in the button-hole of his much worn coat.

"We must ask mamma not to light up to-night," said Denny. "Then papa will find it in the morning when he's sober."

"She will be tired and will want to go right to bed anyway," replied Minta. "She had two washings to do to-day. You know, Denny, she is trying to earn enough money to buy me a pair of shoes for school, when it opens. I can't wait to see Miss Osborne. She gave me the bow. Isn't she a nice teacher?"

Denny nodded assent. "Maybe we'll have something good to tell her, hey, Minta?" he whispered.

When morning came—as mornings are sure to do—the children's father

ARCHBISHOP IRELAND TO BOYS.

Avoid as you advance in years the special temptations that come to young men. I am not going to mention "all of them, only one—in-temperance. As you go through the world and watch your fellow-men, you find the majority of failures in life due to intemperance. This vice of intemperance attacks the weak and the strong, the educated and the ignorant. It is generous, open-hearted man that are the most exposed to this terrible curse. Determine, then, to avoid that temptation. I would advise every man to go forth armed; stop at once. Pledge total abstinence. A man is absolutely secure with it; without it there is danger. It is all very well for a young man to say: "I'll take only one glass," but will he stop at one? Pledge total abstinence; for there is in it discipline, and discipline makes character. The underlying principal of character is self-control. If we practise this self-control on one point we almost surely shall practice it in everything.

REVERENCE TO PARENTS.

Do not forget the pains and weariness, and watching, and fatigue, which your parents have experienced for you, says the "Orphan's Friend." You think them peevish, perhaps. Did they never bear with fretfulness, never pass over your faults, and look with a tender eye on all your mistakes. You are busy, it may be, and cannot spare the time to render them any attention. Were they too busy to watch over your helplessness, to guide your unskilled feet, to sit by your sick bed weary days and more weary nights? They are old, and you can enjoy yourself better with your companions. Your young companions may be pleasant, and you may pass your time very easily among them, but who of all the number will care for you as your own tender and forsaken mother?

"Forget not thy mother when she is old." Then is the time she needs your support, your presence, your cheerful voice to comfort her heart, and guide her trembling steps during the last and most difficult part of the journey. Whatever may be the fashion, or whatever may be the opinions and practices of others, let nothing cause you to withhold the love and respect due to your parents. Do not give them a rude or impatient answer; you will be sorry for it when they are dead. Do not leave them to be cared for by others, or to take care of themselves; you will regret it when they can not more be benefited by your attention.

bits were disappearing, when Grace could stand it no longer. She exclaimed indignantly: "Just look at him! He won't give me a crumb. It was me that gave him the measles!"

Little Boy—I want you to write me an excuse for being late to school yesterday.

Jeweler—Eh? You are not my son. Little Boy—No-o, but mamma says I had plenty of time to get to school, so I guess the clock you sold her doesn't go right.

Alexis came home one night with his clothes full of holes. "What has happened to you?" exclaimed his mother.

"Oh, we've been playing shop ever since school closed," Alexis replied.

"Shop?" echoed his mother.

"Yes. We opened a grocery, and everybody was something," Alexis explained. "I was the cheese."

A bright little Columbus miss, six years old, went out to dinner the other evening for the first time. When she returned home she was asked if she had been a good girl and enjoyed herself. "Oh, yes," she replied, "only I didn't pray out loud like those people." "Pray out

tea service, it gave a pleasing sense of home comfort.

Mr. Ellis opened the door of an inner apartment and called: "Jane, here's Miss Morris."

A tall, middle-aged woman came forward, holding out a long thin hand.

"Miss Morris, you're welcome. I hope you're not altogether froze." Then looking at her husband, "My sakes! What kept you? Did you think I'd nothing to do but sit here waitin', an' the supper spilin', an' the milk not strained yet, nor the young-uns' clothes ready for the wash. Much you care, though. Keep in 'this stranger out so long in the cold, too. It's a shame!"

I hastened to say that I had enjoyed the ride extremely. After a few minutes the irate lady grew calm and I turned to express my thanks to Mr. Ellis, but he had disappeared.

Muriel and Bessie, the little girls, had taken off their shoes and were warming their feet at the stove. Mrs. Ellis excusing herself to get some lights, I began to chat with the little ones.

"Aren't you afraid of getting chilblains?" I said to Muriel.

"Oh, no, Miss. I'll be warm just in a minute. Wasn't it grand, though! Did you like the cutter ride?" timidly.

"I guess you're 'omesick, Miss Mawis," chimed in Bessie. "You musn't cwy, though. I always cwy when I go away from my papa."

Bessie was two years younger than her sister, whom she greatly resembled. Both girls wore blue frocks and silver medals of the Immaculate Conception.

Mrs. Ellis' return cut short our talk, and soon we all sat down to supper. Mr. Ellis carved the ham, while Mrs. Ellis poured out delicious cups of tea. Muriel and Bessie were perched on high chairs near their papa. Opposite me sat Johnny, the farm boy. He had a shock of red hair and a frocked, good-natured face. Taking no part in the conversation, he every now and then would wink expressively at Mr. Ellis, and, whenever I spoke, would pause in the act of raising a morsel and gaze at me, with open, crummy mouth and twinkling eyes.

"Fraid you're cold, Miss Morris. Not used to the country, are you? Never mind. You'll soon like the air. Guess supper's ready by this time."

The kitchen was neatness itself, with its polished stove, white-worn floor, immaculate cloth and dainty

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IDEAS OF LITTLE FOLK.

A writer in Little Folks tells how a small girl named Janet was one day digging in the back yard, helping her mother to get the ground ready for planting flower seeds, when suddenly she cried out:

"Oh, mamma, come and see! I've found the funnest bug! It hasn't anything 'cept a long, fat tail." It was her first anglerworm.

HIS SON'S CHOICE.

"Pa," said the little boy after long silence in the crib, "when I'm a man will I be a twin?"

"Yes, just the same. Don't you want to be a twin?"

"I don't care. I don't want to be a Chinaman."

"Were you afraid you would be?"

"No-o. And I don't want to be a soldier."

"What do you want to be?"

"I think I'd like to be a storekeeper and a father."

"Oh, you want to be a father, do you?"

"Yes, and a storekeeper. Then I'd have lots of money and could give it to my little boys."

Silence from papa.

REX CORDIUM.

By R. P. P., In Rosary Magazine.

"You're the only passenger, Miss," said the station-agent as he handed me to the platform; "just step in here."

A kind of shed a few paces away, bearing overhead the notice "Linteu" told me my destination was indeed reached.

"Mr. Ellis, the school secretary, will be here in a few minutes, Miss. He had to fetch some letters and told me to get you warm. Mighty sharp weather, Miss," and my obliging guide bowed and departed.

I, Agnes Morris, university undergraduate, had lately been appointed teacher of Linteu district school. Papa's last illness had exhausted our slender capital, and, as my widowed mother had but Mabel, a girl of twelve, and myself, the hope of becoming the stay and support of my dear ones urged me to the sacrifice. Thus tremblingly, but hopefully, I accepted the position.

Mr. Ellis greeted me most kindly. He was an elderly man with a pleasant though careworn face. I noticed that he hesitated a little over his words, as if he weighed everything he said. He made many inquiries as to my comfort as he showed me my place in the sleigh.

"I've settled the wee ones down at our feet, Miss Morris. I think they'll be more cozy there. The road's bad and we're having such a cold snap. Put the buffalo around you tight."

The "wee ones" were two little girls at present undistinguishable bundles in mufflers and wraps. It was too cold for conversation, and I drew my furs around me and abandoned myself to the delight of a first sleigh-ride in the country. The road was uneven for some distance, but was finally succeeded by a smooth, shining track, and we sped along to the music of the sleigh-bells.

Night was closing in as we stopped at the entrance to a long, low farmhouse. Mr. Ellis opened the gate and, after calling, "Johnny, come help with the trunk," turned to me with a smile.

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