

BOYS AND GIRLS

'One, Two, Three.'

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy who was half-past three;
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go running and jumping,
And the boy, no more could he,
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin, little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree;
And the game that they played I'll tell you
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his one little sound right knee,
And he'd guess where she was hiding,
In guesses One, Two, Three.

'You are in the china closet!'
He would cry, and laugh with glee—
It wasn't the china closet;
But he still had Two and Three.

'You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key'
And she said: 'You are warm and warmer;
But you're not quite right,' said she.

'It can't be the little cupboard
Where mamma's things used to be—
So it must be the clothes-press, Gran'ma!'
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One, and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple tree—
This old, old, old, old lady,
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half-past three
—H. C. Bunner, in 'Scribner's.'

A Good Reference.

John was fifteen, and very anxious to get a desirable place in the office of a well-known merchant who had advertised for a boy. But he was doubtful of his success, because being a stranger in the city, he had no references to present.

'I'm afraid I shall stand a poor chance,' he thought despondently. 'However, I'll try and appear as well as I can, for that may help me a little.'

So he was careful to have his dress and person neat, and when he took his turn to be interviewed, went in with his hat in his hand and a smile on his face.

The keen-eyed man of business glanced him over and over from head to foot.

'Good face,' he thought, 'and pleasant ways.'

Then he noted the neat suit—but other boys had appeared in new clothes—saw the well-brushed hair and clean-looking skin. Very well; but there had been others here quite as cleanly. Another glance, however, showed even the finger-nails irreproachable.

'Ah, that looks like thoroughness,' thought the merchant.

Then he asked a few direct, rapid questions, which John answered as directly.

'Prompt,' was his mental comment. 'Can speak up when necessary. Let's see your writing,' he added aloud.

John took the pen and wrote his name.

'Very good, easy to read, and no flourishes. Now, what references have you?'

The dreaded question at last!

John's face fell. He had begun to feel some hope of success, but this dashed it again.

'I haven't any,' he said, slowly; 'I'm almost a stranger in the city.'

'Can't take a boy without references,' was the brusque rejoinder; and, as he spoke, a sudden thought sent a flush to John's face.

'I haven't any references,' he repeated, with hesitation; 'but here's a letter from mother I have just received. Would you mind reading it, sir?'

The merchant took it. It was a short letter:

'My dear John,—I want to remind you that, wherever you find work, you must consider that work your own. Don't go into it, as some boys do, with the feeling that you will do as little as you can, and get something better soon; but make up your mind you will do as much as possible, and make yourself so necessary to your employer that he will never let you go. You have been a good son to me, and I can truly say I have never known you to shirk. Be as good in business, and I am sure God will bless your efforts.'

'H'm!' said the merchant, reading it over the second time. 'That's pretty good advice, John—excellent advice! I rather think I'll try you, even without the references.'

John has been with him ten years, and now occupies a very responsible position.

'Is it a fact that you intend taking that young man into partnership?' asked a friend lately.

'Yes, it is, I couldn't get along without John; he is my right-hand man!' exclaimed the employer, heartily.

And John always says the best references he ever had was a mother's good advice and honest praise.—'The Family Friend.'

A Bird Story.

W. S. Reed, M.D., tells the story of a robin that took possession of a passenger coach which had been left for several weeks unused at East Thompson on the Southbridge branch of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railway. The robin built her nest on the framework of the trucks under the body of the car. The bird had been seen around the car by different employees of the road without their suspecting the presence of the nest until the car was coupled on and hauled to Southbridge. The mother followed the train, and on arrival brooded and fed her young, which were just hatched. She followed the train back on its return trip to East Thompson, where she again fed and housed the young birds. On the second trip of the train in the afternoon the bird again followed her young to Southbridge and back to East Thompson, where the car was side-tracked, and given into possession of the robin, rent free, until her family were grown.

The distance travelled by the bird in the two round trips was eighty-six miles. The kind-hearted conductor said if he had known the nest was there, he would never have taken the car out.—'Christian Register.'

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Grandmother's Turn.

(Zelia M. Walters, in the 'Christian Standard.')

'It's my turn to have a party now,' said Alice, 'but I do not care the least bit about it. I haven't any new ideas, and it's such a bother and no satisfaction to get up just a common party.'

'You lazy girl,' cried Clare; 'I wish it were my turn. I have some splendid ideas.'

Mrs. Egbert, with her family of four lively girls and two livelier boys, had to limit the number of parties, and allowed each to give one in turn, with a fixed interval between.

'Girls,' said Hilda, suddenly, 'let's let grandma have her turn this time.' Hilda was the thoughtful one of the family.

'Why, do you think grandma would care for a party?' said Alice.

'I believe she would if we managed it right, and didn't give her a lot of worry and trouble,' said Hilda. 'Grandma is getting very old, and sometimes she looks tired and homesick. Perhaps we won't have a chance to do things for her much longer.'

The girls all looked serious by this time, and Alice exclaimed: 'Why, of course, grandma shall have a party, if you think she would care for it. I'm sure I shall be very glad to do all I can, and she is quite welcome to my turn!'

After some consultation with their mother, the girls decided that the party should be a small one, and invitations were sent to six of grandma's old friends. The china and silver that had been great-grandfather's gift to our grandma when she was a bride, were unpacked and got ready for service. There was an old, yellow note-book filled with recipes copied in grandma's neat handwriting before the day when printed cookbooks were common. With great diplomacy, Hilda borrowed the treasure-book of grandma, and the girls practiced on some of the recipes before the day set for the party.

They were not going to serve a fashionable luncheon, but an old-fashioned tea such as grandma used to serve to her guests. Hot buttermilk biscuits, cold roast chicken, sliced ham, pound cake and drop cakes, and, of course, preserves and plenty of tea.

The work was divided. Hilda undertook to learn to make tea to grandma's taste. Alice was to practice until she attained perfection in the making of biscuits, Clare knew she could roast the chicken properly, but to poor Maud fell the hardest task. She was to make the cakes, and the pound cake, at least, was too expensive to practice on.

It was to be a surprise to grandma. It really was not necessary for her to make any preparations. Her room was always in company order, and grandma herself always looked like an old-fashioned picture. So, there was no suggestion to make, and grandma sat placidly knitting on the afternoon of her party.

When the first visitor came, Maud took her to grandma's room. Grandma was in a flutter of pleased excitement, for her friends did not come often. When the second old lady arrived grandma was plainly very much surprised.

'How fortunate that you happened to come to-day, Mrs. Lane,' she said. 'There are three of us now, quite a little party.'

But when two more guests were ushered in, grandma looked about so helplessly that Maud felt it was time for explanations.

'We thought it was your turn to have a party, grandma,' she said, 'so we planned one for you to-day.' Then she hurried from the room. The old ladies were left to enjoy the after-