

Ups and Downs

PUBLISHED ON THE FIRST OF EVERY MONTH, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.

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We shall be obliged if subscribers will notify us at once in the event of delay or irregularity in the delivery of their papers.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 1ST, 1896.



WING to the unusually early date at which we published our last issue, this is our first appearance since Christmas, and "Christmas Day at the Home" is an event we cannot think of allowing to pass into the lumber room of "things that have been" without some mention of the many pleasing incidents the day brought forth. With the boys in the Home, at least, Christmas shares with Exhibition week the honour of first place among all the days of the year, with, we are fain to admit, a slight preference in favour of Christmas. Why this preference? will doubtless be understood by the time we reach the end of our story. Many days before the 25th young faces began to wear a look of joyful expectancy not unmixed with anxiety. We could not help noticing that if a boy were sent on an errand which took him past the culinary department, he displayed more than customary alacrity in starting away. It was strange how "round by the kitchen" seemed to be shortest way to everywhere during those days preceding Christmas; and it was *not* strange that expectancy deepened and anxiety vanished from the faces of the message bearers—for "coming events cast their odours before."

Hard labour and plenty of it was the order of the day—and night—in the housekeeper's department. The responsibility of providing for the Christmas appetites of forty healthy English lads is not a small one, but the undertaking was in the right hands. Under the skilful manipulation of Mrs. Cunnerty, assisted by a small army of very willing assistants, all sorts of good things began to take recognizable shape.

When at last Christmas dawned, boots were polished and best clothes donned with an energy which might be taken as an indication of that to be exerted at a later stage in the day's proceedings.

After breakfast the boys marched to Euclid Avenue Methodist Church, where a special Christmas service was held. As the hour for dinner approached, patience became conspicuous by its absence. Never before were boys so ready to obey the word of command, "fall in," for the march to the dining hall; never did boys' faces wear a happier and more determined look than did those of forty of Dr. Barnardo's boys as they gazed upon the turkeys, geese and other ex-members of the poultry yard, invitingly awaiting the magic touch of

Mr. Davis' carving knife. Pyramids of oranges, apples, and candies looked down alluringly from their places on the tables. "Let justice be done if the sky fall" was the ruling maxim; and justice was done. The feathered tribe quickly gave way to "real English plum pudding," in turn supplemented by the lighter delicacies. All having expressed themselves as satisfied, the tables were cleared and the afternoon was given over to games and singing.

There were two very pleasant interruptions of this part of the day's programme. The first was a visit from four young ladies—Misses Rose Taylor, Mabel Penny, Jamieson and McKennie—who came on behalf of the Euclid Avenue Methodist Bible Class, bearing greetings—and a generous supply of oranges and candies. This kindly act was highly appreciated by all in the Home.

We also had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. Walter Stark, of Liverpool—a gentleman who has for some years past taken a warm and kindly interest in Dr. Barnardo's work. Mr. Stark gave the boys a few kindly words of greeting and advice, to which all listened with attention and, we hope, not a few with profit. It is not alone on account of the substantial contribution which he left towards our Christmas cheer that we thank Mr. Stark for his call and hope we may see him again in his future visits to Canada.

In the evening additional members of the staff and many other friends arrived. A few seasonable words from Mr. Owen, and then there appeared two large barrels filled with sawdust, which immediately became the cynosure of all eyes. Those barrels proved to be—we were going to say the *hollowest* of frauds, but the very reverse, as a matter of fact; mingling with the innocent-looking sawdust were many variously shaped parcels—three for each boy. Whatever a boy drew was his, and in a few minutes the scene might be likened to a gathering of young Indians clad in European dress. Knives were flourished and horns were tooted, while on the side-benches story books were eagerly scanned and the merits of colour boxes approved. But all this excitement rendered necessary a further strengthening of the "inner man," and cakes and fruit again held sway. Then followed blind-man's buff, every boy being desirous of making Mr. Webb blind man. With this and kindred games the ball was kept merrily rolling until 10 o'clock, when the National Anthem brought to a close a day which had been full of enjoyment for all at the Home.

There is one feature of the large correspondence which finds its way to our hands of which we wish to make mention. It is the readiness that is displayed by many of our boys to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the publication of a journal distinctively our own, to "write that others may read." We are particularly pleased to see this, inasmuch as the aim of UPS AND DOWNS is not only to interest and amuse, but, whenever possible, to instruct, and these epistles of our friends not only prove the means of keeping the various members of our large family in direct communication with each other, but they have considerable value from an educational standpoint, a boy writing under such circumstances being instinctively impelled to "do his best."

In ordinary conversation and private correspondence there is, to-day, a tendency towards slovenliness of expression, which not infrequently amounts to coarseness; there exists a desire to exchange good wholesome English for the slang phrases which are the shibboleth of the street-corner loafers.

Many fall into the habit of using these ex-

pressions through sheer carelessness. They hear others use them, become familiarized with them and make use of them themselves,—only occasionally at first, but, as in all bad habits, the "occasional" becomes the "general."

An occasional letter, written, not for private perusal, but for the "public," offers a good antidote to this tendency. Slang expressions, which through familiarity may sound allright, appear in all their hideousness when committed to writing. They are quickly erased and the proper phrase substituted. The result is beneficial not only to the writer but to the readers. The open columns of our journal afford our friends an excellent opportunity for exercising their faculties, and, as we have already said, the fact that they are making use of the opportunity is a source of pleasure to us. Some of our correspondents do not confine themselves to prose, but, like Mr. Silas Wegg, "drop into poetry."

In speaking of these poetical effusions we must exercise considerable discretion. Some are really good, and evince great depth of feeling and not a little knowledge of the technical requirements of verse building; and others—well—they do not.

There is an old Latin tag, which, translated, reads: "A poet is born, not made." We are not going to question the truth of this, but we must always remember that this is *our own* journal, and, if we decide to devote a little corner to the poetical efforts of some of us, who shall say us nay?

As we write we are very seriously asking ourselves why we cannot devote a not inconsiderable space in our journal to educational purposes—why, in fact, we cannot form ourselves into a sort of Literary and Mutual Improvement Association? We believe a page set apart for this purpose, containing special contributions from our friends, and useful items of instruction, together with extracts from the works of leading English prose and verse writers would be appreciated by all, and would prove of especial benefit to the very many among our friends who are seeking by their own efforts to supplement their previous educational opportunities. We might arrange for a very varied and interesting programme of papers or essays upon different subjects from our friends. We could select the topics, let us say for six months. Our selection could be made to cover most subjects in which our boys are interested and on which they would be likely to have something to say. By publishing a copy of our syllabus for six months, all would have an opportunity of rubbing up their knowledge of any subject about which they intended to write.

Then we might arrange a system of marks, and to the member gaining the highest number in the six months we would award a suitable prize.

To attempt to start a "Literary and Mutual Improvement Society" for our boys without the support and active interest of at least a number of them would be a waste of time. We have given an outline of our idea. Undoubtedly it is capable of amplification and improvement, upon more thoughtful consideration; but it is enough for the present. Whether we carry out our idea depends entirely upon our boys. Before our next issue appears they will have plenty of opportunity to write and let us know what they think of the proposition.

Three boys seated at the same table, all writing to wish their friends at the Home a