

A LITTLE WAVE'S HISTORY.

"Tell us a story about what you've seen this summer!"

Five little folk grouped about me before an open wood-fire at the close of an October day of wind and snow, and I, the victim of the above demand, was lying on the rug, ready to be amused and entertained.

"Must I tell the story after all? Well, what shall it be? Shall I tell you about my travels, and the funny little Swiss children, or shall I tell you what a little wave told me one day, as I sat on the rocks and watched it playing in the great ocean?"

"The wave! The wave!" cried one and all. And so I began:

"My home was in a mountain in Switzerland, the little wave said, near an old hut, amidst mosses and ferns. I was very small; so small you could scarcely see me, except when the sun shone on my face, and made little dimples in my cheeks. I was very merry, and the boy who lived in the hut near by used to throw me pebbles and bright red berries, and sometimes gave me his yellow curls to play with. You might think I was afraid of the great mountains that towered up at my back, and I used to hear people say, as they passed, 'The mountains are frowning.' But I could never understand what they meant, for the great, strong things were always friendly to me, and the one in which I lived was very grateful when I would trickle down its side, and give the thirsty ferns and berries water to drink. Well, I was a happy little thing, with meadows before me, the music of cow-bells day and evening, and the smiling heavens over my head. But, just as little children grow larger and eager to see more of the world, so I grew larger and less patient, and began to dream about the big ocean, which the boy was always talking about, where, he said, his father sailed big ships, and the moon and stars best loved to shine. To be sure, the sun coaxed me to forget such things through the day, but every night, when the sun and world had gone to sleep, I would look straight up at the stars, and beg them to tell me all about it. You see, I was only a very tiny mountain-brook, after all, and had never seen the great ocean, so far away.

"One day the wind came in a flurry, and whispered strange things to me; the thunder-clouds began to cover the mountain-peaks; the lightning broke the

clouds to pieces, and down came a flood of pouring rain. The earth about me was scattered everywhere, and down I came, bursting my prison-bars, tumbling, rolling, half in terror, half in delight, and unconscious of what was coming. Other streams ran by me, as joyous and eager as I, and, joining them, I found out that I was really on my longed-for journey to the ocean!

"O joy!" I cried aloud, and hurried on, with wonderful visions in my brain. I should soon be part of a great river, they told me, and flow into a lake. And I did, and a pretty blue lake it was, and a happy child was I for many days.

"But still the lake was not the

the roar of breakers on the beach. I tore up trees, banks, grasses, stones and great rocks. I let dams loose, threw pine-trees across wood-paths, laying bare to the world their snake-like roots. On, on in my fury, winding in and out, behind mountains, by great castles, anywhere where I could astonish and frighten! But when I came to the valley which the clouds were bathing in golden glory, little flecks of pink and blue floating in their midst; where, over the tops of the mountains, a rainbow was arching itself, each end resting in the valley below; and where, sweetest of all, I could hear children's voices chanting at vespers, I began to grow ashamed of my wild-

nature smiled and nodded at me, and I never asked myself where I was going, but flowed on, with my secret longing locked up in my bosom,—God only holding the key.

"Do you wonder, then, when the boundless ocean burst upon my sight, and I knew that in one short hour I should be a part of it, that, not with the old wildness and dash, but quietly and singing praises, I went along, sometimes losing sight of my love, but always knowing it was awaiting me with open arms! And now, here I am, one of its own children, a real little wave of the great sea, and I beat against the rocks where people sit, and dream, and tell my life to all who will listen.

The moon and stars and the warm sunshine are my constant friends the world beneath is far more beautiful than I can tell you,—coral island, stately castles, and beautiful maidens who shimmer the ocean with wondrous colors,—blue, emerald, amethyst and gold. Sometimes when the ocean is so radiant with color, I dream of the Swiss valley and mountains, and of the rainbow that taught me patience and hope, and trust, and wonder if God has reflected its beauty here for my sake. So I sing and splash against the rocks with constant rejoicings for my happiness.

"That is the end, children," I said, after a long silence had followed, and hopeful eyes were gazing deep into the dying embers. "And now you must scamper off to bed. Don't forget to think of the wave and its history when you are impatient, and feel you cannot wait longer for what you want."

And I kissed the upturned faces, with a blessing in my heart for the little wave singing and tumbling about the rocks in the dark night.

—St. Nicholas.



BLUE-JAYS.

ocean, and though I had made friends with the leaves and little islands scattered everywhere, yet I secretly resolved to tell the lady of the lake all about it, and ask her to let me go. She came in the night, gliding along in a silver boat with two swans at its head, up to where I was, near the sandy shore, and told me of an outlet far off. To this she led me, and with a wave of her wand she bid me be free!

"Oh, how wild I grew, and how vain I was, and how proud of my strength! I would show the people in the castle, far-off there, what I could do! Four days the wind raged, and I raged, too, tumbling the rocks about in my bed with so furious a noise that people afterward said it was louder than

ness, to flow more and more slowly, and to be sorry that I should be so impatient and restless. I was truly sorry for my naughtiness, and when I looked at the beautiful rainbow and thought of Him who put it there just for me, perhaps, I said softly to myself, 'If God will only let me be a little wave in the great sea, I will go leagues and leagues, never be fretful again, and wait just as long as He wants me to.'

"And I did grow patient, and though I never thought I was pretty, children called me beautiful, trees and foliage looked down into my heart, and the willows hung their waving tresses over me. Birds came, too, and made me almost delirious with their sweet carollings. All the world of

BLUE-JAYS.
If fine feathers made fine birds, the pretty creatures that you see in the picture would deserve everybody's praise. The brilliant blue of their backs and breasts, the elegant marking of their wings, and the proud crests on their heads, give them a distinguished appearance that wins universal admiration. But with birds, as with boys and girls, it is not always the handsomest that are the best. Judged by the rule of "Handsome is that handsome does," the blue-jay deserves few admirers.

A flock of blue-jays will frequently spend half a day squealing and chattering around the