

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Green Bonnet: a Story of Easter Day.

(By Sarah Orne Jewett, in 'The Youth's Companion'.)

To begin with, Miss Sarah McFarland had not thought well of the bonnet she had worn all winter.

It was a presentation bonnet from an aunt who lived in Boston, and was therefore entitled to proper respect; but if the aunt, who had presented it the autumn before, not without parting pangs and a sense of great generosity, had seen how many times the present owner had angrily ripped off the feathers and moved them from side to side, and curled them with the edge of the scissors until they looked thinner and thinner and more and more spiritless, she would certainly have sighed over an unappreciated gift. There are many advantages about ostrich plumes but now and then some wilful relics of those energetic birds refuse to curl or to curve, or to look anything but flat or forlorn.

So all winter long Miss Sarah McFarland, aged eighteen, had never gone to church on a single Sunday without regret at her own appearance, and the green velvet bonnet had got many an angry glance and pettish shake. Sarah was always more or less conscious of being a horrid spectacle of tastelessness to the rest of the congregation. She sometimes had so keen a sense of those worn-out feathers which topped her pretty head that they felt as if they had stems that came through like sharp pins.

It was really such an awful old bonnet for a girl to wear; poor Sarah began to feel as if it somehow made her look more and more like the aunt who had given it, and more like the aunt who had given it, and who was anything but a beauty. The fact that she owned a good house in Boston and could do many things for her namesake did not make her any pleasanter, either. She was not likely to do the things a person wanted done.

But Sarah's father had very little money, and there were four girls younger than she. So she forbore, as she walked to church, to give unnecessary glances at the shadows of those sprawling little flat feathers on the snow.

There were almost no ways for a girl to earn money in Walsingham. It was a large township among the northern hills, with scattered houses and only one group which could by any stretch of imagination be called a village. This was composed of the church, Mr. Bent's store where the post-office was, and the blacksmith shop, which was a shop of high renown. John Tanner, the blacksmith, was almost a man of genius; that whole region of country depended upon him. He had taken the business at sixteen, when his father died, and now at twenty-four or five, he was one of the best known men in a large neighborhood.

Everybody said that, with his instinctive knowledge of machinery and his power of handling metal, he should have been a trained mechanic. He had some artistic gift, but there was little chance to exercise this except now and then in a handsome pair of wrought-iron hinges for a barn door, or a really beautiful bracket which he once hammered and twisted out to hold a lantern which should light the meeting-house steps for Wednesday evening meeting.

John Tanner and his mother lived in the comfortable story-an-a-half house beside the shop and opposite the church. She was a

hospitable, motherly soul, full of generosity. They were very well-to-do, and every Sunday noon she was sure to have some friends to dinner between the morning and afternoon services. Sarah McFarland's mother, a hard-worked, delicate woman, was often invited, but Sarah herself and the younger girls took care of themselves, being so young and active. They lived only a mile and a half from the church, which was not so far, after all.

Distances were great between house and house in Walsingham, and almost every farmer had a great deal more land than he could manage—almost all the timber-land had been stripped and left the country dreary. Sarah's father was one of these

regularly, both morning and afternoon, and stayers at home were carefully accounted for; but in these days you could choose between morning and afternoon, and there was general disappointment among the older people if Sarah McFarland did not come up the aisle. Beauty is beauty wherever it is, and shines brightest in a dull place like Walsingham, where one has so little in any house to delight the eye.

But when Sarah, in the old-fashioned velvet bonnet, thought of her despised head-gear and blushed for shame and sorrow, it was the moment when she looked prettiest, and made a thrill of pleasure in the country church. She was a good child, and many a dull-looking old farmer, sleepy with a hard



ALL PLEAS FOR A NEW BONNET WERE UNHEEDED BY HER FATHER

poor farmers, and it seemed hard to everybody that instead of a growing family of stout boys to help him work on the land, he had only his five girls; and it was often said that Sarah, the eldest, would have been so much more help if she had been a boy.

It seemed to everybody that Sarah was growing prettier every day, and toward spring in spite of her youthful sorrows, and even the shadow of mortification which attended the Sunday church-going, her bright beauty attracted much public attention. In the old days everybody went to church re-

week's work, got more delight in looking at her than in the whole week besides. As for the young men, there were very few to share this pleasure. They went away as fast as they could, just as the girls did, to get something to do in the larger towns. Sarah herself was going to Boston to live with her aunt as soon as her next sister could take her place at home. They had a milk farm, and there was a great deal to do. Ethel was a good scholar, and this was to be her last year at school. Sarah did not care much for the prospect of be-