

BOYS AND GIRLS

a Pause in the Day's Occupation.

THE DOLL'S FUNERAL.

When my dolly died, when my dolly died, I sat on the step and I cried, and I cried, and I couldn't eat any jam and bread, 'Cause it didn't seem right when my dolly was dead. And Bridget was sorry as she could be. For she patted my head, and "Oh," said she, "To think that the pretty has gone and died!" Then I broke out afresh, and I cried and cried.

And all the dollys from all around. And to see my dolly put under the ground. There were Lucy Lee and Mary Clark Brought their dollys over all dressed in black. And Emmeline Hope and Sarah Lou Came over and brought their dollys, too.

And all the time I cried and cried, 'Cause it hurt me so when my dolly died. We dressed her up in a new white gown, With ribbons and laces all around. And made her a coffin in a box Where my brother keeps his spelling blocks. And we had some prayers, and a funeral, too; And our hymn was "The Two Little Girls in Blue."

But for me I only cried and cried, 'Cause it truly hurt when my dolly died. We dug her grave in the violet bed, And planted violets at her head; And we raised a stone and wrote quite plain, "Here lies a dear dolly who died of pain."

And then my brother he said "Amen," And we all went back to the house again. But all the time I cried and cried, 'Cause 'twas right when my dolly had died.

And then we had more jam and bread, But I didn't eat, 'cause my dolly was dead. But I tied some crepe on my dolly-house door, And then I cried and cried some more. I couldn't be happy, don't you see, 'Cause the funeral belonged to me.

And then the others went home, and then I went out and dug up my dolly again. Dear Aunt Becky: This is my first letter to you. I live in the country, but I stay at my grandma's to go to school in the town at the Congregation de Notre Dame. I have one sister and one brother. My name is May Murphy. I know there are two other little girls the name of May and Laura Murphy. I hope they will soon write as I am longing to see some letters from them. As my letter is getting long, I will close, hoping to see my letter in print. I remain,

Your loving niece,
MAY MURPHY,
St. John's, P.Q.

Dear Aunt Becky: This is my first letter to you. I have often wished to write. I am ten years old and I am going to make my first communion next spring. I have four sisters and two go to the school. I learn Sacred History, History of Canada, geography, grammar and arithmetic. I am in the second reader. Our teacher's name is Mother St. Ann. Well dear Aunt, I can't think of any more. I will write more next time. Hoping to see my letter in print, I remain,

Your loving niece,
EDITH WALSH,
Montreal.

Dear Aunt Becky: This is my first letter to the corner. I like to read the letters and stories in the True Witness. I was eleven years old the 2nd of July and I go to school every day. I am in the fourth book and study geography, grammar, history, hygiene, arithmetic and algebra. I have five sisters living and two dead. The youngest is living; we call her the doctress. This is a very lonely place in winter, as there is no priest stationed here this last four years.

This is all I can think of for the present. Hoping to see my letter in print, with love, I remain,
MADELINE PENNEY.

AN EVERY-DAY ROBIN.

The front door opened and closed gently. Mrs. Rivenburg winced. It only it had been slammed! Soft footsteps went by the sitting-room door and up the stairs. A door above opened and closed quietly, then everything was still. "Mother!" Esther looked at her mother with wide, appealing eyes. A faint smile quivered around Mrs. Rivenburg's mouth, and then she laughed, a trifle unsteadily. They were so tragic, they two. They had been sitting here for an hour, waiting. And now, without a word, they knew.

Presently the door above opened and swift steps came down the stairs. "I wonder what he told her?" Esther said breathlessly, and then with a tightening of her hands, "I detest him! I do! I detest and despise him!"

"Hush!" Mrs. Rivenburg held up her hand warningly. The door opened and Lavinia came in. She was quite composed, though a little pale. She looked from her mother to her sister, inquiringly. "Well?" asked Mrs. Rivenburg faintly. She knew. Had not the gently-closed door told the story? Lavinia struck an attitude—the attitude of the famous French violinist, to whom she had gone for a verdict as to her musical ability. She thrust forward her head, turtle fashion, and beat the air with an imaginary violin bow. "The Frenchman's broken English, 'it ces E-mpossible. You have ze talent. Yes; ze parlor talent. Zee little, small music, it ces for you. Yes. But not ze grand harmonies. Zey, for you, zhey are E-mpossible.'"

They all laughed at the clever imitation; laughed with sore hearts, to be sure. It was like Lavinia to turn her disappointment into a joke, like the Rivenburgs, to laugh and not to cry.

Mrs. Rivenburg leaned forward with outstretched hands. "Where is your violin, daughter?" "I have put it away," said Lavinia, coldly, "forever." A white line came around her hard set lips. Mrs. Rivenburg's eyes filled with tears. Esther leaned over the music she was copying. It was so hard, so cruelly hard, for only three months ago Esther had been assured that her ability as a pianist was more than the "parlor talent." And Lavinia had failed!

Winter passed slowly to the Rivenburgs. They had never before realized what Lavinia's violin had been to them. They were not demonstrative, the Rivenburgs. They hid their feelings deeply, and now it seemed to them that Lavinia's violin had been, in a way, the family life, and that they had lost the power of utterance. It had laughed and wept. It had cheered them on dreary evenings, and on dull days it had roused them like the call of a bugle.

Esther began to slip backward steadily in her music. Something was gone from it. "It is the violin," she said one day, wonderingly, to her mother; "Lavinia kept me up to the mark." And then with a start of surprise, "Why, we're all slipping back. Do you know, I believe she kept us all up." Lavinia threw herself into her school work as she had never done before. She was slowly but surely creeping up to the head of her class. But something was gone from her, too. She grew a little hard. She was not always kind in her upward progress. Not quite the gay, sweet-natured Lavinia Rivenburg of a year ago. Without realizing it, her ideals were slipping back a trifle, and her spirit was not quite up to the mark.

It was the first warm evening of spring. The girls had gone for a walk, leaving their father and mother in the sitting-room. It was here, just at dusk, that Lavinia used to come to play the dear old songs her father loved, and now, as the day began to fade, he longed for them. It seemed to him that the echoes were still ringing in the walls. "Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand," he quoted, "and the sound of a voice that is still!" Mrs. Rivenburg's eyes filled.

A voice, sweet, loving, caressing—that was what the violin had been. It was the voice of their undemonstrative daughter, speaking through the violin to them, telling her highest, noblest thoughts.

Mr. Rivenburg opened the window and leaned out. The girls came in with exclamations about the heat. Then the four set for a time in silence. Suddenly through the open window they heard the vespers song of a robin, and with one accord they cried, "It is spring!"

"You can talk to me about your nightingales and skylarks, and—" Mr. Rivenburg paused. "Tree toads?" suggested Lavinia. "Yes, tree toads. I've heard them all. They're fine and all that, I suppose. But the song that goes down deeper and closer to everyone's heart, I believe, is just the common, ordinary song of the everyday robin."

"Hark to the patriot!" laughed Esther. "You heard nightingales abroad, and don't like them because they aren't American." "No such thing! But a nightingale or a—" "Tree toad?" someone again suggested.

"Yes, or a tree-toad must have conditions just right, or he won't sing. He sits back and sulks. The robin is always on hand. He's always cheerful. He hasn't a great deal to give, perhaps, but he gives it all; he gives it every day, girls, with a gurgling, overflowing happiness. And that's what counts. He hasn't much of a gift, just 'ze parlor talent,' Lavinia, but he uses what he has."

Lavinia went upstairs with a flush on her face. So father's little homily had been for her! If father only knew! She took down her violin from the high shelf, opened the case, and with quivering fingers touched the loose strings. "Oh, I can't! I can't!" she cried. A tear splashed down on the shining wood. But she did not put the violin away again. It lay all night on her table.

She was borne back from the land of sleep on billows of song. Millions of robins were singing outside her window. Thousands of them, hundreds. Finally when she had struggled back to wakefulness, she found it was really only one swaying on the branch of a cherry tree. Just a common, everyday robin, but, oh, what a flood of melody was pouring from his throat!

"Just an everyday robin," she mused as she stood by the window, ready for breakfast. It was hard to be just that; so hard to have just "ze parlor talent." She looked out and watched the people passing in the street below. There was Marion Davis going to work. Marion had no home sorrow; mother, there, looking listlessly from his sick-room window, was Jack Legrand, rich to be sure, but crippled and fatherless. There were the two Taylor boys going around to the hospital, anxious to know if their mother had passed a good night.

Suddenly Lavinia remembered how once, when she was very small, she cried because she couldn't have a red parasol and a Shetland pony, new shoes and a toy balloon, a "truly" watch and a new doll, all at once. And her father had said, in his funny, whimsical way, "You mustn't expect that all the gold lace in life will be sewed on your dress, dear."

But wasn't that just what she had been expecting? How brave all of those people in the streets were! They went on in spite of heartaches, and did their work in the world. What a coward she had been! She had not only expected all the gold lace to be sewed on her dress, but she had been fostering a growing resentment in her heart because the particular, shiny bit she most longed for, had been denied her. She had actually felt that she was being cheated out of something rightfully hers.

Suddenly she took up her violin, tuning it as best she could, cuddling it lovingly under her chin. It was rather a harsh and rasping sound that came from it, as if it had taken cold during its imprisonment, but Lavinia didn't care. She bowed with a flourish to the robin outside. "We're two of a kind," she cried. "We have just 'ze parlor talent.'"

She went out through the hall softly playing "Robin Adair." "Here's a robin at dars," she called down gayly over the balusters; and the family gathered in the dining-room below, looked at each other with glad faces and cried with one accord: "It's spring!"

HELEN'S CHANGE OF MOOD.

"Now, grandma, don't preach. I came to spend vacation quietly with you, and try to forget that horrid bank has swallowed up my last year at the School of Design, and that I must stay at home and wash dishes the same as ever."

"Forgive me, Helen, for bringing up the matter, but I must have my say and then we will close the subject for all time. I can't bear to see you settle down in despair, and give up your bright prospects so easily. Because the Sagertown bank has failed, is no reason why you must give up fitting yourself for your life-work. It is just as necessary that you should be able to help your mother and Tom as ever it was. If you have lost the money for your art school, you must get some more. It isn't so bad to lose money as it is to lose the means of getting it."

"But I haven't any means of getting it," answered Helen, who was in no mood to be told her duty. "You are young and strong and have two good hands, and your time is your own."

"But what can I do here?" "Who made that dress you have on?"

"I did. Why?" "Couldn't you make one for some one else? Elsie Walworth—"

"Yes, I know Elsie is working in the canning factory, and Maud Hastings is with the seed company. Don't think for a minute I am too proud to work for a living; it's what I expected to do—after next year. But it would take me two years to earn a year at the School of Design. And mamma just can't give it to me. I wish I had gone to Europe last year with the Stones. I would have had something out of that money. As it is I have a cent for next term, and it is only five months away."

"My dear, don't be discouraged. You can do whatever you determine to do. I am sorry to see you give up so easily. My William—your father—wouldn't have done it."

Helen's big brown eyes softened and grew moist at the mention of the father whom she had idolized. "How old are you, Helen?" "Nineteen."

"He was only seventeen when his father died, and he had to leave school and provide for his sisters and me."

Helen did not answer. She was looking out of the window at nothing, and thinking, selfishly, that if her father had lived she would not have to worry about money matters. She was called from her gloomy thoughts a few minutes later by grandma.

"Helen, will you go down to Mrs. Crawford's and get a roll of butter?"

Grandma was wise, and did not add that she thought the morning walk would do the girl good. Nor did she hint that if Helen did not go, Mrs. Crawford would send the butter the next morning as usual.

Following grandma's directions, Helen soon found herself at Mrs. Crawford's. A little boy of six opened the door to her, and led the way into the neat little sitting-room where a woman sat by the window sewing. As she came to meet her caller, with bright eyes and smiling face, Helen saw that her right sleeve was empty.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Crawford, acknowledging Helen's introduction. "I have often heard Mrs. Stacy speak of the grandchildren. Take a seat by the fire. I was just sewing a button on Charlie's coat."

Helen nearly forgot her errand in wonder and amazement at watching the little woman's bright face and easy movements.

She was saying to herself that she would never smile again if she had lost an arm; but she took the proffered chair, saying awkwardly: "Thank you—I came for the butter, but am in no hurry. Please finish the button."

Helen watched her every movement with fascination, and as Mrs. Crawford broke her thread and helped Charlie into his coat, their eyes met and Helen blushed crimson. "I beg your pardon," she murmured. "I must seem very rude, but it is wonderful to me that you do things so easily and—and—cheerfully."

"It is the result of practice and desperate determination," she answered with a smile. "I have proved to myself that one can do what she sets out to do. When I found that I must lose my arm, I resolved that I would not allow myself to be helpless. I used to earn quite a bit setting type afternoons, and it was hard to give that up; but I set about learning to do everything with my left hand that I could do with my right. It has been a year now," she added, glancing down at the empty sleeve—"and I am getting used to it. And as for doing it cheerfully—isn't that the right way?"

"Yes, but I couldn't," said Helen with mixed feelings of pity and shame as she remembered her grandma's remark, that "it is not so bad to lose money as it is to lose the means of getting it."

"You don't know what you can do until you have to—and try," continued Mrs. Crawford. "It is wonderful how many more things we can do than we think we can."

Grandma looked out of the window many times before she saw her granddaughter coming up the hill. She had been a little anxious of the result of her experiment, but was reassured when she heard the quick step on the walk and saw Helen's pink cheeks and shining eyes. She did not wait to take off her wraps, or even to put away the butter, but threw herself at her grandma's feet exclaiming: "Grandma, did you send me to Mrs. Crawford's on purpose?"

She did not wait for grandma to plead guilty, but rattled on: "I never felt so humble in my life. When I felt that little woman down there doing her work with one hand, I felt guilty to own two hands that were so helpless. I walked as if in a trance—thinking of how she would do this, and how she would do that—why, grandma, you don't know how it made me feel to see her sewing on a button with one hand, and—"

"Smiling! I got to the grove when the little boy overtook me with the butter, which in my confusion I had left behind. I sat down on a log, and thought it all out. It is wonderful how one's mood can change in an hour. I can think of lots of things I can do. I have my plans all made. I am going to patch, darn and bind skirts for the girls at school—I can begin next week. Mildred Stow earned fifty dollars that way last year. Then what I earn next summer, with my patching and darning next year, will take me through. I will do it. Do you hear me, grandma? And if I ever hear of washing dishes with two hands, I shall come to Stamford, and go down to Mrs. Crawford's after some butter. Are you listening, grandma?"

Grandma was listening.

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Father of the Irish Party.

Probably it will come as a revelation to many people, says the Westminster Gazette, to learn that William Redmond, who is by his gaiety of heart and sprightliness of wit, regarded still as one of the youngest members of the Irish party, is entitled to rank as the father of that party, having had the longest continuous service in the House of Commons, which he first entered in 1883, of any member representing a constituency in Ireland. T. P. O'Connor, who sits for an Irish constituency in England, the Scottish Division of Liverpool, and has been a member of the House of Commons without interruption from 1880, is the father of the Irish Parliamentary Party, strictly speaking.

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