

Columbia's Flower.

Upon a day in merry May,
Among the buds of spring,
Our bonny lass, Columbia,
Went lightly wandering.
And first she plucked a wind flower,
And gravely shook her head,
"Too pale you are, too frail you are,
For what I want," she said.

And next she found a shady nook
Where purple violets grew,
"I never spied a flower," she cried,
"That could compare with you."
How neat you are! how sweet you are,
You modest little dear!
But, oh, so diffident! I guess
I'd better leave you here.

And so she roamed from flower to flower,
But carried none away;
One was too grave to suit her taste,
Another was too gay.
The daisy and the buttercup
Smiled in her face in vain;
"Too trim you are, too prim you are,"
She laughed in her disdain.

Nor would she heed one lovely weed
That through the summer grows;
She tossed aside the purple flag,
She flouted the wild rose;
And was so hard to suit indeed,
It seemed she'd never find—
This little lass, Columbia—
A blossom to her mind.

But one day through the autumn fields
With nimble feet she trod,
And dale and height were all bedight
With splendid golden-rod.
Then merrily she clapped her hands:
"This is the thing for me;
Type of the gold my broad lands hold,
To which the world is free!"

"Oh! mine you are, for fine you are,
And beautiful and strong;
You are the flower that shall be set
To sermon and to song,
And through the land Columbia,
The fairest child of God,
Went smiling, with her golden hair
All crowned with golden-rod."
—Mary Bradley, in *Harper's Weekly*.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Hid in the Christmas Mist.

It was a narrow yard with rows of holly-hocks down each side of a grass plot and at the foot a little sand pile with a toy spade and bucket beside it. The holly-hocks had crumbly little brown buttons where the gorgeous crimson rosettes had once been, and the grass was dull and faded; the only bright spot in the garden was baby's red cloak.

Baby had stopped digging a well in the sand and thrown down her spade to watch something which was crawling about in the grass. It was only an ugly brown caterpillar, and it was wiggling its way awkwardly along, but to baby it was a thing of interest. She poked it with her fat fingers, and it rolled itself into a queer, round ball, and baby laughed. She pushed it a little, and the furry ball rolled away quite out of sight between two boards. Then baby cried.

Why two great tears on a baby's face and a sobbing "Gone!" should mean that a caterpillar had just fallen down a crack I cannot tell; yet baby's mother led her in—all smiles now; carrying the caterpillar on a green twig.

When baby's papa came home he was shown the new treasure. Baby's papa disliked creeping things, they made him shiver; but baby loved them; that was enough; so he let the caterpillar crawl over his hands.

Soon a wonderful thing happened. Mr. Caterpillar spun a nest about the twig and hid himself away from baby. Mamma explained how some day he would come, all beautiful and gay, out of the dark shell into the bright sunshine, and baby laughed and clapped her hands. Then mamma stuck the twig over a picture frame and forgot all about it.

It was Christmas. The yard was covered with snow and it looked narrower than ever, and the sandpile at the foot was a little white mound. The hollyhock stalks were quite bare, and there was no bright spot in the garden now—baby was dead.

A tiny casket stood in the parlor, and in that white mist baby was hidden away. Her father and mother kneeled while friends whispered of hope and comfort, but their words fell upon dull ears.

Then there fluttered, from somewhere above a great golden butterfly with sunshine in his wings. Slowly he circled down and settled upon the coffin—baby's coffin.

The father, sobbed, and hid his face in his hands, but the mother's countenance was bright with hope, and she murmured, "Thy will be done."

What Does It Mean.

"Father, what does it mean to be a drunkard? Maggie Gray said you were a drunkard, and her father said so, too!" Had a bomb-shell exploded at the feet of Mr. Weston, he could not have been more surprised. He stood mute, and one could have heard a pin drop, so silent were they all; but Kate nothing daunted, after waiting what she considered a proper length of time, repeated the question, and it was answered: "A man who drinks liquor and makes a beast of himself." "Is that what you do father?" "It is what I have done sometimes," he replied, in a choked voice. "It's bad, ain't it?" "Yes, child; the very worst thing a man can do." "And that's what makes mother cry when there don't anything hurt her; and that's why I have to wear such dreadful old shoes?"

Only one word in reply to this—"Yes."

"Then I shouldn't think you'd do so any more; cause mother's good, an' I don't like to wear old shoes a bit! You won't be a drunkard any more will you?" "No, darling, I won't; and raising his right hand he promised never to drink another drop of intoxicating liquor." "God helping me," he added reverently. "God bless you, darling, you have saved me!"

Then there were tears and sobs and broken ejaculations, all for joy, while supper was forgotten. It made no difference to Kate, whether her shoes were old or not, but when, a few days later, she became the possessor of some

long boots with red lacings and tassels, she had a better appreciation of the change which had taken place. Since then she has often received beautiful gifts, and always she remembers, with a grateful heart, that her father is not a drunkard.

ABOUT ALTAR BOYS.

An Open Letter from One Who Knows Them.

It is my lot—perhaps I ought to say my happy lot—to be quite well acquainted, and in fact to have a good deal to do with a certain set of altar-boys. Yet I grieve to say that it is not always a happy lot. There are less than two dozen of them, from nine years of age to seventeen, and I have reason to think they are tolerably good altar-boys; but—they might be so much better.

Sometimes I get them together—the process resembling that of getting so many little rolling balls of mercury together—and try to tell them what a real earnest altar-boy ought to be. I tell them of St. Tarcisus, acolyte and server of the Blessed Sacrament, patron of servers at the holy altar; and of St. Stanislaus and St. Aloysius and St. John Berchmans, who loved so dearly to serve Mass, and who were so quiet and recollected in church, and so devout at prayer. I tell them how the angels feel a holy envy of them at their sacred duty, and how the sanctuary is full of angels, pressing reverently around the altar, and how a priest, whom some of them perhaps have seen, told his little server one day, that they two were the happiest people in the church, because they came nearest to our Lord.

But at first the boys think it hard to listen, and though sometimes, when they do listen, their faces grow very serious, and you can see they are touched by what they hear,—alas! as we all know, a boy's memory is very short, and presently saints and angels seem quite forgotten for the sake of some silly whisper to a comrade, some idle laugh or wandering gaze, some foolish bit of fun.

Now if I may be permitted to speak from some ten years' experience with the race of altar-boys, the truth comes very greatly from two things.

First, the boys do not recognize sufficiently the dignity of their position. Give any one of those seventeen boys, whom, Sunday after Sunday, it is my privilege, but also my trial, to meet—give any one of them an important errand to do. Each one, I am confident, would be likely to fulfil it in a satisfactory and manly fashion. So what I claim is that each one could do the same in his holy calling, could we bring him to understand how important that calling is.

But second, they need systematic training in this.

An altar-boy is something more than a machine to speak Latin, and carry cruets, and light candles; he is something more than an ordinary Sunday-school scholar. He stands apart from all other boys in the parish; he is brought out in view of everybody's eye; he needs a special grace, this altar boy, who, whether he be seven or seventeen, is just the age his Lord is once, and who ought to remember that, and also how very near to our Lord's body and blood he comes.

We owe our own debt of respect and thanks to these faithful little fellows, coming sturdily through all weathers in the early morning, at 6 o'clock or 6:30 or 7 or 8, to serve Mass. We ought to pray for them, and not be too hard on them if sometimes they do not act like angels. Nevertheless, they might be and they ought to be a good deal harder on themselves. Let them think over this fact carefully, that they need a great grace to do such work as theirs.—*Sacred Heart Review*.

Catholicity in Mexico.

The following view of the position of the Church in Mexico is that of Mr. F. R. Guernsey of the Boston Herald, a Protestant correspondent intelligently bent upon writing the truth. As evidence, it outweighs columns of stuff written by missionaries intent on justifying their claim to a salary from the A. B. C. F. M.:

"Catholicity is not dying out; there is, rather, something like a Catholic revival here. Old abandoned churches are being redecored, and the rural clergy find large audiences when they preach. What the policy of the new Archbishop will be is not yet disclosed, but it is rumored that he will try to bring about a better feeling between the rulers of the land and its historic Church. The Church has its faults, but it is part of the bone and tissue of the Mexican people. It has profoundly influenced the character of the people, and it has taught a race of noble women—the ever-charming, home-loving mothers of Mexico. The Catholic Church is their spiritual home; it gives them solace in their daily lives. One would like to be sure of many things as of the permanency of the ancient Church."

Mrs. John McLean writes, from Barrie Island, Ont., March 4, 1889, as follows: "I have been a great sufferer from neuralgia for the last nine years, but, being advised to try St. Jacob's Oil, can now heartily endorse it as being a most excellent remedy for this complaint, as I have been greatly benefited by its use."

Monthly Prizes for Boys and Girls. The "Sunlight" Soap Co., Toronto, offer the following prizes every month till further notice, to boys and girls under 15, residing in the Province of Ontario, who send the greatest number of "Sunlight" wrappers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 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