

## THE LITTLE FOLK.

## THE CHILDREN'S MUSIC.

We asked where the magic came from  
That made her so wondrous fair,  
As she stood with the sunlight touching  
Her gloss of golden hair,  
And her blue eyes looked towards heaven  
As though they could see God there?  
"Hush," said the child; "can't you hear it,  
The music that's everywhere?"

God help us! we could not hear it,  
Our hearts were heavy with pain;  
We heard men toiling and wrangling,  
We heard the whole world complain;  
And the sound of a mocking laughter  
We heard again and again,  
But we lost all faith in the music  
We had listened so long in vain.

"Can't you hear it?" the young child whispered,  
And sadly we answered, "No—  
We might have fancied we heard it  
In the days of long ago;  
But the music is all a delusion,  
Our reason has told us so,  
And you will forget that you heard it  
When you know the sound of woe."

Then one spoke out from among us  
Who had nothing left to fear;  
Who had given His life for others,  
And been repaid with a scar.  
And His face was lit with a glory,  
And His voice was calm and clear  
As He said, "I can hear the music  
Which the little children hear."

"Good Words."

## THE THIN PLACES.

There! my darning is done for the week; every hole is mended."

"And the thin places?"

"Thin places? why, auntie, I never look for thin places. There are always holes enough to keep me busy."

"When I was a little girl," said auntie, "I had a dear old grandma who taught me to mend and darn, and with the teaching she slipped in many a lesson about higher things. 'Look out for thin places,' she used to say; 'it will save you a deal of trouble. A few runs backward and forward with the needle will save a half-hour's darning next week. There are a few thin places in your character,' she said one day, 'that you'd better attend to—little failings that will soon break into sins.' I did not quite understand her, so, sweetening her talk with a bit of chocolate she carried for the bairns, she said, 'I see your mother picking up your hat and jacket, and putting away your shoes again and again. I hear you sometimes speak pretty snarply when some one interrupts you at your story-telling. I heard you offer to dust the drawing-room several days ago, and you forgot it, and to-day your mother put down her sewing to do it.' I felt so ashamed that I never forgot about the thin places after that, though I'm afraid I did not always attend to them at once."

"Why, Aunt Mary, if you hadn't said grandmother, I'd think you meant me. There are my boots in the corner, and I promised mamma to dust the sitting room this very day! But I don't quite understand what holes she meant."

"If you can't find your things, and you are in a hurry, what might happen, Grace?"

Grace coloured, and her eyes fell.

"I did get very angry about my grammar. I was sure I put it on my desk."

"And you found it on the sofa! Then if you promise and do not perform, might it not lower your notion of truthfulness, and give Satan more power over you?"

"Why, auntie, I went up and tidied my room."

"I don't understand, Grace."

"I thought you knew," said the girl, in a shamed whisper. "I told mamma I had tidied my room (for I promised I would) when I had forgotten it, and was ashamed to own up. Oh, I see how thin places become holes, and I mean to look out."

"With God's help," said auntie softly; and Grace, giving her a hug, ran to put away her boots and dust the sitting room.

## A PNEUMATIC BOY

"What is that," asked Ned's father, looking up from the newspaper, that you are saying about Tom Roderick's 'bike'—"

"Why you see," answered Ned, edging up to his father, so as to get into short-distance communication with him, "it has a pneumatic—"

"Didn't I get you the latest pattern of tyre that was made?" his father broke in upon this explanation. "I cannot afford to throw away a brand new wheel just because some inventor has come out with an improvement on it."

"It is not the tyre, papa," broke in Ned eagerly; my tyre is all right. But, you see, it's a pneumatic seat that Tom Roderick has on his, and that's ever so much better than the old-fashioned steel spring leather seat."

"A pneumatic seat!" echoed Mr. Wilson. "Well, I wonder what in the world is coming next. There is just one thing more somebody ought to invent," he mused, with half a smile upon his lips, "and that is a pneumatic boy to ride the pneumatic-tyred safety with a pneumatic seat. I think in this age of the world, when everybody seems to be trying to avoid jars and shakes in every other way, that it would be a fine thing to have a boy about the house built on that plan. I'll see about your pneumatic seat for your safety after we have some evidences that there is a pneumatic boy to sit on it. I don't think it's fair that one member of the family should have all the smooth riding, and his baby brother, mother, and the rest be continually jolted and jarred by his ill-temper and poor memory."

Ned knew it was of no use to argue the matter, and so went away doubting as to whether his appeal had done any good, yet with a half-formed idea in his mind that his father had meant that he would swap a pneumatic seat for his safety for a pneumatic boy, whatever that meant. The more he thought about it, the plainer it became to him that this was the situation of affairs. The figure of speech, in which father had likened him to a safety, stuck in his fancy.

"I guess I am a little rough and crusty sometimes," he admitted to himself in an undertone. "Maybe I do make some jolts about the house. I guess papa must have heard me snapping at baby Dick this morning for scratching my school slate. I did make pretty rough riding for the little fellow—that's a fact. And mamma says I come home from school every night as cross as a bear."

Ned sat still on the porch settee for five minutes without even whistling or whittling at a stick, and that was something unusual for him. Presently he heard steps coming through the library. He pricked up his ears in an instant and then said to himself:—

"There's mamma coming to remind me about that errand down the street. I'll slip right off before she gets a chance to tell me a second time. I suppose it does worry her to have to keep jogging my memory." And with an "I'm going, mamma; I didn't forget," he scampered off as fast as his legs would carry him.

His mother thrust her head through the partly open door, and watched him disappear, in a half-surprised way, and then remarked aside to Mr. Wilson:—

"That's encouraging, I didn't suppose Ned could possibly remember to do anything from being told once."

"Ah!" responded Ned's father, "maybe he's trying to relieve your mind of some of the jolting his forgetfulness gives it. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd taken the hint I gave him, and you had pretty easy times—for a day or two at least."

Mrs. Wilson didn't understand, and so she had further occasion to be mystified over Ned's unusual thoughtfulness and generosity before the day was gone.

He came home, bringing a stick of candy.

"Here," he said, holding out the larger half to baby Dick.

This was quite an innovation on his usual procedure. Ordinarily, the baby teased, and the mother coaxed, and finally commanded, and then Ned acquiesced in a division by grasping three-fourths of the stick in his hand, and requiring the baby to break the short end off.

"That's a great deal nicer," approved the mother, "than letting your brother worry and cry over it."

"I guess it does ride smoother than the other way," agreed Ned within himself. "I'm going to see how still I can go upstairs now, and hang up the clothes I left scattered around my room."

Down in the library Ned's papa smiled to himself as he noted the whole proceeding, even though he kept busily at work. "I think," he said, casting his eye over a catalogue of bicycle dealers' supplies which Ned had with a good deal of forethought left at his elbow, "that the price of that pneumatic seat may prove one of the best investments I ever made."

Something in his father's scanning the catalogue encouraged Ned wonderfully, and it was not long before he mustered up courage to approach his father's elbow, and demurely suggest: "I guess it's been a little smoother around here lately, ain't it, papa?"

"Don't know but it has," answered the father. "It seems to me that I haven't heard Dick fretting quite so much as usual, and I know your mother has been saved quite a number of steps, and your grandmother a great deal of worry, while I haven't been—"

"Jolted," prompted Ned. That's what I call it. You see, I've been playing to myself that I am a pneumatic boy, and it was my business to keep people from being jolted. That's what a pneumatic seat is for," he shrewdly concluded.

"I see," answered the father. "You've shown me how much easier riding with a pneumatic seat is, and I guess we'll have to order one to-day for your safety. We're willing to be partners with you in this matter of smooth riding. That's a great deal fairer than to have all the smooth riding on one side, don't you think?"

"Course," assented Ned.—"Freeman."