

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

By AUNT BECKY.

Dear Boys and Girls:

I fancy you are all very busy preparing for Christmas. I think it would be very nice to write to the corner telling us all what you intend doing. If you are going to have a Christmas tree, if you are planning surprises for your friends out of your ingenious little brains, and what you are expecting Santa Claus to bring you. This would be interesting reading for the little folks who take pleasure in reading this page.

Your sincere friend,
AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

It is with great pleasure I write my first letter to you. I have heard a great deal about you from reading the letters in the True Witness. I enjoy this beautiful Catholic paper very much, and I've been reading it since I was able to read, and I am now fourteen years old. I will be fifteen on Christmas Day. Is it not a beautiful birthday to have? I attend the Collegiate Institute and I like the studies very much. I study Latin, French, zoology, botany and many others. I also study music, and I like all my teachers very well. We have had two or three snowstorms this year and the weather is very, very cold. Our Peterboro Cathedral is a magnificent piece of architecture. The plan is so artistically laid out. The women had their jubilee a week ago, and the men had theirs last week. I made the jubilee and received Communion. I have four brothers and four sisters. My eldest sister entered the convent of St. Joseph three years ago, and is at present in Lindsay. Mother missed her very much at first and does still, but she is getting used to being without her. Mother and father are anxious that we all should be sisters. At times I think I would and other times I think I wouldn't. I suppose when I get older I will feel different. Well, dear Aunt, I hope this is not too long. I will close, with hopes to see my letter in print. I remain,

Your affectionate niece,
AILEEN.

Peterboro, Ont.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I am glad Christmas is drawing near, for Santa Claus always brings me presents and lots of candies and fruit. I wonder if there are any children that he does not visit at Xmas. My papa started to get up his wood pile. We raised a hundred and forty-five chickens this summer. My baby brother, who is five years old, gathers the eggs most of the time. Good-bye,

LIZZIE.

Granby.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I was reading some very nice stories in the True Witness last night on the children's page. I like to read them. You think the birds are depending on our charity in the cold weather, so do I. There are a lot of birds stay in the cupola of our barn, and they come down every day into the door yard to pick up crumbs my little brother scatters for them. It is such fun to see them hop about, trying to see which will get the most. He takes great delight in feeding them. Good-bye,

ROSE.

Dear Aunt Becky:

We have been taking the True Witness for a long time and noticing the boys' and girls' little letters. I thought I would write one. I go to St. Patrick's School. I like it very well, it is a fine school. It is in the best part of the city and well ventilated. The Christian Brothers are very nice. I was in the country last summer. I had a fine time, especially on hot days, when we would run races, in our bare feet. One day my brother, cousin and I went up to the mountain to pick berries. On the top of the mountain there is a big bush which is about ten miles wide and I don't know how long. After we had eaten our fill of berries we thought it was time to go home, but when we looked around we did not know where we were. My brother, who is three years older than I, said it would be better to take one direction and keep straight ahead so we started, and we walked and walked. We were all scratched from the bushes. I was afraid that we would not get out of the bush till the next morning, but at last we came to a road and we thought we would follow it. After we came to a house and we inquired the way to get home. However, we got home, and found our neighbors were all out looking for us with lanterns. I guess I will have to close now, as I have got

to go and study my lessons. If this letter is all right I will write again.

Your little friend,
M. B. (11 years old.)

THE LUCKY LITTLE FIDDLER.

The clock on the great stone church at the corner showed that it was only half-past six, but the short November afternoon had long since deepened into darkness. The lights on the avenue shone with a flickering gleam, through the fast falling snow.

Suddenly around the corner came a figure, and as it passed under an electric light, the rays fell on a slender little lad in shabby garments, with a violin clasped tightly in his arms.

The boy's face was thin and pale, and the great brown eyes seemed full of unshed tears. Wearily he leaned against the post. No one cared to listen to him to-day, and he would have no supper. Neither breakfast nor dinner had he had, for that matter.

Oh, it was so cold, and he was so hungry.

Perhaps he might lie down here in the snow and an angel might see him and take him up to Paradise. What was that verse? Ah, yes! "And they shall have neither hunger nor thirst."

What a beautiful place that must be! He wondered if little Patrick, the bootblack, was there now. Patrick had died in the early fall.

How many nights they had shared a bun or a bit of fruit together, and planned a dazzling future, when he was a great musician and Patrick a banker, living on Fifth avenue.

Well, Patrick had found a better home than the palatial mansion he had pictured; but he was just a tired, hungry little street waif.

As he stood there in a sort of stupor, a light flashed from a window across the way. The curtain was up and he could see into the luxurious dining room where preparations for the evening meal were going on. The sight of that tempting table filled him with fresh strength, and crossing the street he drew his bow across his violin and began to play.

Now, in that great mansion lived a woman past the first bloom of youth, but with its traces still upon her. A stately, haughty woman, possessed of many talents, she dwelt in the luxurious house alone. All her kindred had crossed the dark river, and she was left, the last of a noble family. Society admired but stood in awe of her. She gave her money with lavish hand to charities, herself she never gave.

While possessing much that makes life desirable, Elinor Wentworth had missed the best in life. To-night she sat before the open fire, a bored, listless look on her handsome face. She would have to go abroad this winter, she was thinking. Home was unbearably dull.

Suddenly she raised her head in wonder. Through the still night air came the sound of a violin. Louder and louder rose the plaintive notes, and so full of sadness were they that tears unbidden came to the listener's eyes.

Hastily ringing the bell, she ordered the servant to learn who was playing outside in the bitter night.

He came back in a moment: "Twas nothing but a beggar lad, and he would send him away."

She cried out imperatively to bring him in.

"Bring him right here!" she said to the astonished man.

The boy entered, his weary face full of dread. Probably she would send him to the police station.

"What is your name?" she commanded.

"Donald Shepard, ma'am," he replied slowly.

"Play for me. Anything," and Miss Elinor seated herself and watched him closely.

He played a simple little melody, but as she looked something stirred her thoughts. Once, long ago, she had a little brother with just such beautiful dark eyes. She had worshipped him, and had cried out fiercely when he had been taken away.

What if Stephen had been left to the mercy of the cold world. The

old, tender impulses, so long repressed, leaped forth.

"Stop!" she cried, and calling him to her, held his cold little hands in her own warm ones, while she said gently:

"Donald, you have a wonderful talent. Now, I want you to tell me all about yourself."

He told her quietly. Told her of his father's struggle with poverty; how he had been a music teacher, and in the spring had followed the mother dead long ago, and had left his boy nothing in the world but his treasured violin, and the legacy of an honest name.

Miss Elinor had listened silently, her thoughts busy, but now she said:

"Donald, I once had a little brother who was dearer than all the world to me. He is gone, and I am all alone. So are you, and I want you to come and take his place," and then she drew him into her lap and kissed him.

People said that winter that Elinor Wentworth seemed to grow younger and brighter; that she had been alone so long a companion was what she needed.

She thought so herself, when the long silent rooms rang with the sound of a child's merry voice; or when at night she and Donald sat before the fire making plans for the years to come, or talking of those who were waiting for them in the far country.

One evening when they had been speaking of these loved ones, Donald told her of little Patrick, and of the neglected grave in the cemetery.

"I wish I could put a stone on it, Aunt Elinor!" he said, and she bent and kissed him for an answer.

So it came about that a week later they stood by a little mound and at the head was a marble stone with a beautiful angel on top, and below was written: "Patrick Dooley, aged ten years.—R. I. P."

IN ST. PATRICK'S WARD

(Continued from Page 2.)

her and asked who couldn't be glad to be out of that; and in the next moment informing her that maybe when she was anointed she might find herself cured an' out, as many a wan had before her, an' wasn't it well known that them that the priest laid his holy hands on, as likely as not took a good turn imaydiate.

Later on Sister Louise bent over Mrs. Brady with gentle reassuring words.

"God knows best, you know," she said at the end of her little homily, "you will say 'His will be done,' won't you?"

"Sure Sister, how can I?" whispered Mrs. Brady, opening her troubled eyes, her face almost awful to look on in its grey pallor. "How can I say 'His will be done' if I'm to die in the workhouse? An' me poor little boy comin' as fast as he can across the say to take me out of it, an' me breakin' my heart prayin' that I might live to see the day! An' when he comes back he'll find the parish has buried me. Ah, Sister, how am I to resign myself at all? In the name of God, how am I to resign myself?"

The tears began to trickle down her face, and Sister Louise cried a little too for sympathy, and stroked Mrs. Brady's hand, and coaxed and cajoled and soothed and preached to the very best of her ability; and at the end left the patient quiet, but apparently unconvinced.

It was with some trepidation that she approached her on the morrow. Mrs. Brady's attitude was so unusual that she felt anxious and alarmed. As a rule the Irish poor die calmly and peacefully, happy in their faith and resignation; but this poor woman stood on the brink of eternity with a heart full of bitterness, and a rebellious will.

Mrs. Brady's first words, however, reassured her.

"Sister, I'm willin' now to say 'His will be done.'"

"Thank God for that," cried Sister Louise, fervently.

"Aye, well wait till I tell ye. In the night when I was lying awake I took to lookin' at St. Patrick beyant, wid the little lamp flickerin' an' shinin' on his face, an' I thought o' Barney, an' that I'd never see him agin, an' I burst out cryin', 'Oh, St. Patrick!' says I, 'how'll I ever be able to make up my mind to it at all?' An' St. Patrick looked back at me rale wicked. An, 'oh,' says I agin, 'God forgive me, but sure how can I help it?' An' there was St. Patrick still wid the cross look on him, p'intin' to the shamrock in his hand, as much as to say, 'there is but the wan God in three divine persons, an' Him ye must obey.' So then I took to baitin' me breast an' sayin' 'the will o' God be done!' an' if ye'll believe me, Sister, the next time I took heart to look at St. Patrick there he was smilin' for all the world the moral o' poor Barney. So, says I, after that."

"Well, Sister, the will o' God be done! He knows best, Sister alanna, doesn't he? But," with a weak sob, "my poor little boy's heart'll be broke out an' out when he finds I'm after dyin' in the workhouse!"

"We must pray for him," said the Sister, softly, "you must pray for him and offer up the sacrifice that God asks of you, for him. Try 'not to fret so much, Barney would not like you to fret. He would grieve terribly if he saw you like this."

"Feth he would," said Mrs. Brady, sobbing again.

"Of course he would. But if he heard you were brave and cheerful over it all, it would not be half so bad for him."

Mrs. Brady lay very quiet after this and seemed to reflect.

When the priest came presently to administer the Sacraments of the dying to her, she roused herself and received them with much devotion; and presently beckoned Sister Louise to approach.

"Sister, when Barney comes axin' for me, will ye give him me pades an' the little medal that's round me neck, an' tell him I left him me blessin'—will ye, dear?"

"Indeed I will."

"God bless ye. An' tell him," speaking with animation and in rather louder tones, "tell him I didn't fret at all, an' died quite content an' happy an'—an' thankful to be in this blessed place where I got every comfort. Will ye tell him that, Sister, alanna?"

The Sister bowed her head; this time she could not speak.

It was nearly two months after-

wards that Sister Louise was summoned to the parlor to see "Mr. Brady" who had recently arrived from America, and to whom his cousin, Mr. Byrne, had broken the news of his mother's death.

Sister Louise smiled and sighed as she looked at this big, strapping prosperous-looking young fellow, and remembered his mother's description of him. The black eyes and curly hair and rosy cheeks were all there, certainly, but otherwise the likeness to "St. Patrick" was not so very marked.

"Mr. Brady wants to hear all about his poor mother, Sister," said the Sister Superior. "This is Sister Louise, Mr. Brady, who attended your poor mother to the last."

Mr. Brady, who seemed a taciturn youth, rolled his black eyes towards the new comer and waited for her to proceed.

Very simply did Sister Louise tell her little story, dwelling on such of his mother's sayings, during her last illness, as she thought might interest and comfort him.

"There are her beads, and the little medal, which she always wore. She left them to you with her blessing."

Barney thrust out one large brown hand and took the little packet, swallowing down what appeared to be a very large lump in his throat.

"She told me," pursued the Sister in rather tremulous tones, "to tell you that she did not fret at all at the last and died content and happy. She did, indeed, and she told me to say that she was thankful to be here."

But Barney interrupted her with a sudden incredulous gesture, and a big sob. "Ah, whist Sister!" he said. —Selected.

THE TRUE YELLOW PERIL.

In a recent sermon, the Bishop of Fall River warned his hearers against the sensational Sunday papers, which he described as "the true yellow peril of this country"; urging parents to keep them away from their homes, out of the hands of their children. "You can not preserve the purity of the home if you have these sensational sheets in them," said the Bishop.

It is a far cry from Fall River to Calcutta, but in distant India the same baneful influence is felt, and the same warning is re-echoed. "Through the secular press," says the Catholic Herald of Calcutta, "many come to lose touch with Catholic interests and Catholic life." Disregard of this evil, neglect of counteracting influence, is a sign of carelessness creeping in and threatening to smother Catholic life. "There is no denying," adds our distant contemporary, "that in a Catholic paper one finds what must, on the whole, to a great extent, keep alive the true Catholic spirit so much needed when everything around us is so worldly and even debased."

NATURE'S JOKES.

Gardeners all over the world are toiling to produce new flowers. Nature, in a freakish moment, will sometimes accomplish what generations of horticulturists have been unable to effect, says Pearson's Magazine.

As an instance in point, there is a Malmaison rosebush in a garden at Violet Hill, Stowmarket, which one summer recently produced a most astonishing floral freak. The rose grows near an apple tree, and when one of its largest buds first burst into bloom it was seen that five perfect apple blossom petals were springing in its centre.

A flower discovered on the isthmus of Tehuantepec in the early morning blooms a pure white; by midday it has changed to a perfect red, but before it closes at nightfall it has turned to a pale blue. Even more wonderful than its change of color is the fact that at noon only does it give out any perfume.

But the strangest flower is the New South Wales flannel flower. It is so called because it has the exact appearance of having been carefully cut out of white flannel.

ONE AT A TIME.

We are told that Adam Forepaugh once had a big white parrot that had learned to say, "One at a time, gentlemen; one at a time. Don't crush." The bird had, of course, acquired this sentence from the ticket-taker of the show. One day the parrot was lost in the country, and Mr. Forepaugh started out post-haste to hunt for it. People here and there who had seen the parrot, directed him in his quest, and finally, as he was driving by a cornfield, he was overjoyed to hear a familiar voice. He got out and entered the field, and found the parrot in the middle of a flock of crows, that had pecked him till he was almost featherless. As the crows bit and nipped away, the parrot, lying on his side, repeated over and over: "One at a time, gentlemen. One at a time. Don't crush."

God's presence makes a desert a garden of paradise.

The Secret of "Fruit-a-tives"

lies in the secret process of making them. The fruit juices are changed, chemically and medicinally—their action on the human system is intensified—their effect on disease made infallible.

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are the juices of fresh, ripe apples, oranges, figs and prunes—prepared by our secret process, and compressed into tablets.

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At all druggists, 50c. a box.

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WHAT DOCTORS SAY.

An Unprejudiced Exposition of the Danger of Alcohol.

During the last year there has been an unusual amount of discussion by leading physicians in England and France of the value of alcohol as a drug and its dangers as a beverage. There has thus been put on record a mass of testimony of the highest scientific character and entirely free from prejudice. The conclusions justified by the experience of the majority of these men may be briefly summed up as follows:

In certain bodily conditions and when carefully administered alcohol is a valuable drug, but it is at present used much too freely and with distinct harmful results. Its use as a daily beverage in any form is dangerous physically and morally. As an illustration of its medicinal abuse Sir Samuel Wilkes cites the following case:

"A young lady, for many years the subject of heart disease, had finally been forced to take to her bed, and I was called in consultation. It was a matter of formality, as she was thought to be dying.

"She was lying in bed gasping with a fluttering heart and an almost imperceptible, irregular pulse and semi-conscious; she was being plied with brandy to keep her alive. The two medical men who were present did not perceive that they were poisoning her, but nevertheless assented to my strong wish to stop the spirit. I met her a short time afterward walking in the street."

As to the daily drinking of some form of alcohol, while the weight of opinion was against it, several of the physicians said they had observed no ill effects from its use in moderation in themselves or their patients. Dr. J. Simms Woodhead, however, calls attention to the significant fact that when the body is being trained for any unusual exertion the use of alcohol is strictly prohibited.

During his athletic career at the University of Edinburgh he says: "I was early impressed by the fact that nearly every athlete who was not already an abstainer became practically a teetotaler during his period of strict training and in some cases had to stop after his routine of life that he found it almost impossible to do anything but keep in training. Those of us, on the other hand, who were teetotalers had to alter our daily routine of living comparatively little. We could continue our work in the classes, and it was not necessary for us to refuse social invitations.

"It is not dancing, dining or working that upsets men. It is getting rid of the alcohol. I may say most confidently that during my most successful athletic years I did my best class work, and during the whole of that time I do not know that I had to refuse a single invitation on account of training."

TO LIVE IN THE LORD.

How can we live in the love of our Lord? By making this love, living in the Eucharist, our centre of life, the only centre of consolation, in pain, in sorrow, in deception. He invites us: "Come to Me, all ye who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Thinking to puzzle the eminent physicist and microscopist, they brought him a miscellaneous collection of articles taken from the stomach of an ostrich.

"You can't fool me on that, gentlemen," he said. "That's the contents of a boy's pocket."



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