

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

I must express my appreciation of the interest you have taken in the page devoted entirely to yourselves. Both the way in which you wrote so regularly and worked out the puzzles pleased me very much, and I am going to get another competition ready for you. I have one in mind at the moment; but perhaps it would be more agreeable if I were to let you suggest yourselves what kind of competition you would like. Put on your thinking caps and send all your suggestions along by Jan. 12, 1907. I wish you all the best and brightest year you have yet known, with just sufficient shadow to make you search for the sunshine, which, you know, is beyond every cloud.

Lovingly, AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

It was with pleasure I received your very welcome letter containing the postal order for two dollars and fifty cents, for which I return my most sincere thanks. Wishing you, dear Aunt Becky, a very happy Christmas, I remain,

Yours respectfully, H. O'SULLIVAN. Quebec, Dec. 21st, 1906.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Many thanks, dear Aunt Becky, for awarding me the prize. With love and best wishes for a merry, merry Christmas, I remain,

Your little nephew, WALTER G. O'SULLIVAN, Quebec.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I was very much pleased to receive by this morning's mail the third prize offered for the puzzle competition. It will be all the better appreciated because it offered such a help to my bank. Many, many thanks, dear Aunt Becky, and now that the puzzles have finished, I hope we shall continue to send our letters to the corner.

Wishing all my cousins, and yourself, dear Aunt Becky, a merry merry Christmas, and a thrice happy New Year, I remain,

Your loving niece, MAUDE CREIGHTON. Quebec, Dec. 20, 1906.

THE INFANT KING.

They leave the land of gems and gold, The shining portals of the East; For Him, the Woman's Seed foretold, They leave the revel and the feast.

To earth their sceptres have been cast, And crowns by kings ancestral worn, They track the lonely Syrian waste, They kneel before the Babe newborn.

O happy eyes that saw Him first; O happy lips, that kissed His feet; Earth slakes at last her ancient thirst; With Eden's joy her pulses beat.

True kings are those who thus forsake Their kingdoms for the eternal King; Serpent, her foot is on thy neck; Herod, thou writh'st, but canst not sting.

He, He is King, and He alone, Who lifts that infant hand to bless; Who makes His Mother's knee His throne, Yet rules the starry wilderness. —Aubrey de Vere.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.

The sweetest memories that mortals know are those which gather about the scenes of childhood, and especially those which Christmas created, fostered, and maintained throughout the stay of those they loved.

The star that shone so brightly on Bethlehem's plain on that glad morning when shepherds heralded the advent of Jesus has not lost its luster. Nay, it grows more luminous and beautiful as the days go

LITTLE ODDITY

By the Author of "Served Out."

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"Men of genius are always absent-minded," Herr Bruder remarked soothingly, though he remembered the man in the pantomime, and would not have liked to say how he thought the accident had happened.

But the cat was out of the bag very quickly. As if by magic, Bonny appeared by the professor's side, pulling at his sleeve.

"I didn't want him to take it off, Herr Papa," he said, quite earnestly. "He's got to be a 'Simple Simon' for ever and ever. Make him put it on, that's what I tell you."

"You imp of mischief!" cried the irate doctor, "I knew you were at the bottom of it. You want a birch rod, and you shall have it."

"He's making wicked pointed eyes at me," Bonny retalliated, and indeed the angry light seemed to dart out of the doctor's eyes at Bonny, who was, however, quite unmoved.

"Come away, my friend," Herr Bruder said; "and Liese, take Johann up-stairs, where I will come presently to talk with him."

The doctor followed his host, who led the way, and Bonny took Liese's hand. At the foot of the big staircase the doctor turned round, and cried out in a mighty voice—

"TMP!" Bonny turned round and caught the expression which accompanied the word.

"Spitful face, wicked pointed eyes, Simple Simon, old man doctor!" cried Bonny, as Liese tugged him away.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE DOCTOR DEPARTS.

When the professor had somewhat soothed his guest's ruffled feelings he went in search of the delinquent, whom he found in the highest spirits.

"I did put a box of matches in his pocket, berry tiny softly," he was saying to Liese, "and then I did put a little light just underneath, and old man doctor never see me. I did creep-crawl away, and then I did hear one big fizz-z-z, and then—"

"Johann, come here. Do you know I am very angry?" It was the professor who spoke.

Bonny stared at him curiously. "What you be angry with, Herr Papa?"

"You, Johann."

"Is you be'd angry with other one? No, you didn't. Then you not angry with me. That's what I say."

"That was a joke, Johann," the professor said, somewhat floored by Bonny's argument.

"Yes, it is a joke. Berry nice joke. I did be do a joke, too. Old man doctor jump all round like this, and be a berry Simple Simon. Herr Papa, you did laugh very big at other one. You got to laugh too again."

"No, this is not to laugh at. This was done not to hurt. This did burn poor doctor, and hurt him very badly."

Bonny looked up in the professor's face quite uncomprehendingly. It was wonderful how dull he could be when he was not interested in understanding.

"Shall I hurt you, Johann?" "Oh, Herr Papa, you mustn't talk like that," Bonny said reproachfully.

"You think Herr Papa would not be cruel and spiteful, little Johann? But Herr Papa would not have his children cruel and spiteful either, or he will not love them any more."

Bonny stood thoughtful for a few moments. Then he suddenly burst out: "Herr Papa, you mustn't say that. You do love Bonny, and Bonny loves Herr Papa. You very good, dear Herr Papa, and I do love you. Old man doctor is a wicked spiteful face to me, and I'm a wicked spiteful face to him. He do not like Bonny. Bonny do not like him. He go to kill my ears berry dead, and I joke his coat berry dead. That's all what I tell you. Dear Herr Papa, send the bad man away, then I'm going to be berry dreffully nice good boy, I am."

I do not know how it was that the professor could not repress a smile. "Well, Bonny," he said, "if you love Herr Papa, you will do what he tells you, as Liese always does. And I tell you now that I will not have any more tricks on the good doctor. He is very kind and good. If I tell you that I love him, you will know that when you

vex and hurt him you hurt and vex me. I believe you can understand that."

"Oh, Herr Papa, you couldn't love an old man doctor," was Bonny's only reply.

"He seems to have an unaccountable horror of doctors generally," Herr Bruder explained to his friend afterwards. And so Bonny had, for his experience of doctors was not very happy. He remembered only the disagreeable things they had done to him, and knew nothing of the good they intended to do.

The professor soon found that no amount of severity would make Bonny yield his will, which could only be done through the love which had been so closely locked up in his young heart. Nothing would induce him to play before the doctor, until the professor insisted that he should when Bonny obeyed, but did his very worst, so that the doctor saw in him only a very ordinary amount of talent, and wondered whatever Herr Bruder could be about to devote so much time and affection to such an odious little mortal.

He took his departure the next day and Bonny was quite happy again. As if to keep his promise of being a "dreffully nice good boy" he was very attentive over his lessons, and delighted his teacher.

"It is truly wonderful," Herr Bruder said to madame, "how that child can play when the spirit of music seizes him. I could have wept with joy at the tones he drew from his violin. If I shut my eyes I could no longer believe it to be a child. It is as if an angel moved his hand. But I tremble for him, because he loves and dislikes deeply, and just a little dislike drives away the angel, and brings a demon in its place."

For the first week or so after the doctor's departure Bonny seemed much more dull of hearing than he had been before, but by degrees this passed away, and it seemed by comparison perhaps, that he heard better than ever.

The professor noticed this, and thought that very likely it was unwise to draw the child's attention to his hearing, lest it might cause a nervous fancy to take hold of his mind, and really increase the evil so the Berlin doctor came no more, and no other doctor was called in.

Once more everything went on as before, and the anxious fears of the past gradually died away, for besides the dulness of hearing which Madame Bruder had first noticed, and to which they had all long since grown accustomed, there was nothing noticeably wrong about the child. The lessons went on uninterruptedly for the next few years, when something happened about which I must tell you in another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.—A GREAT EVENT

There was, I think, never a happier household than the Bruder one, and people said the reason was that no one could be unhappy where the professor and his wife were. To Bonny and Liese it was the most beautiful home. They were cared for, and thought of, and loved as few children can be. Everything that was good for them they had, and if there were lessons to be learned, Liese was always ready to help Bonny, and the little mother was always ready to help Liese; and when the Herr Papa was so pleased when they did well, and was so grieved when they were ever naughty, that even Bonny's obstinate fits were very few and far between. And in return for all the love and care lavished upon them both the children would do anything for "Herr Papa" or the little mother. The very maids in the kitchen sang over their work, and smiled with pleasure when the professor gave them a word of praise. And in this atmosphere of love and happiness, so different from that of his earliest years, Bonny grew into a very different child.

He was no longer puny and pale. He had grown a good bit, and filled out too. The roses had begun to bloom in his cheeks, and although his nose still turned a little upwards, and his eyes were round and black, which made them look something like beads, he no longer wore the "stupid stare" that used so to aggravate old Mary, and the dull, dogged expression was rarely ever seen. Except when he had an occasional fit of naughtiness, he looked bright and happy and clever. His adoptive parents thought him quite pretty and very forward for his age, which they concluded was more than they had at first thought, although they had not got it quite correctly yet. They thought he must have been between six and seven when they found him, whereas he was between seven and eight.

He was, as they thought, nine

Frank E. Donovan

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years old when the thing happened that I am going to tell you about.

One of the royal princes was to be married, and a grand concert was to be given in honor of the event. Many great people were to be there, foreign princes and noblemen from ever so many countries, as well as the German princes and princesses.

Of course, Herr Bruder was to play—that was settled long before, and all his friends were quite excited about it, and fully expected that some very great honor would be conferred upon him. Scarcely anything else was thought or talked of for months before-hand, and the only person who was quite calm was the professor himself. I do not think he cared much about the coveted honor, and I believe he was more highly pleased when he brought the tears into some poor man's eyes by his wonderful playing than when a royal prince complimented him in flowery language.

Only a week before the great concert the professor had promised to go and play for some blind people. He always said that he loved playing to the blind, for they listened better than any other audience, and their faces showed so plainly what pleasure they felt. When the day came, the professor was not feeling at all well, and in the morning Madame Bruder said to him, "I wish you were not to play to-night, for I think you should rest and get quite well before next week. Let me send a telegram to say you cannot come."

"Ach, no no!" the professor replied. "I would not for the world disappoint my blind friends. Rather the great folks who have many pleasures than these poor ones who have but few."

So in the afternoon, when the children had finished their lessons and "Herr Papa" had played one little piece with them, they were allowed to drive with him to the station, Bonny sitting by his side, holding the reins, and chattering away in great glee.

"Herr Papa," Bonny said, "I wish I might come all the way with you and hear you play to-night. I wouldn't be in your way at all, and I should clap my hands louder than anyone else."

"No, Johann, not yet. Late hours would soon take out of these cheeks the roses, which I have watched to grow there so gladly. Besides, I shall not play so well to-night as you often hear me play at home."

"Why, Herr Papa?" Bonny asked in surprise.

"I think the angels have stayed at home, Johann, and left poor Herr Papa to play alone."

Bonny understood what the professor meant. When he played anything that Bonny particularly liked the child would say it was like the music the angels used to play to him. The professor, who truly believed that music, like every other good gift, came from God, used to tell Bonny that the good Father had sent His angels to guide his fingers and put sweet sounds into his heart; and Bonny quite believed that the angels did help the Herr Papa both to play and to compose beautiful music.

"Then I shall tell God to send some more," replied Bonny. "But, Herr Papa, you do not look nice

and funny at all to-day."

"Herr Papa is tired, little one." "Oh, Herr Papa, I will be good this time. You won't think I'm being bad, will you?" It was generally when the professor was away that Bonny had naughty fits.

"It is good, my child, to hear you speak that," the Herr Papa said; and then he did not talk any more, which made the drive so dull to Bonny, for he was generally the merriest of companions.

At the station he said, "Send the carriage at eleven to meet me, for I shall leave directly I have finished playing, and come home quickly."

About midnight the man came home from the station without his master. He had waited for several trains, and then returned, concluding that the professor had stayed in Berlin, as he usually did when he went there to play.

It was a very wet night, and there were no more trains, he said, so the master must have stayed. Madame Bruder had no argument whatever to bring against this, and yet she felt a little uneasy; for when Herr Bruder said he should return he never failed to do it.

Nor did he this time. About half-past one the bells rang loudly, and when the servants were roused and had unchained the big door, there stood the professor, dripping wet. He had walked the whole way, having come by an extra train, and arrived in time to find his carriage gone. To the coachman he said sternly, "When Herr Bruder says he will come, he comes. Your duty was to wait."

The man would have waited all night rather than do what he had done, for the next day Herr Bruder was very ill, and a doctor from Berlin was sent for in great haste, who pronounced the professor to be too seriously ill to think of leaving his room for some time.

It very soon got known, and great was the consternation of Herr Bruder's friends, for the great concert was to come off in six more days.

The manager and director came from Berlin in hot haste, and arrived one morning at the house while the doctor was still there.

When he was shown into the drawing-room Bonny and Liese were practising together a violin sonata by a great composer. It was a wonderful performance for two children and the gentleman stood still in astonishment.

(To be continued.)

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