

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Boys and Girls:

In all the letters I have received from my little nieces and nephews not one mentions a thing about sugaring. Do none of the little folks live in a sugar district? I think an account of a sugaring off would be interesting to all readers of our corner. Genevieve sends her first letter. Santa Claus was very good to you, I think. Grandpa is a good supporter of our paper. Chester S. wishes to see more letters. So do I, Chester. Many thanks, Agnes, for kind wishes. Write again, Mary Margaret is a new comer. She is very welcome. Washington enjoys reading the little letters and does his part well. What a number of studies for a small boy. I should think it would be very funny to have a class of only five or six. But there is the advantage of the teacher being able to give individual attention. Love to all my little nieces and nephews.

Your friend,
AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

My grandfather has taken your paper for a number of years and I always read the little letters to Aunt Becky, and thought I would like to see my little letter in print in the True Witness. I am a little girl of ten. I have two sisters and one brother, and dear knows that is enough, he is so mischievous. Santa Claus came to our house on Christmas night and brought me lots of lovely things. I live five miles from the church and a half a mile from the school. Now, dear Aunt Becky, I bid you good-bye. From
GENEVIEVE B.

Fath, N.B.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I was glad to see my first letter in print, and thought I would write again. My cousin will write one also, and it will be her first letter. We are having bad weather now, and I am wishing for spring to come. I was glad to see all the letters this week and hope to see more, because the children write such good letters. I will write soon and I will close now saying good-bye.

CHESTER S.

Hudson, Mass., March, 1905.

Dear Aunt Becky:

This is my first letter. I am nine years old. I have three sisters and two brothers. Our baby is a girl. We all love her. She is nine months old. We three girls go to the French Sisters' school and like it well. In the real cold stormy time we cannot go every day. There is a lot of snow here now. We take the True Witness and like to read the children's letters. Santa Claus was kind to us all Christmas. One of my sisters is to write a letter also. I hope to see this letter in print. Wishing you a happy new year, I remain

Your niece,

AGNES.

Ogdensburg, N.Y., March, 1905.

Dear Aunt Becky:

We take the True Witness, and I read the little letters in it. I am eleven years old. I go to school every day I can in the winter. The roads are bad sometimes. I have three sisters and two brothers. Our baby is nine months old. My father is not working now. He is home with us. We have some hens. Eggs are dear here now. We have a cow and two calves. Now I hope to see this letter in print next week. I will write a longer letter next time. Good-bye.

From your niece,

MARY MARGARET.

Ogdensburg, N.Y., March, 1905.

Dear Aunt Becky:

You said you were glad to hear from me, so I will write another letter. I wish all the boys and girls would write, so I would have the fun of reading the letters to see what is going on. If all the boys and girls would write they could fill the page with letters every week, but I think they are a little lazy. I go to school every day, and I study geography, grammar, health reader, reading, British history, arithmetic, Canadian history, spelling and catechism. It is very fine weather here

this month, but I don't think it will last long. It is awful lonesome around here in winter. There were only five or six at school ever since Xmas, but everyone is beginning to come again. We live about three hundred yards from the school, but we had a terrible time climbing the hill over the snow drifts. Now, dear Aunt Becky, I think I have written too much.

I remain,

Your loving nephew,

WASHINGTON R.

Kouchibouguac, Kent Co., N.B.

LITTLE ROBBY'S STORY.

By John Tracy Jones.

Once there was a little boy
'At sneaked up stairs
En didn't kiss his ma good night,
Ner didn't say his prayers!
'Nen when she called him
He began to snore,
'Tendin' like he's ist sleep,
Good enuf, fer shore!

'Nen when its night time
Heard an orful noise
'At ud skeer big men folks
'At ain't little boys;
Satan ist whislin'
'At's ther way he skares
Little boys 'at's sneaked off
'Nout sayin' 'er prayers!

A SINGULAR QUARTETTE.

The arrival of a new pupil at the "Misses Gorden's Finishing School for Girls" was always considered an event of great importance by teachers and pupils alike.

Imagine, then, the effect produced upon both, when the announcement was made three weeks after the opening of the January term, that no less than four new girls were expected from a country town in far-off Minnesota.

The day set for the arrival was Wednesday; but the first actual appearance was made Thursday morning. They had arrived by a late train the preceding night, to the great disappointment of the thirty-two already assembled.

When the four new girls, with embarrassment written upon every feature, walked into the large dining-room that Thursday morning, sixty-four bright eyes were opened with astonishment.

Up to that moment, all of the Misses Gorden's pupils had been the daughters of well-to-do parents. While the school prospectus had mentioned that simplicity was a desirable feature of a girl's wardrobe, it had said nothing against silk-lined, tailor-made gowns, well-fitting shoes, dainty waists of soft warm fabrics and becoming neckwear. Consequently the pupils wore all these things, and were, as a whole, an unusually well-dressed lot of girls.

The new pupils had apparently taken the prospectus literally, for when they filed into the dining-room they were indeed a surprising sight.

It was a very cold morning, even for January, but the new-comers were clad in ill-fitting home-made gowns of the cheapest quality of figured calico. Their shoes were of heavy leather, and of clumsy make, and their stockings were knitted from coarse, colored yarn. Two of the girls were absolutely guiltless of neckwear, but the tall slender girl, heading the little procession, wore a remarkable collar of bristling fur; and the stout girl, who brought up the rear, was muffled in a woollen arrangement of green and purple yarn. It is not probable that Nature had supplied every one of the Misses Gorden's thirty-two girls with curly hair, yet such appeared to be the case. The newcomers, however, wore their abundant locks brushed straight back, and braided in unbecoming pig-tails.

When the sixty-four astonished eyes were able to detach themselves from the extraordinary costumes of the new girls, they began to exchange amused glances; and it was clear that mischief was brewing. One had only to look at Mollie Mitchell's dancing eyes to discover that Mollie had excellent control over her mouth, but she could do nothing with a rebellious pair of the brightest eyes that ever sparkled in a girl's head. Mollie was at the bottom of every piece of mischief that was perpetrated in the establishment. If she had devoted half the energy to learning her lessons that she expended in devising tricks to play upon the rest of the household, she might easily have carried off all the honors, for she was an exceptionally bright girl.

"Madge," said Mollie to her roommate right after breakfast that morning, "you can make my bed if you like. I'm going to fly around and ask half a dozen of the girls to a spread this afternoon, to meet the new girls. Did you ever see such guys?"

"One might imagine," replied Madge, with mild sarcasm, "that I wasn't in the habit of making your bed right along."

"You're a dear," said Mollie, giving her a hug and darting off.

Mollie spent her leisure time that day—and Mollie managed to have more leisure moments than any other girl in the establishment—in extracting peanuts from their shells, and then gluing the shells neatly together again in cracking hickory nuts and deftly picking out the meats, and in making fudges, part of which were enriched with hickory nut meats, and part with fragments of hard coal.

The strange girls were shy and awkward, and the fact that most of the nut shells and coal bespangled fudge fell to their lot, when they attended Mollie's little party that afternoon, did not tend to make them less embarrassed. They soon discovered that the thoughtless girls were ridiculing them in every possible way and sat thereafter in uncomfortable silence; until Mollie announced that the party was all over.

"Before you go, girls," said Mollie, "I want you all to write in my visitor's book. Here's a pen. If you feel like it put in an appropriate sentiment, or a nice little bit of verse; but if you are not poeticaly inclined, just write your name."

Three of the "Singular Quartette," as Mollie had dubbed them, wrote their autographs only, but the fourth wrote something more. When Mollie examined the book a few moments after the departure of the girls, she found, written in a strong, firm hand, the following verse:

"Cheer up, kind friends, and don't despair
Tho' troubles may increase;
For He who keeps the sparrows safe
Will also tend the geese."

SUSAN JANE BENNETT.

"Hurrah for Susan Jane!" exclaimed Mollie, who was able to appreciate a joke, even when she herself happened to be the victim.

"Of course I knew I was a goose, but to think that a girl with clothes like that should be able to discover it in so short a time! She must be quite a girl. I'll have to cultivate this discerning Susan."

But erratic Mollie forgot all about the goose episode in a very short time, and the new girl remained uncultivated, so far as Mollie was concerned.

If the thirty-two young women under the Misses Gorden's educational roof had realized that they were behaving heartlessly and unkindly toward the four homesick strangers, they might have treated them differently. As it was they left the "Singular Quartette" out of all their jollifications, and made them feel at all times, as Mollie put it, that they "didn't quite belong."

Sometimes when the pupils went for their daily walk in the two-by-two procession which good, old-fashioned Miss Hannah Gorden maintained was the only proper form of exercise for boarding school girls, Susan Bennett, whose throat was delicate, would stay at home; leaving her usual companion, tall, lanky Martha Burrows, to walk alone, or with the teacher who always accompanied the girls. Not one of the thirty-two girls ever offered to walk with her until one day little Betty Bigelow discovered that there were big tears rolling down the poor girl's cheeks, and cleverly guessed the reason.

After that tender-hearted Betty often walked beside her, and the two girls became quite friendly.

One evening, about a month later, all the girls, with the exception of the "Singular Quartette," were dancing in the dining room. Bettie, who was playing a lively two-step on the piano stool, stood and clapped her hands.

"Girls," said she, "I want to tell you something."

"A speech! a speech!" exclaimed irrepressible Mollie.

"Go take a nap, Mollie," advised Madge. "We want to hear what Bettie has to say."

"Girls," said Bettie, "I don't think we have been very nice to those poor girls from Minnesota. We've left them out of all our good times and it isn't their fault that they're such sticks, it's ours. We haven't given them the chance to be like other folks. I've found out that they've earned nearly every dollar of the money that brought them here, and is keeping them here, by the hardest kind of work. Their people are farmers, and they're poor and have had hard luck, and have

milked cows and picked berries and turkeys and dug potatoes and split wood—and it took them—it took them three years—"

But here sympathetic, but incoherent Bettie, overcome by the pity of it all, fell to weeping and was tenderly lifted to the floor by half a dozen loving arms. "Bettie, dear, you didn't say so," said Mollie, "but I'm sure you meant that it was the girls, and not the farmers, who did all these awful things, but think how much worse it would have been, if they had picked the cows and dug the turkeys! What do you want us to do about it?"

"Get them and teach them to dance," sobbed Bettie; "and for goodness sake, somebody lend me a handkerchief."

The Misses Gorden offered each year a number of prizes for excellence in different studies. The girls had decided early in the term that Madge was to have the prize for mathematics, Helen the one for history, Mildred the one for the most profound essay; and Mollie because of her general smartness, was to capture all the prizes that were left. They left the Minnesota girls entirely out of their calculations, as they had left them out of everything else, up to the time of Betty's appeal in their behalf; but the four girls had worked too hard for their advantages not to realize that it behooved them to make the most of them.

Bettie's little talk worked wonders for the forlorn quartette. Almost every girl in the school exerted herself to be pleasant and helpful; and the new girls improved wonderfully in more ways than one. It was Mollie who discovered that one of them could mend most beautifully and Bettie who found that another really liked to darn stockings. It was Mollie and Betty together who put them in the way of earning a comfortable little sum each week by means of these accomplishments, and it was Madge who helped them expend it wisely for warm and well-made clothing.

"Of course," said Madge to herself as she proudly surveyed the "Singular Quartette," properly clad in becoming garments, "clothes are not everything in this world, but it is surprising what a difference they make. It takes a truly wise person like this dear, silly Bettykin of ours to see the real girl right through figured calico and purple yarn."

It was the four girls themselves, however, who, by patient, honest work, surprised everybody, including themselves, by capturing every one of the prizes and all the honors over the heads of mathematical Madge, historical Helen, profound Mildred, and brilliant Mollie, and who were filled with remorse as well as elation at learning the result.

"We don't care," said the defeated ones, talking it over among themselves, "so certainly they needn't. They need the money and the scholarships and we don't. It'll help them famously towards another year, and they deserve all they get, and more too."

"They're welcome to my share," said Mollie. "My people would all fall dead for astonishment if I took a prize anyhow, so perhaps it's a mercy I didn't. Now let's give our quartette the biggest kind of a send-off to make up for our bad behavior in the gloomy past."—Young People.

A MODERN MEDICINE.

Baby's Own Tablets is a modern medicine which replaces barbarous castor oil and poisonous "soothing" stuffs. The Tablets are a sweet, harmless little lozenge, which children take readily, and which may be crushed to a powder or administered in a spoonful of water if necessary. This medicine cures all stomach and bowel troubles, breaks up colds, prevents croup, allays the pain of teething and gives healthful sleep. And you have a solemn guarantee that it contains not one particle of opiate or poisonous soothing stuff. Mrs. J. D. Cilly, Heatherton, Que., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for stomach and bowel troubles and have always found them a most satisfactory medicine, and one that keeps my children bright and healthy." You can get the Tablets from any medicine dealer, or by mail at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

We should never repulse the poor. We can not give them anything, we should pray to God to inspire others to do so.

"I'm not denyin' the women are foolish. God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

—Mrs. Poyser: Adam Bede.

FRED RUSSELL'S TRIUMPH.

Mrs. Russell seemed deeply absorbed in the morning paper. It was only after her daughter Edith had stirred up the grate fire, and made the embers glow with renewed life that she was tempted to lay it aside. Gazing dreamily into the burning coals, she soon fell into a reverie.

"Mother, what can you be thinking of?" said Edith, as she busied herself arranging the sitting room before beginning her day's work. "It is fully a quarter of an hour since I heard you speak."

"Well, Edith, I am thinking something must be wrong with Fred. He never keeps us so long without a letter. It is almost a month since we had a line from him."

"Don't worry, mother. If anything had happened Fred would have let us know one way or another. Oh! this must be the postman; I know his ring." And she tripped off gaily to satisfy her curiosity.

"Thank you," cried Edith eagerly, as the postman handed her a package of mail. The first letter bore the New York postmark, and was addressed to Mrs. Russell in Fred's own handwriting.

"At last, mother, it has come. Shall I read it to you?" And Edith's face was aglow with pleasure.

"Do, Edith, I am so anxious to hear its contents."

New York, Jan. 18, 18—
My Dearest Mother:—

"For the past three weeks I have been extremely busy; otherwise I would have written sooner. I am grieved beyond expression to be obliged to give you pain; yet I think it proper that you should know the truth."

"Quite recently my employer, Mr. Simpson, lost two hundred and fifty dollars which he had laid aside for the purpose of banking. A search was made through the office, but all in vain. Yesterday he conveyed to me the startling intelligence that my services will not be required after the end of the month. He expressed regret at the step he considered it his duty to take, but assured me that after due deliberation, he came to the conclusion that the blame could be imputed to no one except the cashier. Now I am looked upon as a thief until I can prove the contrary. Do not think harshly of me. If nothing intervenes, I will take a run home as soon as my time expires here. Mr. Simpson has promised to keep the matter quiet provided the money be refunded. To save my name, I took out the required sum this a.m., and laid it on his desk. Be patient, mother; time will prove my innocence. Love to Edith."

"Your devoted son,
"FRED."

The letter dropped from Edith's hand and she made a quick move to help her mother, who had swooned.

"What is to become of us, Edith?" said Mrs. Russell, after she had partly recovered from the shock. "Appearances are against Fred. Disgrace seems to threaten us."

"Mother, I will never believe that Fred took the money. He has too strict a regard for honesty to stoop to so base an act. Let me help you to your room. You must compose yourself. Everything will come right."

"Now," soliloquized Edith, "what am I to do. I must take an active part in the matter, and help my brother out of his difficulty." For a moment she paused, looking into vacancy. "That is a capital idea. I will send a despatch to Aunt Sarah asking her to come into town as mother is not well. Then, there are my music pupils. I expect four of them to-day. While I am out, I shall call and tell them that I have been called away for a few days, and will let them know when I return. I could not possibly have them here to-day while mother is in such a condition. She needs absolute rest."

Soon the street door closed after her. She thought it best to withhold her intention from her mother until after she had sent the message.

"So you do not approve of what I have done, mother?"

"No, Edith, I would much prefer to have the matter kept quiet."

Aunt Sarah lived but a short distance from Montreal and arrived in a bustle of excitement late in the afternoon.

"Is your mother seriously ill, dear?" she asked of Edith, who met her at the door.

"Not exactly, Aunt Sarah, but somewhat indisposed. I am obliged to leave town for a few days, and do not like the idea of leaving her alone."

"And where are you going, Edith?"

"Wait until you see mother. She will explain to you."

FATHER KÖNIG'S FREE
A VALUABLE BOOK ON NERVOUS DISEASES AND A SAMPLE BOTTLE TO ANY ADDRESS. POST FREE! KÖNIG MED. CO., 109 Lake St., CHICAGO. Sold by Druggists at 25¢ per bottle, six for \$1.

Aunt Sarah did not favor Edith's idea of travelling alone to New York.

"Well, I am going, Aunt Sarah. So please do not try to dissuade me from my purpose. Besides, I have been there before, and know just where to locate Fred."

"Edith Russell! You in New York?" cried Fred in astonishment as he came out of his boarding-house and encountered his sister at the door.

"Yes, Fred, I am. Do not blame me for coming. I could not rest till I had seen you. I left Montreal last night, and arrived a few moments ago."

"You must be very tired. Come in till I make arrangements for your breakfast. Edith, how is mother?"

"As you might expect, Fred, she is almost prostrated since she heard the news. I had Aunt Sarah come and stay with her during my absence. Fred, I hope this matter will soon be settled favorably; the suspense will injure mother."

"Edith, please do not make me feel any worse than I do. Only a few days remain to me in Mr. Simpson's employ. If things do not assume a more propitious aspect, the heaviest share of the burden will be mine. Think of the humiliation of being dismissed from a firm after five years' faithful service with the imputation of theft attached to my name."

"Fred, do not talk in such a strain. I will not listen to you. I am afraid I have already kept you late. Do not delay any longer. I know this house so well that I can find Mrs. Adams and arrange to stop here during my sojourn in New York."

The fourth day after Edith's arrival at Mrs. Adams' house, Fred came home beside himself with joy.

"Edith! Edith! the mystery is solved; the money is found."

"Is it possible, Fred? Do you really mean it?"

"Yes, and under peculiar circumstances, too."

"Shortly after this incident occurred, Mr. Simpson had occasion to leave a suit at McIntosh's tailoring establishment to be renovated. When the clothes were returned to-day, a note to the following effect was sent to Mr. Simpson:

"Dear Sir:—
"When the lining was removed from your coat, a package of greenbacks to the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars dropped out. This discovery will likely interest you. Kindly call at your earliest convenience, as I would like to see the money, deposited with the rightful owner."

Very truly yours,
"J. R. MCINTOSH."

"Mr. Simpson hastened back to the office with the good news, offered me a public apology, and proposed to reinstate me. I accepted, seeing that he humbled himself to apologize as soon as he saw his mistake. More than that, he gave me permission to take a ten days' vacation beginning this evening. So I think we will start for home to-morrow morning and surprise mother. She will not expect us so soon."

"Did I not tell you, mother, that everything would come right?" said Edith as soon as she entered their humble homestead, followed by Fred, whom she presented as a free man.

Mrs. Russell listened quietly to Fred's experience, then turning to him, said: "Fred, from your earliest childhood, I tried to instill into your young mind principles of uprightness and integrity. Now that you have come to manhood's years, I am happy to say your character has stood a fair test. The ordeal through which you have passed will but serve to strengthen your faith in the old adage, 'Honesty is the best policy.'"

K. HANLEY.

It was the custom of one old lady to say to the young people around her, "Be heartsome!" It was good advice. To be a sort of wet blanket in the world is certainly being a sort of human quencher of all that is good, wholesome and "heartsome." It's a fine word, that "heartsome." It stands for strength, for kindness, for brightness and humor; it drives away the "blues" as nothing else can; and the man or woman who gives heart to others is the man or woman who is helpful in this weary old world. Be heartsome, wherever you are!