

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

AT THE PARTY.

HALF a dozen children
At our house!
Half a dozen children
Quiet as a mouse,
Quiet as a moonbeam,
You could hear a pin—
Waiting for the party
To begin.

Such a flood of flounces!
(O dear me!)
Such a surge of sashes,
Like a silken sea,
Little eyes demurely
Cast upon the ground,
Little airs and graces
All around.

High time for that party
To begin!
To sit so any longer
Were a sort of sin;
As if you weren't acquainted
With society!
What a thing to tell of
That would be!

Up spoke a little lady
Aged five;
"I've tumbled up my over-dress
Sure as I'm alive!
My dress came from Paris;
We sent to Worth for it;
Mother says she calls it
Such a fit!"

Quick there piped another
Little voice:
"I didn't send for dresses,
Though I had my choice;
I have got a doll that
Came from Paris too;
It can walk and talk as
Well as you!"

Still till now, there sat one
Little girl;
Simple as a snow-drop,
Without flounce or curl.
Modest as a primrose,
Soft, plain hair brushed back,
But the color of her dress was
Black—all black.

Swift she glanced around with
Sweet surprise;
Bright and grave the look that
Widened in her eyes.
To entertain the party
She must do her share,
As if God had sent her
brought she there,

Stood a minute thinking,
With crossed hands,
How she best might meet the
Company's demands.
Grave and sweet the purpose
To the child's voice given:
"I have a little brother
Gone to Heaven!"

On the little party
Dropped a spell;
All the little flounces
Rustled where they fell;
But the modest maiden,
In her mourning gown,
Unconscious as a flower
Looketh down.

Quick my heart besought her,
Silently;
"Happy little maiden,
Give, O give to me
The highness of your courage,
The sweetness of your grace,
To speak a large word, in a
Little place!"

—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

GRAPPLING FOR A LOST CABLE.

THE "Great Eastern" was fitted out with apparatus, which may be likened to an enormous fishing-hook and line, and was sent to the spot where the treasure had been lost. The line was of hemp interwoven with wire. Twice, the cable was seized and brought almost to the surface. Twice it slipped from the disappointed fisherman, but the third time it was secured. It was then united with the cable on board, which was "paid out" until the great steamer again reached Newfound-

land, and a second telegraph-wire united the two continents.

The scene on board as the black line appeared above water was exciting beyond description. It was first taken to the testing-room, and a signal intended for Valentia was sent over it, to prove whether or not it was perfect throughout its whole length. If it had proved to be imperfect, all the labor spent upon it would have been lost. The electricians waited breathlessly for an answer. The clerk in the signal-house at Valentia was drowsy when their message came, and disbelieved his ears. Many disinterested people, and even some of the promoters of the cable, did not think it possible to recover a wire that had sunk in thousands of fathoms of water. But the clerk in the little station connected with the shore-end of the cable of 1865 suddenly found himself in communication with a vessel situated in the middle of the Atlantic. The delay aggravated the anxious watchers on the ship, and a second signal was sent. How astonished that simple-minded Irish telegraph-operator was! Five minutes passed, and then the answer came. The chief electrician gave a loud cheer, which was repeated by every man on board, from the captain down to his servant.—*St. Nicholas for March.*

HOW MATCHES ARE MADE.

A MATCH is a small thing. We seldom pause to think, after it has performed its mission, and we have carelessly thrown it away, that it has a history of its own, and that like some more pretentious things, its journey from the forest to the match-safe is full of changes.

The match of to-day has a story far more interesting than that of the old-fashioned match. As we have said, much of the timber used in the manufacture comes from the immense tracts of forest in the Hudson Bay Territory. It is floated down the water-courses to the lakes, through which it is towed in great log rafts. These rafts are divided; some parts are pulled through the canals, and some by other means are taken to market. When well through the seasoning process, which occupies from one to two years, the pine is cut up into blocks twice as long as a match, and about eight inches wide by two inches thick. These blocks are passed through a machine which cuts them up into "splints," round or square, of just the thickness of a match, but twice its length. This machine is capable, as we are told, of making about 2,000,000 splints in a day. This number seems immense when compared with the most that could be made in the old way—by hand. The splints are then taken to the "setting" machine, and this rolls them into bundles about eighteen inches in diameter, every splint separated from its neighbors by little spaces, so that there may be no sticking together after the "dipping." In the operation of "setting," a ribbon of coarse stuff about an inch and a half wide, and an eighth of an inch thick, is rolled up, the splints being laid across the ribbon between each two courses, leaving about a quarter of an inch between adjoining splints. From the "setting" machine the bundles go to the "dipping" room.

After the ends of the splints have been pounded down to make them even, the

bundles are dipped,—both ends—into the molten sulphur and then into the phosphorus solution, which is spread over a large iron plate. Next they are hung in a frame to dry. When dried they are placed in a machine which, as it unrolls the ribbon, cuts the sticks in two across the middle, thus making two complete matches of each splint.

The match is made. The towering pine which listened to the whisper of the south wind and swayed in the cold northern blast, has been so divided that we can take it bit by bit and lightly twirl it between two fingers. But what it has lost in size it has gained in use. The little flame it carries, and which looks so harmless, flashing into brief existence, has a latent power more terrible than the whirlwind which perhaps sent the tall pine-tree crashing to the ground.

But the story is not yet closed. From the machine which completed the matches they are taken to the "boxers"—mostly girls and women—who place them in little boxes. The speed with which this is done is surprising. With one hand they pick up an empty case and remove the cover, while with the other they seize just a sufficient number of matches, and by a peculiar shuffling motion arrange them evenly, then—'t is done!

The little packages of sleeping fire are taken to another room, where on each one is placed a stamp certifying the payment to the government of one cent revenue tax. Equipped with these passes the boxes are placed in larger ones, and these again in wooden cases, which are to be shipped to all parts of the country, and over seas.

All this trouble over such little things as matches! Yet on these fire-tipped bits of wood millions of people depend for warmth, cooked food and light. They have become a necessity, and the day of flint, steel and tinder seems almost as far away in the past as are the bow and fire-stick of the Indian.

How apt to our subject is that almost worn-out Latin phrase, "*multum in parvo*,"—much in little! Much labour, much skill, and much usefulness, all in a little piece of wood scarcely one-eighth of an inch through and about two inches long!—*F. H. C., St. Nicholas for March.*

THE USE OF LEAVES.

WHEN the cold weather comes the leaves have done all they've got to do—they're no longer of any use.

"But, my dear child, do you know what is the use of leaves?"

"Why, to be sure, to make the trees look pretty, and to give us shade when we're hot."

"Why, dear, these are but two of their uses. The great God who made them, together with everything else, both in heaven and earth, has intended them to serve other purposes as well. As for giving us shade when we are hot, only one kind of leaf would have been able to do that as well as a great many. But God loves to give us pleasant as well as only useful things, and so He gave to the leaves of different trees, all sorts of various forms and colors. But what I wanted to explain to you was that a tree cannot live without leaves. In the spring the sap which the root draws out of the ground spreads itself into the leaves. There, by the help of the sun and the air, the sap goes through a process which I'm afraid I can't make you understand now, but which makes it able to feed the trunk and the branches with the juices they need for growing and spreading."