

LITTLE FOLKS

A Blurred Picture.

Minnie Gray's face wore a most unwonted cloud; she was always such a bright, cheery little maiden that when she went down the garden path and across the shady country road to Auntie May's pretty cottage, her aunt asked at once:

'What's troubling you, childie? 'Tisn't often we see a cloud on your face! Come, tell Auntie all about it.'

Tears rose to Minnie's big eyes, and she was silent for a few moments, watching her aunt lifting the white new-laid eggs out of the basket she had brought, and ar-

bage-leaf. She drew Minnie to her side.

'Dearie,' she said seriously. 'Don't you have any blurred pictures among your memories of happy childhood! I have one—oh, I would be glad to see that picture of one holiday free from all mist or stain, but that I never shall this side of eternity! There's a shadow on it for evermore!'

'Please tell me about it,' said Minnie eagerly. Her aunt finished placing the eggs and butter, and she folded up the white cloth, and finally gave the money for both to Minnie, in a twist of white paper,

Every day we managed somehow to get a rowing-boat from someone in the village who owned the two or three heavy boats along the shores of Loch Linnhe or Loch Cre-ran, and we almost lived on the water, but father did not like it. He knew that we were none of us quite skilled in the art of managing a boat if a sudden blast should sweep down over the great mountains, and lash the blue waters into foam and fret. One day he heard us talking of St. Mungo's Isle for the morrow—the very island you wish to visit to-morrow, love! He begged that we would not go there—remember, Minnie, he was ill then, and spending long days in bed while we went a-pleasuring, but he was well attended to, and we never dreamed that he would rise no more from that lingering sickness, he was always so cheery and happy, so interested in our pleasures. He asked us to go to the waterfall instead, for he dreaded the long open stretch of sea, deep and treacherous, and the wild rocky precipices of St. Mungo's Isle. We listened—oh! Minnie—in respectful and apparently interested silence while he described the rough sheep-tracks we must follow, to find the beautiful waterfall in the wood, over the hill. We kissed him good-bye, and we packed our lunch in a little basket, with a bowl of yellow gooseberries and some raspberries in a cabbage-leaf—and—we stole round by the back of the house, and off to the shore where the boat awaited us! We rowed to St. Mungo's Isle, and I dare not say we did not enjoy it, for we did, although the picture of the sweet, kind old face on its pillow came up before me every now and then. Father died soon after, and he never knew the truth on earth—God forgive us! So the pictures of that day, Minnie, are all blurred and misty to me now. Don't you do it, dearie! Don't lay up for the years to come the memory of disobedience, to spoil the sunny pictures of life.'—'Adviser.'

How Alberta Lost the Prize.

(Sunday Friend.)

'Girls,' said the head governess of a young ladies' boarding school to her pupils one morning, at the commencement of the new term,



ranging them in a deep soup-tureen.

'To-morrow is the holiday,' she faltered. 'And it's my birthday too—I'll be eleven to-morrow! And we had arranged to row out in Charlie Blair's boat "Viking," as far as St. Mungo's Isle, and—and—' here came a quick shower of tears—'father won't let us! He says it is too far to be safe! It is not!'

Auntie May looked very grave—sad even. She set down the basket, with the pat of fresh butter still in the bottom, wrapped in a cab-

then she sat down, and Minnie took the stool at her knee.

'It is a long time ago now,' she said. 'I was a girl of sixteen, and Nellie, your mother, dear, was a year and a-half older. We had a young man, a very dear friend of our brothers who were in Glasgow at business, staying with us for a week. Other two young men, staying with a neighbor of ours, came every day with their sisters, and we had a fresh excursion every day to some place of interest or beauty—our beautiful old Highland home here abounds in such.