

THE QUEEN'S GIFT.

WHERE English daisies blossom
And English robins sing,
When all the land was fragrant
Beneath the feet of Spring,

Two little sisters wandered,
Together, hand in hand,
Along the dusty highway,
Their bare feet soiled and tanned.

'Twas not a childlike sorrow
That filled their eyes with tears;
Their little hearts were burdened
With grief beyond their years.

The bright-eyed daisies blossomed
In valley and in glen,
The robins sang their sweetest,
Spring smiled—but not for them

Beneath the trees of Whitehall,
Within their shadow brown,
From out the royal palace
The Queen came walking down.

She saw the children standing,
Together, side by side,
And, gazing down with pity,
She asked them why they cried.

'Dear Lady,' said the eldest,
'My little sister Beas
And I have come together
A hundred miles, I guess.

'Sometimes the roads were dusty,
And sometimes they were green;
We're very tired and hungry—
We want to see the Queen.

'For mother's sick, dear Lady,
She cries 'most all the day;
We hear her toiling Jesus,
When she thinks we're at play.

'She tells Him all about it,
How when King James was King,
We were so rich and happy
And had 'most everything.

'We had our own dear father,
At home beside the Thames,
But father went to battle
Because he loved King James.

'And then things were so different—
I can not tell you how.
We have n't any father,
Nor any nice things now.

'Last night, our mother told us
They'd take our home away,
And leave us without any,
Because she could n't pay.

'So then we came together,
Ran through the meadow green,
And prayed for God to help us,
And take us to the Queen;

'Because mamma once told us
That, many years ago,
The Queen was James' little girl,
And, Lady, if 't was so,

'I know she'll let us keep it,—
Our home beside the Thames,—
For we have come to ask her,
And Father loved King James.'

Her simple story finished,
She gazed up in surprise,
To see the lovely lady
With tear-drops in her eyes.

And when the English robins
Had sought each downy nest,
And when the bright-eyed daisies,
Dew-damp, had gone to rest,

A carriage, such as never
Had passed that way before,
Sat down two little children
Beside the widow's door.

They brought the weeping mother
A package from the Queen.
Her royal seal was on it,
And, folded in between,

A slip of paper, saying:
'The daughter of King James
Gives to these little children
Their home beside the Thames.'

—Rose Hartwick Thorpe, in *St. Nicholas*.

NORWEGIAN SNOW-SHOE, OR SKEE RACING.

ONE of the most popular winter sports in Norway is skee-racing. A steep hill is selected by the committee which is to have charge of the race, and all the best skee-runners in the district enter their names, eager to engage in the contest. The track is cleared of all accidental obstructions, but if there happens to be a stone or wooden fence crossing it, the snow is dug away on the lower side of it and piled up above it. The object is to obtain what is called a "jump." The skee-runner, of course, coming at full speed down the slope will slide out over this "jump," shooting right out into the air and coming down either on his feet or any other convenient portion of his anatomy, as the case may be. To keep one's footing, and particularly to prevent the skees from becoming crossed while in the air, are the most difficult feats connected with skee-racing; and it is no unusual thing to see even an excellent skee-runner plunging headlong into the snow, while his skees pursue an independent race down the track and tell the spectators of his failure. Properly speaking, a skee-race is not a race—not a test of speed, but a test of skill, for two runners rarely start simultaneously, as, in case one of them should fall, the other could not possibly stop, and might not even have the time to change his course. He would thus be in danger of running into his competitor, and could hardly avoid maiming him seriously. If there were several parallel tracks, at a distance of twenty to thirty feet from each other, there would, of course, be less risk in having the runners start together. Usually, a number fall in the first run, and those who have not fallen then continue the contest until one gains the palm. If, as occasionally happens, the competition is narrowed down to two, who are about evenly matched, a proposal to run without staves is apt to result in a decisive victory for one or the other.

It can hardly be conceived how exciting these contests are, not only to the skee-runners themselves, but, also, to the spectators, male and female, who gather in groups along the track and cheer their friends as they pass, waving their handkerchiefs, and greeting with derisive cries the mishaps which are inseparable from the sport. —H. H. Boyesen, in *St. Nicholas*.

HAVE A SWEET VOICE, GIRLS.

WERE half the pains which is often taken to cultivate the voice in song bestowed upon its tones as used in speech, social intercourse would gain a very great charm. We hear harsh, metallic voices, which are cracked, a discord running through their cadences. Nobody can be where a number of ladies are gathered without being struck by the lack of culture which is evidenced in disagreeable voices. A sweetly-modulated voice in conversation is delightful and restful. In educating the young, example is more potential than precept; and if mothers and teachers always spoke with gentleness, and were careful to let their voices be clear and distinct, dropping from their lips like finished coin, a great benefit would accrue to the attractiveness of social intercourse.

SCOFFING YOUTHS.

AN eminent minister recently went to preach at a little town on the West Coast. After the usual prayers and praises, the preacher read his text, and was about to proceed with his sermon, when he suddenly paused, leaning his head on the pulpit, and remained silent for a few moments. It was imagined that he had become indisposed; but he soon recovered himself, and, addressing the congregation, said that before entering upon his discourse he begged to narrate to them a short anecdote. "I am now exactly fifteen years," he said, "since I was last within this place of worship; and the occasion was, as many here may probably remember, the very same as that which has now brought us together. Amongst those who came hither that evening were three dissolute young men, who came not only with the intention of insulting and mocking the venerable pastor, but even with stones in their pockets to throw at him as he stood in the pulpit. Accordingly, they had not attended long to the discourse, when one of them said impatiently, 'Why need we listen any longer to the blockhead?—throw! But the second stopped him, saying, 'Let us first see what he makes of this point.' The curiosity of the latter was no sooner satisfied than he too said, 'Ay, confound him, it is only as I expected—throw now!' But here the third interposed, and said, 'It would be better altogether to give up the design which has brought us here.' At this remark his two associates took offence, and left the place, while he himself remained to the end. Now, mark, my brethren," continued the preacher, with much emotion, "what were afterwards the several fates of these young men. The first was hanged many years ago for the crime of forgery; the second is now lying under sentence of death for murder in the goal of this city. The third, my brethren"—and the speaker's agitation here became excessive, while he paused and wiped the large drops from his brow—"the third, my brethren, is he who is now about to address you—listen to him."

QUEEN VICTORIA AT HOME.

WHEN the Assistant Editor of the *Christian Advocate* was in London he made a visit with several friends to Windsor Castle, the principal residence of the Sovereign of England, and now the chief home of Queen Victoria. The Queen was absent on a visit to Scotland, but we were courteously shown through most of the historic royal apartments, as also through the several most interesting groups of buildings, gardens, and parks which go to make up that most magnificent royal home.

Nothing, however, interested us more than the responses of the guide to our questions concerning the daily official duties and home habits of the Queen. "Yonder," said he, "is Frogmore, and if the day is pleasant the Queen always drives there in an open carriage and breakfasts. If the weather is hot the table is spread for her in a tent on the lawn, where, also, she reads her private letters and newspapers." The Queen never takes up a newspaper that has not been previously perused by a lady-in-waiting, who marks all the passages

which she thinks would interest her Majesty, who is supposed to look at nothing that is not marked. Afterward the Queen goes to another room or to another tent, and proceeds to the business of the day; there are seldom less than twenty and often more than thirty boxes to be gone through, and a groom is kept constantly riding between the Queen at Frogmore and Sir Henry Ponsonby at the Castle.

After about three hours of incessant work Her Majesty drives back to the Castle with the boxes in the carriage, and they are then carried up stairs on a trav. and sorted and despatched by Sir Henry Ponsonby. Then Her Majesty lunches with Princess Beatrice, and any other members of her family who are at the Castle, and, unless there is any ceremony of State appointed for the day, they afterward take a walk in the sunk garden or on the slopes, and later go out for a drive. On their return they retire for a little necessary rest before preparing for dinner, which brings the day's visitors. The only part of the Queen's daily routine which never varies is the morning work, which comes as regularly as that of any clerk in the city, and every thing is done by Her Majesty with conscientious thoroughness. The Queen looks into every thing herself, and the public have little idea of the prodigious number and variety of the subjects which come before her for decision. It is an axiom among all who have served the Queen, that if they can only get their case looked into by Her Majesty, strict justice is assured. At Windsor her life is more laborious than elsewhere, from the incessant visitors and ceremonies, and the impossibility of getting away from the pomp and pageantry of a Court.

GOLDEN RULES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

1. Shut every door after you, and without slamming it.
2. Never shout, jump, or run in the house.
3. Never call to persons upstairs or in the next room; if you wish to speak to them, go quietly where they are.
4. Always speak kindly and politely to the servants, if you would have them do the same to you.
5. When told to do or not to do a thing by either parent, never ask why you should or should not do it.
6. Tell of your own faults and misdoings, not those of your brothers and sisters.
7. Carefully clean the mud or snow off your boots before entering the house.
8. Be prompt at every meal hour.
9. Never sit down at the table, or in the parlour with dirty hands or tumbled hair.
10. Never interrupt any conversation, but wait patiently your turn to speak.
11. Never reserve your good manners for company, but be equally polite at home and abroad.
12. Let your first, last, and best friend be your mother.—*The Grand Army Journal*.

The rod of the prophet at Horeb brought not fire from the rock, but water—sweet water; so sometimes the blow of affliction, blessed by a higher power, softens the heart to the flow of the gentler affections.