

The color had gone now, and she dropped into a chair, white and trembling. The ticket and shoes were marked from Mr. Darlington, the gloves and collars from his mother. Besides these, there were three notes. Mother opened them slowly, Ruth's first.

"Mother dear, you are going. Ever since Phyllis called you 'Pa Wilfer' and you told us of your wedding trip, I've meant that the rest of it should come true, but I didn't think it could so soon. It's only a little I did—most of it was Barbara; but I know the weists will fit! I never realized before how convenient it was to be just your mother's size. Mother—if I could tell you how perfectly dear Barbara has been! Once I was afraid—I'm so ashamed of it now—that she was Bella Wilfer, beautiful and spoiled. But she isn't. Dear, we are so happy over this! Your loving Ruth."

The next one read:

"Dear Little Pa Wilfer.—If you dare make a fuss! You can't because I'm so much happier. I knew I was selfish and horrid, and every individual hair in that lovely fur pricked me every time I put it on. I wore it only three times, and I went to the head of the department and explained matters and got it changed for—something better. Ruth was shocked. Ruth is such a selfish dear—she wants to have all the fun of being unselfish herself. Mother, truly that fur weighed fifty pounds and was growing heavier every minute and I never was so happy in my life as when I traded it off for the suit. So please, please take it from your selfish, but repentant

"Bella W."

The last one of the notes was Phyllis's and that broke the strain with laughter:

"Dearest, Belovedest Pa Wilfer.—This hat is for your lovely rumpled hair in Washington. We're all dreadfully scared for fear you won't behave, and we're going to stay over at Mrs. Coniston's till you hang my red scarf out of the window in token of surrender. I left it on your chair."

"With love, Bella W.
"P.S.—I call myself Bella because I'm so beautiful!"

For a long time Mrs. Darlington sat there, the letters in her lap, fighting her battle. She could not take so much from the girls—oh, she could not! She never could enjoy the things a moment when they cost so much. The suit could easily be fitted over for Barbara, and Ruth needed a party waist, and—

"Dear, we are so happy," Ruth's letter said, softly.

"I never was so happy in my life," Barbara sang.

Slowly the mother opened the window, and the scarlet suit fluttered in the winter air.—*Ruth's Companion.*

WILLING TO COMPROMISE.

The mother had been having a strenuous day with Her Offspring, as Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer calls the story of a little cousin of hers. The small boy had even more than usually been a peripatetic interrogation point. There were a few things concerning the construction of the world and all things in it, with asides upon various theological, philosophical and scientific questions, which the mother had not tried to answer. She was exhausted and welcomed the night as she undressed her little son and prepared him for bed. But he had not finished his questions.

"Mamma," he asked, "where is my soul?"

"Now, dear," replied the weary mamma, "I am very tired, and I can't answer another question to-night."

"Well, then, you needn't answer it to-night," said the child, "but please put your finger on the very spot."

CONCERNING THE OVERCOAT.

The season of overcoats is approaching, says the London *Lancet*, and probably in no other department sartorial is there exhibited so much indifference to hygienic considerations. The greatest fallacy of all, perhaps, in regard to the choice of an overcoat is that the terms "weight" and "warmth" are synonymous. As a matter of fact they are nearly always diametrically opposed. Heavy materials are often good conductors of heat and are calculated therefore to allow the heat of the body to escape, while light materials are bad conductors and so preserve the heat and energies of the body. Moreover, the heavy overcoat is a tax on the resources of the organism and destroys the economy which a good insulating cloth is intended to secure. Further, heavy material encourages an uncleanly and unhealthy state of the body chiefly by imprisoning the exhalation of the skin. That cloth is best, therefore, which gives the minimum of weight and the maximum of warmth while being porous enough to admit of ventilation. It is not generally realized that in protecting the body from the dissipation of its own heat—i. e., from cold—clothing really serves as an economizer of fuel—that is, food. Could we accustom ourselves to wearing no clothing at all under cold climatic conditions we should have to consume more food than we do in order to compensate for the rapid loss of heat which would happen if the body were not wrapped in non-conducting materials. This point needs to be borne in mind by those who advocate the banishment of the overcoat. It is, of course, possible to dispense with an overcoat, provided that the clothes worn are particularly warm. The overcoat, however, offers the decided advantage that it can be superimposed over a comparatively light suit of clothes and thus, while preventing the escape of heat provides also an air space between the ordinary clothes and itself—an air space which is open to ventilation. There seems to be little doubt that a well-chosen overcoat surrounding a warm, but light suit of clothes, is for the reasons just given, much more comfortable than a heavy suit of ordinary clothes. There is another important point about the qualities of an overcoat, and that is in regard to the color of the material. The choice of a sombre hue—black, dark gray, dark brown, or dark blue—is totally opposed to scientific indications. The polar bear is not provided with black fur; if he were, he would not be able to defy the cold with that impunity which he does. Light colored material, as a matter of fact, does not so easily give up its heat as does dark material, and this would appear to teach that our notions as to the suitability of color of garments for winter wear are illogical. Fashion and custom bind us hard and are seldom on all fours with reasonable ideas. If he would follow the dictates of science and common sense, the purchaser of winter clothing would choose, if he were able to do so, garments of a light, rather than a dark hue. And why should everyone be clothed in a funeral type of material just when winter sets in, when every effort is necessary to compensate for the dreariness and darkness of its days?

The church was packed, even the aisles being lined with chairs. Just before the benediction, the thoughtful clergyman, who loved order, made this request:—

"In passing out, please remain seated until the ushers have removed the chairs from the aisles."—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

"Edgar is a splendid talker, isn't he?"
"One of the finest I ever escaped from."—*Life.*

THE PICTURE SCRAPBOOK.

A child's picture scrapbook is capable of variations which add to its interest; for while a hodge-podge of pictures, however gay and pretty, delights only the very young child, when a special subject is chosen for illustration the interest is longer-lived. For instance, a little city boy will enjoy making a farm book. The picture of the house, of the barns, the fields, the cows, the horses, and all the other animals will form a pictured story; a story with the additional charm of indefinite continuation, for he may add to his stock and poultry or put up a new barn whenever a fine picture presents itself. A garden book is easily made from seed catalogues. A sea book has possibilities in the way of boats on top of the waves, fish beneath, and shells and seaweeds on the shores. A bird book gives acquaintance with the tree folk. An older boy may enjoy collecting pictures of means of travel: trains, old-fashioned and modern, different kinds of ships, balloons, airships, old velocipedes, automobiles, and so forth. As a special Sunday occupation for children a scrapbook may be made illustrating Bible stories, or filled with pictures of famous men. In fact, any special interest on the part of the child may be utilized as the motive for the book.—*Congregationalist.*

WHISKERS.

The teacher of the Sunday school class was telling the little boys about temptation, and showing how it sometimes came in the most attractive form. She used as an illustration the paw of a cat.

"Now," said she, "you have all seen the paw of a cat. It is as soft as velvet, isn't it?"

"Yesem," from the class.

"And you have seen the paw of a dog?"

"Yesem."

"Well, although the cat's paw seems like velvet, there is nevertheless concealed in it something that hurts. What is it?"

No answer.

"The dog bites," said the teacher, "when he is in anger, but what does the cat do?"

"Scratches," said a boy.

"Correct," said the teacher, nodding her head approvingly. "Now, what has the cat got that the dog hasn't?"

"Whiskers!" said a boy on the back seat.

THE CURIOUS TORCH FISH.

There is a strange fish that swims in the deeper parts of the sea that is commonly called the torch fish, though in the scientific books he has a Latin name which is much too long and difficult for everyday use.

The most remarkable thing about this fish is the queer, egg-shaped growth on the end of his long, thin nose. This looks very much like an electric light bulb, and it answers much the same purpose, for the fish can light it up whenever he wants to, which is whenever he happens to be hungry. For the oddest thing about this ocean lantern is that it is not intended to light the fish about in the deep gloom under water (but as a trap for the smaller fish that he likes to eat. So when the little fish that are swimming by happen to see the light they mistake it for a certain deep-sea firefly that they are very fond of, and in their eagerness to scramble for this shiny thing call right into the torch fish's big mouth, which is, of course, wide open ready to receive them. Then, when the fish has eaten all he needs to make him comfortable, he puts out his light and goes off to amuse himself in other ways.