

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Boys and Girls:

I suppose you are all so busy studying, as it is getting on to examinations, that you have forgotten the corner. Well, how about having a nice story. Or how about sending an essay. I know very well how much school children enjoy essay-writing, and apart from the excellent practice it would be for themselves, it would be helpful to the younger ones. Let me see what you will do.

Your friend,

AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

We have been taking the True Witness for a long time, and I like the children's page so much. I never wrote a letter before to a paper, so I would like to see this in print. I have a dear baby sister. We all like her very much, she is so cute. She is just beginning to walk and follows me everywhere I go.

Your friend,

MADELINE.

Ottawa, Nov. 12.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

What do you think of having a crow for a pet? We found it in the country this summer. We were going along the road and saw this black thing moving. On close inspection it turned out to be a crow with a broken wing. They are such a nuisance to farmers that they try to shoot them. We took the poor thing home and fixed it up. It became quite tame, and we made a great pet of it. We call him Jack. He is specially fond of grandmother and will sit hours at the time on her shoulder if she is knitting or reading.

CHARLIE F.

Hintonburg, Ont.

Dear Aunt Becky:-

I am just ten years old and do not go out to school. I have a governess a short while every day. I am an invalid, but I still have a pretty good time. My papa and mamma get me everything to make me happy. You see, I have to go round in a wheel chair, but papa takes me out carrying me down stairs in his strong arms, and takes such good care of me. I have nine dolls, a little kitten, a Japanese pug, a camera, games and books to no end. I was away all summer, and papa says he is going to take mamma and me down south in a little while. Good-bye.

Your friend,

Caroline.

Brockville, Nov. 9.

LOOKING THROUGH BLUE SPECTACLES.

"Oh, yes," you say at once, "we know what they are. They are the sort of glasses that people wear when their eyes are weak, or when the sun shines too brightly on the snow." Perhaps some of you have even tried on a pair, and know when you look through the dark glass it seems as if the sunshine had lost its soul, and the flowers and trees had gone into mourning. You lay them aside at last as gladly as you come from a gloomy cellar into God's light and air.

The glasses of which I am going to speak, however, are not of the same sort, although they produce very much the same effects. They might almost be called magic glasses, for they are certainly invisible. I have looked into some of the prettiest eyes which ever opened on this round world without dreaming that they looked back at me through blue spectacles.

It almost seemed the other morning as if some bad fairy had slipped a pair of these glasses over Irene's eyes during the night, for when she waked up she looked around her with a gloomy face as if the whole world were draped in black. The sunbeams were playing hide and seek upon her bedroom floor, but she never noticed them. She dressed very slowly, because she couldn't find her things. This sort of blue spectacles, I have noticed, never improves the eyesight. She hunted so many minutes for her shoes and her hair-ribbon, and her comb, though each of them was in plain sight, that the breakfast bell rang before she was half ready.

Even after she got down stairs nothing on the table looked appetizing—the fault of the blue glasses again. The steak seemed too rare and the muffins too well done, and nothing just right by any chance. At school it was no better. Viewed through the blue spectacles the day's lessons seemed unusually difficult. To be sure, May Martin, who is a year younger than Irene, and as a rule no quicker to learn, worked the arith-

metic in half an hour and could then give her attention to her history lesson. But Irene, for the first time that term, failed in both recitations. And the worst of all was that she missed for the second time, Irene was sure she saw her dearest friend, Kitty, glance at May with a scornful smile on her lips. Irene laid her head on her desk and cried till noon. Such trouble do these magic spectacles bring their wearers.

It was a relief to the whole family, and most of all to Irene herself, when she crept to bed that night, tired and worn out from the day's troubles. And yet the day had been as good as other days, with as many opportunities for happiness and helpfulness. But looking through her magic glasses she had seen everything darkened and distorted. How many of you have a pair of these blue spectacles which you put on occasionally in the morning and wear through the day, making yourself and those about you heartily uncomfortable? Would it not be a good idea to throw away this troublesome property, and to always look at God's world as it is, with all the light and brightness and beauty which He intended should help to make us happy?

A GOOD LESSON.

A boy was sitting on the steps of a house. He had a broom in one hand and a large piece of bread and butter in the other. While he was eating he saw a poor little dog not far from him. He called out to him, "Come here, poor fellow!" Seeing the boy eating, he came near. The boy held out to him a piece of his bread and butter. As the dog stretched out his head to take it, the boy drew back his hand and hit him a hard rap on the nose. A gentleman who was looking down from a window on the other side of the street saw what the boy had done. Opening the street door he called out to him to come over, at the same time holding a sixpence between his finger and thumb. "Would you like this?" said the gentleman. "Yes, if you please, sir," said the boy, smiling. Just at that moment he got so severe a rap on the knuckles from a cane which the gentleman had behind him that he roared out with pain. "What did you do that for?" said he, making a long face and rubbing his hand. "I didn't ask you for the sixpence." "What did you hurt that dog for just now?" asked the gentleman. "He didn't ask you for the bread and butter. As you served him, I have served you. Now, remember hereafter that dogs can feel as well as boys." — Boston Budget.

NO WASHING THERE.

A traveller from Russia says that Russian babies in Siberia are not very attractive. And when he tells one of the reasons, we do not wonder at his thinking so.

He says that one day he noticed in one of the houses a curious bundle on a shelf; another hung from a peg in the wall, and a third hung by a rope from the rafters; this one the mother was swinging. The traveller discovered that each bundle was a child; the one in the swinging bundle was the youngest.

The traveller looked at the little baby and found it so dirty that he exclaimed in disgust: "Why do you not wash it?"

The mother looked horror-stricken and ejaculated: "Wash it? Wash the baby? Why it would kill it!"

What a happy country Russia must be for some boys! They would never hear, "Wash your face and hands," nor, "Have you brushed your hair?" But, O, how they would look!

ALL CAN BE GENTLEMEN.

Birth and wealth neither exclude nor guarantee civility. The poor man may be just as upright, temperate and polite, as the rich; the machinist at the bench, just as kind, gentle and honest, as the judge; the miner just as courageous, self-respecting and civil as the senator—in short all men can be true gentlemen. The simple fact that one has chosen to spend his life behind the hoofs of

horses unshod and another prefers to wield the pen, is no reason why one should be refined and the other remain rude in discourse and demeanor. The blacksmith will find civility just as essential to success in his business as the banker.

A little proverb learnt in cradle days underlies this art of pleasing by being pleased—"Honesty is the best policy." A man of gentlemanly character will at all times be found honest, upright and straightforward. He does not prevaricate, hence has no cause to feel uneasy about his statements; his law is justice. When he says "Yes," it is a law; and he has no fear of the trying "No," at the proper time. Truthfulness shows in all his actions as well as in his speech,—in a word, he is what he seems.

WHERE'S MOTHER?

Bursting in from school or play, This is what the children say; Trooping, crowding, big or small. On the threshold, in the hall— Joining in the constant cry, Ever as the days go by— "Where's mother?"

From the weary bed of pain This same question comes again; From the boy with sparkling eyes, Bearing home his earliest prize: From the bronzed and bearded son, Perils past and honors won— "Where's mother?"

Mother with untiring hands At the post of duty stands; Patient, seeking not her own, Anxious for the good alone Of the children as they cry, Ever as the days go by— "Where's mother?"

KINDNESS OF BIRD TO BIRD.

A correspondent of Outing writes: "I am sure you would like to hear of a generous woodpecker I saw this summer. I was on a farm in Somerset county, Pa., and out in the orchard I saw this red-head perched on a post of the worm fence with a grub in his mouth. The world was full of young blue-birds just then, and a little flock was dancing on the grass. Presently one of them sidled up to the woodpecker and opened his mouth, whereupon the obliging red-head gave him the grub. I would hardly have believed that if I had read it, but seeing is believing. I have seen a little chipping sparrow make a business of feeding some half-fledged robins. She watched for her opportunity and whenever both parents were away from the nest she rushed in with her morsel. The robins resented her officiousness and hustled her out of the tree whenever they caught her there. I have heard of a wren that fed a brood of young robins in a similar way, and of a male bluebird that fed some young birds that were in a nest near its own. I do not suppose that these acts of kindness among the birds spring from any altruistic feeling, but that they are simply the overflowing of the parental instinct."

LITTLE LAUGHS.

THAT "ENGLISH ACCENT." There was unconscious satire, writes Sir Archibald Geikie, in his "Reminiscences" in the answer given by a housemaid to her mistress, who was puzzled to conjecture how far the girl could be intelligible in London, whence she had returned to Scotland. "You speak such broad Scots, Kate, that I wonder how they could understand you in London."

"Oh, but, mam, I aye speek English there."

"Did you? And how did you manage that?"

"Oh, mam, there's naethin' easier. Ye maun spit out a' the r's and gie th' words a bit chaw in the middle."

BRAINS NOT NEEDED.

Sir Conan Doyle once told a story of an English officer who was badly wounded in South Africa, and the military surgeon had to shave off that portion of his brain which protruded from his skull. The officer got well, and later on in London the surgeon asked whether he knew that a portion of his brain was in a glass bottle in a laboratory. "Oh, that does not matter now," replied the soldier; "I've got a permanent position in the war office."—Catholic Deaf-Mute.

ABOVE FALSEHOOD.

Remember that neither the malice of those who defame thee by evil reports, nor the error of those that believe falsehood, can make thee differ from what thou art, nor take away the virtue of thy greatness of soul, which lifts itself above falsehood uttered or believed.

ST. JEAN BAPTISTE.

Colossal Statue in Rome to the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

A colossal statue of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who was canonized by the late Pontiff, Leo XIII., is about to be placed in St. Peter's, in the company of the other huge statues which decorate the niches in the nave and which commemorate the founders of Religious Orders and Congregations. The statue is the work of Commendatore Cesare Aureli, whose studio is in the Via Flaminia. The group, for the chief figure has two smaller accompanying figures, is cut out of a single block of Carrara marble. The statue of the Saint is 15 feet 3 inches in height; two smaller statues, one 10 feet high and the other two feet six inches, represent two youths, arrayed in the costume of the people of the 16th century. The whole group weighs 18 tons. The removal of it from the artist's studio along the Via Flaminia over the Pons Miliarius, and by the road that skirts the Tiber to St. Peter's, began two hours after midnight on a sort of sledge drawn by 20 horses. It must have been a strange sight to see the huge mass, lighted by the brilliant beams of an Italian moon, dragged along in the silence of the night in the desolate roads that lie between the artist's studio and the great dome of St. Peter's!

In the right hand side of the nave, above the statue of St. Philip Neri, Founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, there is an empty niche now almost hidden behind a huge scaffolding, and which is destined to contain the statue of Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle.

Nowadays there are few subjects that force themselves upon our attention with such resistless power as the question of education, writes Mary Banim. But besides this urgency of popular education, there is another phase of the question looming up every now and then with remarkable significance, and by no means confined to the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. Recently the religious features of the educational problem have been descanted upon by quite a few prominent men and women outside the pale of the Catholic communion. One of the best means of knowing and appreciating the attitude of the Church on such matters is to glance over what has been attempted and accomplished by some of her bravest sons and truest educators. The International Catholic Truth Society has just published a brochure on the life and work of Saint John Baptist de la Salle, founder of the Christian Schools. Although a mere compendium, and not intended to give any detailed account of this renowned educator of Christ's poor little ones, the reader will be surprised to find so much interesting information within the small compass of thirty-two pages.

That Saint John Baptist de la Salle was a providential man no one at the present time will attempt to deny. Like the Precursor of the Saviour, it may be said in very truth of De la Salle, "there was a man sent from God whose name was John." His earliest aspirations were towards the sanctuary, and of this sublime calling he gave proof from the very outset; and on April 10, 1678, he had the unspeakable happiness of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the first time. His love for the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament was so great, so penetrating, that many were anxious to assist at his Mass to be edified and strengthened in their faith. After some years came the day when our Saint must be launched upon a career which in the dispensation of God's providence was to bring about his life's work. It all happened simply through the request of a pious lady, Madame de Maillefer, who solicited the help of De la Salle in founding a school for children in the city of Rheims. Masters were selected for the work, and our Saint took charge of the Mission. Much space would be required to describe in detail the founding of the Christian Brothers' Institute—their trials, persecutions, and final triumph. We shall not attempt even a brief review of this new life of the "Newest Saint," but shall content ourselves with recommending all good Catholics, and particularly the Christian Brothers' boys, to obtain a copy of it. Some, perhaps, do not fully realize that Saint John Baptist de la Salle was one of the very first in France to appreciate the great need of a system of free Chris-

tian education, long before the idea of popular education was evolved as we have it to-day. One of the greatest tributes ever paid our Saint was delivered within the present year in the French Chamber of Deputies by M. Buisson, a representative of the government. Among other things he said: "A young man, the eldest son of a rich, great and noble family, had established relations before the end of his studies with men like Olier, Bourdoise and Denna, who even in the time of Louis XIV.—for there were such men then—recognized that there were vast numbers of wretched children left without education and instruction. When this young canon became a priest he heard, ever ringing in his ears, the words of a friend at St. Sulpice, who had just returned from a miserable quarter in Paris: 'Instead of going as a missionary to the Indies to preach to infidels, I feel it better in my heart to go begging from door to door to maintain a school-teacher for our abandoned children.' It was then that the young canon began to act as the rich act whose hearts are in the right place—he gave up his canonry to live with the poor. As there happened just then to be a famine in the city, he distributed day after day to the poor all that he had. And when he had nothing, he thought he had then a right to preach self-sacrifice to his teachers. If that were the only thing in the life of St. John Baptist de la Salle, I think he would be entitled to our respect. But the man who so acted in the beginning gave forty years of the most persistent, the most patient, the most unwearied devotion to the obscure work whose importance and grandeur he alone in France seemed to divine, for he alone saw the need of a system of free education, and he pursued it at the cost of sacrifices that cannot be described." These words, coming from such a source, ought to make us anxious to know more about the great Christian Teacher canonized by Leo XIII. on May 24, 1900, at one of the closing acts of his glorious pontificate. To-day, the fruit of De la Salle's mission is rich and abundant, as will appear from a perusal of the pamphlet the "Newest Saint."

Jubilee of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Among the many preparations that are being made in Rome for the due celebration of the 50th anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that of a Marian Exhibition in the great hall of the Lateran Palace is one of the most notable. It is still in a condition of preparation, but it is expected that it will be opened to the public in the course of November. Besides this, the distinguished composer, Don Lorenzo Perosi, has been occupied in preparing a cantata in honor of the Blessed Virgin, to be sung and performed on this anniversary. He has announced to the Committee appointed for the celebration that he has completed the composition of the work. It is said that Perosi, in the December of 1902, happening to see the first announcement of the Jubilee celebration which the Committee was about to issue, and which contained phrases of devout enthusiasm inviting all people to take part in the celebration, he was deeply touched and inspired to offer a musical composition to the Committee. The new work has incorporated in it a poem of the 15th century. The chief part of the vocal music is written for a baritone voice, with an organ accompaniment. There are parts also for contralto and tenor voices. There are angelic choirs which will be reproduced by boys. The triumphal hymn of the "Magnificat," founded on an ancient document, is expected to form the great feature of the composition, and the cantata altogether is regarded as one of the best of this master's works.

His Eminence Katschthaler, Archbishop of Salzburg, has sent to the Committee of the Marian Exhibition a letter announcing his intention of sending them reproductions of the paintings and sculptures representing the Blessed Virgin existing in his diocese. Like contributions are coming from a great many dioceses throughout Europe. Those that will be sent from other parts of Italy will be of the greatest artistic and historical interest, and will contribute to render this Exhibition unique in its character and completeness.

TO BLACKEN TAN BOOTS.

Get five cents' worth of spirits of hartshorn and with it take all the polish off the boots. Let them dry and then give them a good dressing of ink. Leave them some hours and polish in the usual manner with any good blacking.

VEUVIUS IS UGLY.

The Famous Volcano again the Scene of Awful Magnificence.

The most wonderful sight in Europe at the present time is the eruption of Vesuvius. That famous volcano is furnishing entertainment for a great many tourists, and the desire to see the remarkable spectacle presented has drawn some venturesome travellers into danger. The Italian government has been compelled to take a hand in restraining such sightseers from going too near the angry monster, whose sudden outburst almost 2000 years ago overwhelmed two cities in ruin and death.

The comparative quietude of the volcano in recent years has led many to suppose that no special danger existed in its vicinity, and tourists have gone close to its crater, while the peasantry have peopled to some extent its lava strewn sides. The mountain is about thirty miles in circumference. A railway conveys tourists from the base of the cinder cone to the summit near the edge of the crater. Lava flowing from the crater has now melted away the metal of this railway and destroyed the upper station and the huts in which the guides lived. The peasants in the vicinity of the burning mountain have left their homes and are camped in the open air.

It was in 79 A.D. that the great eruption took place which overwhelmed and buried the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Before this eruption Vesuvius had the appearance of a truncated mountain. There was a deep depression in its summit, and its sides were forest clad. The eruption began suddenly with the formation over the mountain of a huge black cloud, followed by an explosion, in which the top of the volcano was blown off, accompanied by showers of ashes, lapilli and mud. Pompeii was buried under ashes, and Herculaneum was covered with mud.

The cloud from the mountain shot up like a pillar and spread out on all sides. Thunder and awful flashes of lightning proceeded from it. The cloud was also lit up with a ruddy glow, as though from a burning furnace beneath. Explosion succeeded explosion in the mountain, and a succession of earthquakes transpired, the land rocked, and the sea flowed back and forth in strange tides. The inhabitants of the doomed cities had not heeded the warnings that the mountain had given, and when they realized their danger escape was cut off. The elder Pliny, who was in command of the Roman fleet at Misenum, sailed to the scene in the hope of aiding the distracted but when he landed at the foot of the mountain he was suffocated by the vapors escaping from it, just as the inhabitants of the city at the foot of Mont Pelee were suffocated by its gases on its terrible eruption but a short time ago.

The description of this eruption of Vesuvius given in Bulwer's famous novel, "The Last Days of Pompeii," is one of the strongest pieces of descriptive writing in English literature. Though the historic eruption occurred more than eighteen centuries ago Vesuvius has manifested its activity ever since, with intervals of comparative quiet. In these intervals those living in the vicinity have sometimes grown careless of danger. Towns were often destroyed and lives lost in succeeding eruptions, but never afterwards on so great a scale as in 79 A.D. Almost every century has witnessed a number of eruptions, and in 472 ashes from Vesuvius were carried as far eastward as Constantinople. In the eruption of 1822 the mountain lost about 800 feet of its height, but this has been mostly restored since by the deposits of ashes and lava and stone. There were many eruptions during the nineteenth century, one of the most violent being that of 1872.

The demonstrations the mountain is now making cause old residents of the vicinity to fear that some more fearful outburst than any now living have witnessed may be in prospect. An observatory has been established near the volcano. The director reports that one day recently his instruments registered no fewer than 1844 explosions. These explosions sound from a distance like the intermittent roar of a great battle. The force of the explosions is such as to hurl great red-hot stones to a height of 16,000 feet, and the noise when they crash against the sides of the mountain in their fall and tear their way over the ashes and lava is deafening. One stone found about a mile from the crater weighed two tons. All vegetation within a mile of the volcano's crater has disappeared.