

# BOYS AND GIRLS



—'Band of Mercy.'

## SOME OF OUR DOG FRIENDS.

### Lucy's Child.

(By Elizabeth A. S. Chester, in 'The Independent'.)

At four o'clock the morning after Thanksgiving the cock but lately most insignificant in all Esquire Coverly's barn-yard walks rose and crowed shrilly, crowed exultantly, defiantly. Did not the plumed crests of his late proud rivals lie cold, silent, and blood-bedabbled by the chopping-block in the back yard.

'By my might and by my power have I gotten to myself all this roost dominion!' crowed the self-deluded chanticleer, and through the cool morning dusk, that but a week ago had been joyously vocal, came no response, until, at last, faint and far and feeble, the voice of Deacon Rossiter's little bantam rejoined: 'I still live! I still live!'

At five o'clock Miss Harriet Coverly rose upon one elbow, and, rapping on the wall at the head of her bed, called: 'Jo-nas!'

No response.

'Jo-nas!' Profound silence. 'Jo-nas! It's time to get up and start the fire!'

At six o'clock the odor of steamed chicken pie arose upon the air. At seven o'clock the long table, formed of two square tables and the 'extra leaf,' made for Miss Harriet by the neighborhood carpenter and paid for in pie-apples (Miss Harriet, like all the Coverlys, was of a frugal mind)—this long table was set and the family began gathering.

'Oh, Aunt Hattie, why couldn't you have let us sleep this morning!' ejaculated Mabel Coverly, a handsome blonde, as she folded her fair hands wearily within the lace-bordered sleeves of her cashmere wrapper.

'Sister Harriet considers it a religious duty to rise at five o'clock,' said elegant, bright-eyed Sister Van Alnstyne.

'Five o'clock!' cried Dick Wentworth, a Harvard undergraduate. 'I heard her at two this morning reproving Jonas for his sloth.'

'I pity Jonas!' said Miss Mabel, aside.

'Phlegmatic temperament— He'll stand it,' replied Dick.

'When we all come visiting you ought to indulge us a little, Auntie,' persuaded Mabel.

'Have you any idea of what time it is now, Mabel? Just look at that clock,' said Aunt Harriet, tragically pointing at the hands, which indicated five minutes past seven. 'If you are all going to Brother John's, you ought to have been ready to start this minute.'

'What is there to do or to see at Uncle John's, that we should start at such an un-earthly hour?' queried Dick.

'What? Why—why, you want to start early anyway, you know.'

'Sister Harriet feels that these family reunions are the only occasions upon which

we can see illustrated the one only orthodox way of virtue and road to prosperity—getting an early start in the morning!' said the Honorable Charles.

'Brother Charles, you know how you were brought up,' said Miss Harriet, in a tone of mingled reproof, admonition, and pride. 'Pa never tolerated laziness in his boys. Brother Van Alnstyne, be so kind as to move that chair a little. Father is coming.'

After the venerable Squire had taken his seat, the family bowed their heads for the patriarchal grace. Miss Harriet, however, bestowed one glance backward, to see that the door into the kitchen was closed, a second sideways, to make sure the coffee-pot cover was down tight, then, folded her hands, and dropped her chin, to return thanks in spirit, if not verbally, that finally she had 'got them all up and down to the table.'

No sooner had the Squire put a period to his mumbled, and rather unintelligible grace with a loud and somewhat explosive amen than Miss Harriet resumed temporal discourse.

'I'm sure I don't know how you're all to be got over. John will come with his double-seated waggon; but our chaise won't hold more than five. I had engaged Mr. Daly to take over a load; but he has just sent word his wife's uncle is to be buried and he must attend the funeral. Dick, you and Harry have young legs; you can walk. Father says he shan't go; and I shan't start till toward eleven, when maybe I can catch a ride.'

'You need make no provision for me, Sister Harriet,' said the Hon. Charles Coverly. 'I think I shall go around by Brother Hugh's and call.'

Instantly a spark of excitement gleamed in Sister Harriet's eye, and she handed Dick Wentworth's coffee to Mr. Daly's daughter, the maid of the occasion, with an air of vexation speedily changed to one of determination.

'Well, Brother Charles, I can't tell what kind of a place you'll find, nor whether there'll be a decent chair to sit down upon; but I'm sure if there isn't 'tisn't my fault. I've talked to that boy the best I knew. I've told him over and over again that he ought to have a good, reliable housekeeper. No matter if it did cost three dollars and a half a week, he could afford it. I've offered to go over and superintend Mrs. Daly when she clears up for him, in order to save the credit of the family, I've even taken him here to board, though my back is that weak now the doctor says if I don't stop work I am liable to become a helpless invalid; but the truth is, Hugh is so terribly tight he isn't willing to pay anything reasonable either for help or for board. That's just exactly as 'tis!'

Miss Harriet looked around the board defiantly. Everybody else appeared calm.

'I'm sure, Sister Harriet, no one who knows Brother Hugh's circumstances, can blame you,' said Sister Emeline Wentworth, soothingly. 'Hugh always was eccentric.'

'Anybody but Hugh would have come over yesterday and taken Thanksgiving dinner with his brothers and sisters, like a man,' said Brother Joseph Coverly, of the New York firm of Coverly & Packard.

'Hugh and Lucy always were the black sheep of our family,' said Sister Van Alnstyne, lightly.

'No, Sister Van Alnstyne,' said Miss Harriet, decidedly. 'I don't admit there were any black sheep in our family. Hugh and Lucy were odd, very odd; but no one can truthfully say a word against Hugh's moral character, and Lucy's worst trait was her self-will. She would marry that miserable Judd, and she didn't live a year. We told her—'

A sudden hush. All seemed simultaneously aware that, for the first time in the family history, Lucy's child was present at their reunion.

'Brother Charles, please to pass the bread,' said Miss Harriet, mildly.

'Lucy's child,' who was a slender girl of sixteen years, sat at the foot of the table, her plate on the 'extra leaf,' Dick Wentworth, who was on one side of her, at this juncture, kindly pressed her to take some tomato Chowder, and Miss Mabel Coverly hastened to assure her that, if she had never been to Uncle John's, she would enjoy the ride over exceedingly.

Miss Harriet had sent Lucy's child a special invitation to this Thanksgiving, accompanied by railway tickets, and the girl had anticipated the visit every hour, until on Wednesday afternoon she had found herself at the Coverly depot, amid a multitude of strange relatives, whose glad greetings to each other made her feel extremely lonely, and whose rich furs and soft silks contrasted with her cotton-mixed garments as strongly as did their manners of ease and elegance with her embarrassment. Upon learning her identity, they had treated her with extreme kindness, and had so openly endeavored to put her at ease as to unintentionally wound her self-love and render her self-conscious, confused, and miserable; yet all the time she was inwardly self-assertive and angry with herself. Why should she feel inferior to the cousins? Had not the principal of the High School said she was his most promising pupil? hadn't she taken the Latin-essay prize before any of the boys? and was she not prepared in Greek and mathematics, as well as Latin, for admission to Welleston College, where Mabel Coverly had taken the prize, of which the family were so proud?