



BORROWED BRAINS.

The following extracts are taken at random from a collection of child-studies contained in "In The Devil's Alley" by May Quinlan.

"MEG."

Among the quaint little mortals I knew was Meg, aged seven. Of her it might be said that she had quite a talent for praying. Never did she see a hearse drive by but she felt impelled to pray for the eternal weal of the dead man. But as there is a touch of earth in all human endeavour, it so happened that Meg not only prayed assiduously, but she conceived the ambition of breaking her own record, her object being to see how many "Paters" and "Aves" she could get through before the hearse whisked round the corner. Meg was accordingly rebuked for profanity. Such gabbled prayers, she was told, never rose to heaven. She must say them slowly. And it is to be presumed that she laid the counsel to heart, for it transpired soon afterwards that she held the somewhat unique position of spiritual adviser to her own immediate circle. One day she was approached by another small child, who confided to Meg her particular wants, whereupon Meg urged the efficacy of prayer. So the other child went away to return two days later—crestfallen.

"I ain't got nothink," was the verdict.

"Did yer say the prayers?" asked Meg.

"Yuss," came the response.

"Did yer say 'em *Slow*?"

"Yuss."

The two children sat and gazed at one another. Something had evidently gone wrong.

"An' yer said 'em slow?" repeated Meg. Her brows contracted in profound thought, and there was an awful pause. Then she shook her head gloomily: "Dunno wot Gawd's doin'," said she. And thus she dismissed the subject.

WEE WILLIE.

It was a grotesque child figure that ambled down a side street. His diminutive breeches

hung in tatters about his person, and instead of a shirt, his costume was completed by a woolly feminine garment, known to the initiated as a "hug-me-tight." Accordingly to the dictates of fashion it ought to have reached to the waist. But the voice of fashion is silent in Stepney—throttled by the stern hand of necessity. So Wee Willie wore his mother's hug-me-tight, and it covered his knees. But his face was radiant. Yesterday had been a day of days, for having wandered further afield than usual, some one had given him a sixpence. Asked how he had spent it, Wee Willie gave this detailed account:

"There was a 'alfpenny fur milk—that was fur little Joey wot's sick," he interpolated, "an' a pennyworth o' coal. Then another penny went on kindlin' wood, an' a penny fur sugar. Arter that we bought a pennyworth o' tea, w'ich leaves three 'alfpence."

"And what then?"

"Three 'alfpenny buns," was the response, and his eyes glistened at the recollection thereof.

THE PARABLE OF THE MAN WHO TARRIED.

By CPL. A. J. HIND.

And verily it came to pass that a certain man of the King's Army was travelling the highway which is called the "Prom," when he chanced upon a maiden of smiling countenance, who spake unto him, saying, "Hello, Canada, whither goest thou?" He answered, "Even unto Cooden, and the way is long and ever grows apace."

"Then tarry with me," spake the maiden, "and we shall hold converse together."

"Nay, Nay," answered he, "tempt me not. Much conversation have I held since morn, and behold my voice is faint and my throat is parched like the sands of many deserts, and I must journey on to Cooden to partake of the waters thereof."

And the maiden waxed wroth and spake in a loud voice, saying, "Quitter art thou, and a fool, that thou should'st desire to go thine own way."

And his heart turned to water within him, and he quivered in great fright, and after much persuasion and dire threatenings, he arose with the maiden, and they journeyed together.

And verily it came to pass that they came even unto Bexhill, a town of great repute, which lieth on the shore that bordereth the great sea of the Channel, and they entered a tavern inhabited by many smiling damsels, which is known, among the populace, as the "Soldiers' Rest," and was built to the memory of one, the Lord of Devon, a centurion of great renown.

When, after consuming much of the beverage called "Bass," they became as babbling fools, and he became enamoured of the maiden, and she with him, and they professed great friendship with one another.