

BOYS' AND GIRLS' DEPARTMENT.

From the Companion.
JENNIE AND BELLE.

I heard the music of prattling
Coming on through the grass;
I leaned, and looked, and listened,
As to songs that softly pass.

For up through the narrow footpath,
Bordered with clovers sweet,
And daisies reaching to childish arms,
Came the sound of little feet.

The grass heads all in blossom
Scarce bent beneath the tread,
But they rustled against the dinner pails
Gayly painted, blue and red.

The smallest of day-school lassies,
Before the school-day hours,
Each with one hand in a sister's clasped,
And the other full of flowers.

Paused at my open doorway,
With timorous, winsome air;
What but kisses were welcome meet
For little maids so fair?

They lavished on me their treasures
Of the wayside and the woods;
A buttercup, and a daisy bloom,
And a stalk of mullien buds,

A panicle of the elder;
Two lillies red and tall;
A honeysuckle honey sweet;
And a wild rose, queen of all.

The blossoms were crushed and wilted,
In the moist, warm fingers pressed;
But never so fair was unplucked flower
As either dear little guest.

The school-hour called to lessons,
And the darlings might not stay;
But the little ones were a poem sweet
That sang in my heart all day.

E. L. E.

From the Youth's Companion.
THE LITTLE SCAMP.

BY ALMA.

"The little scamp!" exclaimed a rough man, grinning from ear to ear, as the puny, ragged, blue-lipped, red-eyed boy went out of the car, after he had disposed of a yesterday's newspaper instead of a fresh one.

Of course everybody laughed at the "cuteness" of the child.

"Must 'a' been born a Yankee," said one of the passengers, "and emigrated South when he was young."

That caused a general laugh again, for the boy was scarcely higher than your knee, and could not have been more than six years old.

"I should like to box his ears," said the victim, though he said it good-naturedly. "That boy is bound to grow up a villain."

I thought of my own boy, and what would be the consequences if he were sent out upon the street. What of your boy, put upon a bread and water regimen, given blows for breakfast, kicks for dinner, and a double allowance of both for tea? Further, send him to sleep in musty straw, slightly damped by a three month's atmosphere in a wet cellar, have him taught systematically to lie, swear, steal and drink, what would your promising child be, I wonder?

And this thought made me pity the little scamp,—makes me pity all little scamps,—made me hope that he was put up to the trick by some older boy, for the child had a sweet, innocent face, for all his rags and dirt.

Someway the thought of the child haunted me. All through my shopping expedition, I wondered how it would have seemed if I had been buying clothes for him. Every well-dressed and mannered little fellow suggested the poor ragged little scamp, who had so deliberately cheated.

It proved a wet day, so that when through my errands, I felt

chilly, disagreeable, almost cross, and looked forward to the bright fire at home, and the brighter eyes of my own four-year-old.

Seated in the cars again, with bundles piled before me, and an empty purse in my hand, I thought of the evening paper. There was a penny in my pocket, and I searched for it, though the image of the little scamp had almost faded from my mind.

Curiously enough, the man who had been cheated sat opposite me, and his look told that he remembered me as having seen the occurrence of the morning.

"Ere's your evening *Cricket!*" chirped a small voice, and in came the same small child, dirtier, raggeder, hoarser than ever. He looked cautiously about him, and saw my penny extended.

"Is it to-night's?" I asked, smiling in spite of myself, for he had just caught sight of the man he had cheated, and his face was a study. He wanted a penny and he did not dare to come forward.

"I recollect you, you young scamp," said my *vis-a-vis*, and the boy adroitly caught my penny, dropped the *Critic* at my feet, and turned as if a policeman was after him. He had come in at the front of the car; he essayed to leave that way.

All at once there was a scream, a strange motion of the car, a cry from several voices at once, and then the car stood still.

So did my heart. I seemed to feel what had happened, and grew so deathly sick that I feared I might faint. The poor little blue eyes, the tangled hair, the dirty, dimpled fingers, the muddy knees, sticking out of the holes, the little feet hobbling in great clattering shoes!

"What's the matter?" asked everybody; and my opposite neighbor got out, with a sad look on his kind face.

"I'm afraid somebody is hurt," said the lady next to me, and then there was a moment's silence. Presently the man who had gone out came in. There was something in his arms, which had a garment thrown over it, and which never moved.

"It's him, ma'am," was all he said. "The hospital is right on the way, and I'm going to take him there, the poor little lad!"

It was not the little scamp now. God's hand had touched him. He was hurt, dying, perhaps, and the miserable little life had all suddenly become a sacred thing.

"Is he much hurt, do you think?" I asked, shuddering.

"So much that he'll never cry the papers again," was the answer.

"Do you know anything about him?" I asked, not trying to stop the tears that were coursing down my face.

"Not a thing. I suppose tomorrow, the mother, if he's got any, or his friends, will learn from the papers and his absence what has become of him. It's very sad. He was a nice-looking little fellow,—just the age of one of my own."

The day following I went to the hospital. Beside the bed sat a decrepid old woman, oh, so old and wistful and poor, bowed down with grief.

The little scamp had a sheet drawn over him from his head to his feet. He was never to cry or suffer or cheat any more; he had died on the way, and his feet and his hands were at rest forever. I could hardly repress a cry of astonishment as I uncovered his face. Ah me! how beautiful it was! Could it be possible!

"Ah'r, Johnny was a good boy! Johnny was a good boy!" crooned the old creature, working her skinny fingers. "What'll I do now? The last of 'em's gone!"

I had no heart to inquire into the boy's history. It was ended now. Kindness nor cruelty could no longer reach him. He had gone to ONE who pities those who walk in hard ways with a darkened understanding, and who may call others to account that the little one's ways were so hard and his understanding so dark.

THE UNNATURAL CHILD.

A little boy about five years of age was a guest, with his mother, at the house of a gentleman of intellectual culture and highly-polished manners. It was prophesied of the child that he would make a brilliant man. He was a marvel of precocity; but the faults in his character were but too manifest. He was selfish, and evidently deficient in filial love and reverence.

The gentleman had observed these characteristics, and in order to teach him a lesson, he one day, at the table, related to him some facts in regard to the natural history of the stork. He told him that the young birdlings were taught by the parent birds to seek the water; and that when they grew strong, and the parent bird became, from advancing age, too weak to fly to any distant point, one of the young would take the parent upon its back and fly as far as it was able. Then another of the family group would receive it; and so on, dividing the effort among them all, until they reached the water and refreshed themselves, thus performing for the parent that which the parent had done for them in infancy.

To the surprise of all present, the boy—so young as not to be able to pronounce words perfectly—flushed with anger. His eyes dilated, and he evidently applied the story to himself, as if quite conscious of his selfishness and want of filial reverence.

"Well," he said, "if you think that I am going to take my papa and mamma on my back to carry them, you are mistaken."

"What!" exclaimed the gentleman, in astonishment. "Suppose that your mother could not reach the water, and would die for the want of it, what would you do?"

"I would let her die," said the boy.

The mother laughed at this answer of her son, and regarded it as a specimen of his quickness and precocity, but there were those at that table who did not smile, who felt that the future of the boy could be easily foreseen and that the mother's heart would one day bleed over those qualities which now, in the bud, excited her merriment.

And so it proved. The boy grew to manhood. The germs of selfishness, vice and wickedness inherent in his nature matured with his years, and expanded to the full flower. The parents' hearts were broken and bleeding at every pore; and now he sleeps in a drunkard's grave!—N. Y. Observer.

THE SEVEN WISE MEN.

The seven wise men are supposed to have lived in the fifth century before Christ. Their names are Pittacus, Bias, Solon, Thales, Chilon, Cleobulus and Perlander. The reason of their being called "wise" is given differently by authors, but the most approved accounts state that

as some Coans were fishing certain strangers from Miletus bought whatever should be in the nets without seeing it. When the nets were drawn in they were found to contain a golden tripod which Helen, as she sailed from Troy, is supposed to have thrown there.—A dispute arose between the fishermen and the strangers as to whom it belonged, and as they could not agree, they took it to the Temple of Apollo, and consulted the priestess as to what should be done with it. She said it must be given to the wisest man in Greece, and it was accordingly sent to Thales, who declared that Bias was wiser, and sent it to him. Bias sent it to another one, and so on, until it had passed through the hands of all the men, afterward distinguished by the title of the "Seven Wise Men," and as each one claimed that some one was wiser than he, it finally was sent to the Temple of Apollo, where it afterward remained, to teach that the wisest are the most distrustful of their wisdom. In New Orleans and other cities, especially of the South, there are numerous societies which go by the name of "The Seven Wise Men." Some of them are very large, the one in New Orleans, having several branches, which in the aggregate, foot in a membership of many thousands.

THEY SAY.

"They say," often tells that which is not true. He is about the worst authority you can produce to support the credibility of your statement.

Scarcely ever is a suspicious report put in circulation, but this Mr. "They say," is the author of it; and detection is impossible because, living nowhere he cannot be found.

Who said that Mr.—, the merchant, was in failing condition.

Why "They say" so.

Is it a fact that Miss V., is not so circumspect as she should be?

Why "They say" so.

Have nothing to do with Mr. "They say." He is a half brother to Mrs. Nobody, who always does all the mischief, and lives nowhere but in the inventive of those who undeserving respect themselves, are desirous to pull others down to their level.

We always suspect the truth of a report which comes from the authority of "They say."

THE LEGISLATURE AND THE ORPHANS.

Correspondents so often ask what the Legislature has done for the orphans, that we find it necessary to keep a standing answer to the inquiry. The Constitution of North Carolina says:

"There shall also, as soon as practicable, be measures devised by the State for the establishment of one or more Orphan Houses, where destitute orphans may be cared for, educated and taught some business or trade."

Every member of the Legislature, before taking his seat, solemnly swears, "that he will support the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of North Carolina, and will faithfully discharge his duty as a member of the Senate, or House of Representatives."

Both political parties have been in power since the present Constitution was adopted, and the only appropriation made to the orphan work was the gift of the erape used at the funeral of Governor Caldwell. 10-ff.

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