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# On Our Block

A series of little visits with the boys and girls  
that are anxious to do right, and quick  
to learn from watching their  
playmates and their  
neighbors

by

*Uthai Vincent Wilcox*



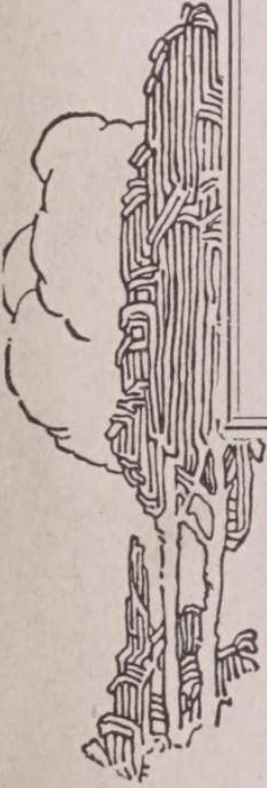
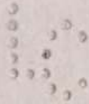
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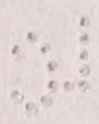
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no 1

# This Is for You, Too

## INTRODUCTION

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”  
Luke 2: 52.

Jesus was once a little child. And He grew. That is what every child should do. On the train one day, I saw a man about thirty-five years old who was only a little taller than the car seats. It was too bad. Something must have happened to him when he was a boy, that he never grew any taller.

Jesus grew in stature — His body grew.

But that was not all. Jesus grew in wisdom. His mind grew. He had His eyes and ears open to learn all He could about everything in nature and in human life. And He learned how to think the right kind of thoughts. He grew in wisdom.

Yes, Jesus' body grew; but best of all, His heart grew. He learned more and more the proper way to act. He was obedient to His parents and to God. He was industrious. He was strong, and liked to do things; but He was always

unselfish and kind. Everybody liked the boy Jesus, because of these things. And people will like you if you show the same fine disposition that Jesus did.

These stories, by a former editor of "Our Little Friend," will help you to understand the right way to live, so that you too may increase in favor with God and man.

M. E. Kern,

General Secretary of the  
Missionary Volunteer Department,  
Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.





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(The index in the back of this little volume may be found helpful in the finding of stories and the application of truths to the everyday problems of the home.)



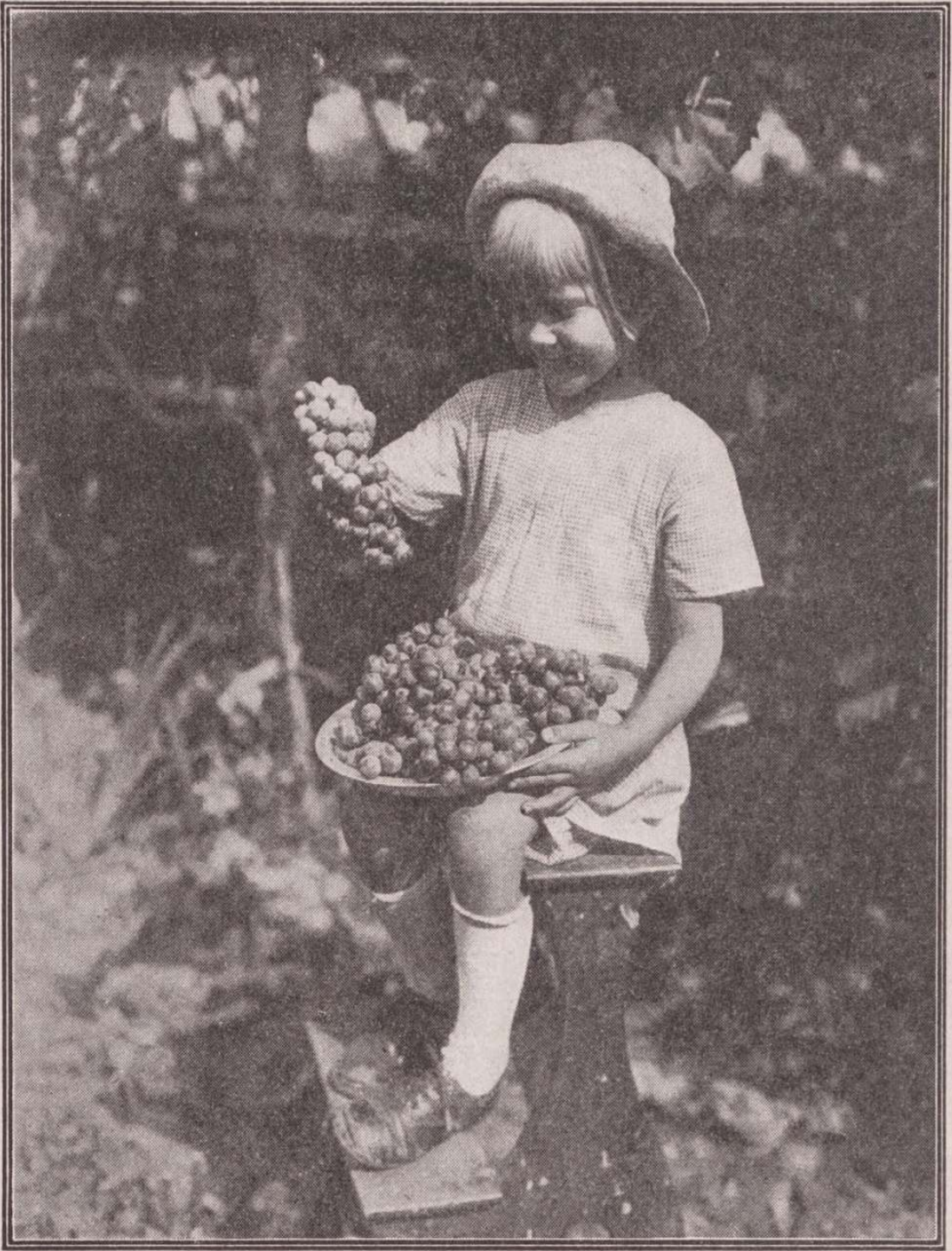


COME TO ME, O YE CHILDREN!  
FOR I HEAR YOU AT YOUR PLAY,  
AND THE QUESTIONS THAT PERPLEXED ME  
HAVE VANISHED QUITE AWAY.

YE ARE BETTER THAN ALL THE BALLADS  
THAT EVER WERE SUNG OR SAID;  
FOR YE ARE LIVING POEMS,  
AND ALL THE REST ARE DEAD.

AH, WHAT WOULD THE WORLD BE TO US,  
IF THE CHILDREN WERE NO MORE?  
WE SHOULD DREAD THE DESERT BEHIND US  
WORSE THAN THE DARK BEFORE.

—HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.



(8)

## Fred and Allan Didn't Like to Play with Her

The new little girl that lives next door wanted to play croquet with Fred and Allan; but the boys didn't want to play the new game that their father had brought home — at least they didn't want to play with the new little girl.

Mother heard them talking it over.

"We don't want to play with her," said Fred.

"I should say we don't!" answered Allan.

"Why, she says herself that she doesn't know how to play, and that means that we will beat her, and then she'll cry."

"She's a cry-baby!" added his brother.

But mother wasn't the only one who overheard them talking about this new little girl. You see, the new little girl was just over the hedge on the other side, lying on the grass, and she heard Fred





and Allan. Being on the other side of the hedge, she sat up straight, and then jumped up and looked right over (for the hedge wasn't very high), and she spoke quickly:

"I'm not a cry-baby! I don't cry when I get beaten in a game; I laugh, and say, 'Let's play again!'"

When Fred and Allan heard this, they couldn't say anything, for she was a new little girl on their block. So they agreed to play one game of croquet. But all the time that they were playing, they were thinking away down in their hearts: "Now when we beat her, she'll probably cry and feel bad. We are going to find out, anyway. But maybe she isn't a cry-baby after all."

And do you know, they found that the new little girl on their block wasn't a cry-baby at all, and now they are glad to play many games with her! Sometimes she wins a game; and when she does, they

are all happy. But if she had pouted or cried after that first game, Allan and Fred would never have wanted to play with her again.

The real fun of playing a game is the game itself. It does not matter so much who wins; and everyone cannot win every time, for it wouldn't be a real game then. Then, maybe Fred and Allan are right; for it is only babies that cry and fuss when they are not the ones to win.

Boys and girls that laugh and smile, as did the new little girl, are always wanted for playmates; and often they learn to play so well that they win many times themselves.





A Little Farmer Boy



## II

### “Simple Simon!”

Robert, who lives in the big house on the corner, called as loudly as he could, “Simple Simon! Simple Simon!” as he caught sight of a bit of red sweater just turning the corner ahead. Robert was on his way to school.

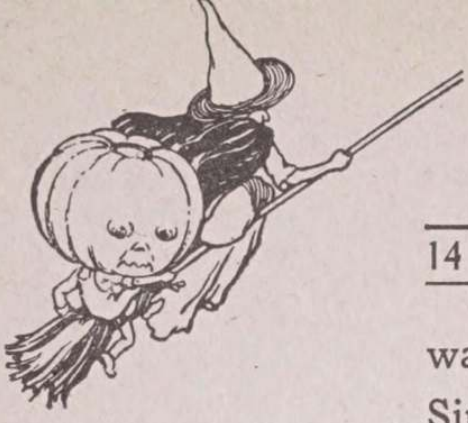
He thought that the red sweater belonged to the boy across the street whose name was Simon, who had tried to get through the third grade at school for two years now, but somehow just could not seem to learn his lessons.

Simon looked different from the rest of the boys on the block, and he generally wore a red sweater.

But the person who had turned the corner and who wore the red, stopped and turned back. Robert looked scared, and stopped still! For would you believe it, it was Miss Molly, his teacher! She had on a new red sweater that day, and it

(13)





was blowing about a little, somewhat as Simon's did when he failed to button it up.

"Good morning, Bobby Shafto!" Miss Molly called back to him when she had seen who it was that was calling so loudly. Then she waited for Robert to catch up with her, although Robert wished that she would go on, or that he could think of some good reason to go home and stay that day.

When Robert had at last reached the teacher, she said, "Mother Goose knew ever so many nice names to call boys and girls besides 'Simple Simon.'" And that was all that Robert could remember that she said as she walked to the schoolhouse with him, although, of course, she must have talked about many nice things — the weather, the birds, the flowers, games, and other things.

But anyway, that was all that Miss Molly said about the name he had called her.

Robert knew that it was better to call a boy "Bobby Shafto," the one who wore silver buckles and went to sea, than to call him "Simple Simon."

That day in school, Miss Molly played a new game. She gave the boys and girls that did best with their work, play names. Frances, who always liked to pick up things and keep the room neat, was "Snow White"; and Thomas, whom the boys called Shorty, she named Cedric, because he helped them all, even to bringing the children drinks, and taking care of the janitor's puppy during recess time. It was a very jolly play, and one that all the boys and girls decided to keep up after school.

It made Robert think, though. He thought that it was ever so much nicer and more fun to call people happy names, than to call them mean names that made them feel unhappy.

And Robert started a new style on his block—all by himself. He surprised





several of his friends and even his chum by calling them Partner or Scout, instead of Fatty or Skinny or even Simple.

And Robert discovered something when he did this. He discovered that his friends liked him better and would do more for him than when he called them unhappy names. His mother told him of how Jesus called the men that He was with, "friends." He didn't call them ugly and disagreeable names.

Even the boy that was called Simple Simon began to feel better when Robert stopped calling him that. One time, he called over the fence to Robert, and said that he would be glad to help him, if Robert wanted him to. And just then Robert needed some one to hold a piece of wood while he nailed it, and he was very thankful to have even this boy's help. And Robert knew that this boy would never have offered to help him if he had continued to call him such a disagreeable name as "Simple Simon."

## Herbert's Mouth and Soapsuds

Carl had just come home from visiting his little chum who lived across the street. His mother was sitting out on the cool veranda. Carl ran up to her.

"Mother, Herbert said a bad word to-day, and his mother washed out his mouth with soapsuds. She said she was washing the bad out. Does that mean that Herbert can't say naughty words again?"

"No, dear," replied mother. "He is likely to say a wrong word again at any time that he lets bad thoughts come into his mind. But the soapsuds may help him to remember and push the bad word away the second it comes wanting to be said."

Carl thought about this for a minute. "I never want my mouth washed with soapsuds. I don't think I need that to help me to remember to push the bad words away."



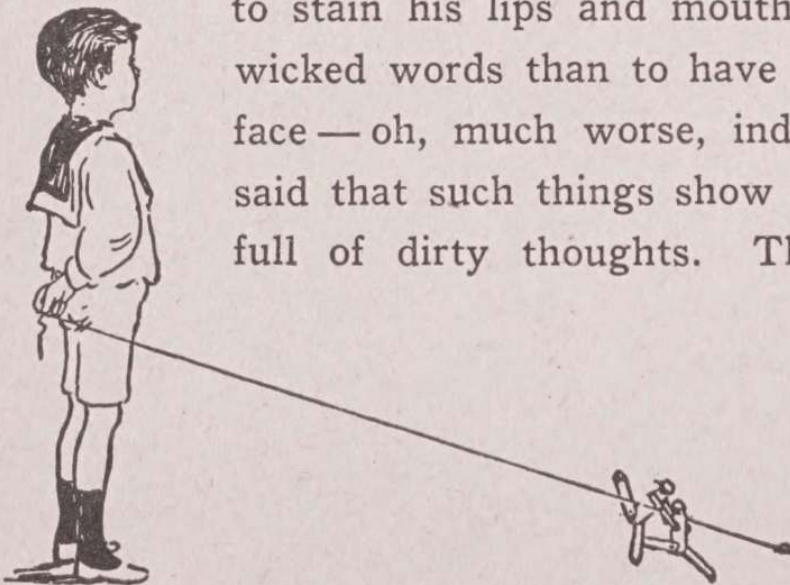
Mother said, "That means that my small man, Carl, will always have a clean mouth."

Then for a moment mother didn't say anything, and Carl thought that mother was thinking about the sewing that she had in her lap.

"You remember," mother began suddenly, "that we met Genie on the street the other day, with her lips all smeared with chocolate candy; and then yesterday Albert, who lives on the street back of us, came running in with his mouth all dirty from eating an egg for his breakfast."

"Yes, I remember," said Carl, all the time wondering just what mother was "getting at."

"Well, it is much, much worse for a boy to stain his lips and mouth with ugly, wicked words than to have food on his face — oh, much worse, indeed! Jesus said that such things show the mind is full of dirty thoughts. That is very



much worse than having dirty hands and face; for the outside dirt can be washed off easily, but it is hard to make a foul mouth sweet and clean again."



Carl didn't say much, for he was thinking hard. He was wondering if mother had heard him the other day when he said a bad word.

"Mother wants to have her boy act as a true little Christian soldier. Here is a prayer that will help you. Suppose you say it over after me, for I am sure that it will help you some day; and if you pray it, really meaning it, it will be better than all the soapsuds in the house.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.'

"That was a prayer King David prayed long, long ago," mother said. "It is a true soldier prayer. To 'set a watch' means to keep a soldier there who will not let an enemy get through. So you put Jesus there, and He will keep out the enemy bad words."



Evening Prayer



#### IV

## What Mary Lea Did When Mother Had Visitors

Everybody in our block likes Mary Lea. She lives in the brick house next to the corner. And even if the old house does look kind o' gloomy, she makes it all sunshine.

But Mary Lea made the mistake one time of trying to do all the talking when mother had company. Of course, Mary Lea isn't so very old, and maybe she didn't know any better — then maybe she did, but just forgot!

Anyway, her big sister Helen — at least, she seemed big to Mary Lea, although she was not more than ten years old — saw how Mary Lea was bothering mother, and she said to herself: "I'm older, and I know better than Mary. I mustn't let her bother mother as she does."





So Helen slipped quietly into the room and whispered to Mary Lea. At first, Mary Lea didn't want to listen. She was having a good time just then showing her dolls to mother's caller. It was mother and the visitor who were not having a good time. But Helen remembered what Mary Lea liked to do—use her water colors. So when there was a chance, Helen asked: "May we play with the water colors out in the grape arbor? And may we have some pictures from the pattern book to color?"

"Yes, indeed," answered mother. "If Mrs. Walters will excuse me for a moment, I'll get them down for you."

Mother went to the cupboard where such things were kept, and gave Helen the colors and the brushes, while Mary Lea carried four big pages from the pattern book. Before she went back to her visitor, mother said to Helen, with such a loving look: "You are mother's helpful,

thoughtful little daughter! You have helped me very much, and you are also helping to teach Mary Lea the right way to act."

You see, Helen had heard her mother and other mothers talking together one time. She couldn't remember all that they said, but the part that she did remember was something like this:

"Dear me! I wish I could get my little girls to remember that they 'should be seen and not heard' when we have company!"

And another mother spoke up: "Isn't it annoying to have to tell your children, right before your visitors, not to talk so much! And to have to tell them, again and again, to be quiet!"

"Yes," said still another mother who was there, and who rocked very fast and nervously while she talked, "it's almost





as bad as to have your children refuse to come in and meet your visitors when you want them to.”

That was about all Helen remembered; but she did not forget that much when, a little later that same day, mother called her in to meet Mrs. Davis, who was one of the mothers whom she had heard talking while she was under the window. She came in pleasantly and answered the questions that were asked of her, speaking quietly, and keeping close to her mother, so that when they began to talk about something else, she might know that it was time for her to go back and play.

Ever since then, Helen has remembered how her mother's eyes shone and sparkled after her visitor had gone. And although she couldn't understand all about it, she believed that she understood much, and she wanted her sister Mary Lea to learn too.

## He Forgot to Take It Home

Verne is a splendid little chap that always smiles when he meets you as you go along his block. Verne goes to Sabbath school, but he forgets almost every Sabbath to take something home with him.

He forgets to take his Sabbath school lesson home. No, not his Sabbath school paper, for he always carries that in his pocket. And he generally knows his memory verse — but he does not take it home.

There's something strange about Verne. When the superintendent asks for those who can say their memory verse, he always raises his hand, and he can say last Sabbath's and the Sabbath's before that, and even the one before that. He has a good memory, too. Still he forgets to take these same memory verses home.





Feeding Old Bossie

Strange, isn't it?

But the trouble is that Verne learns his memory verse just with his head, not with his heart. And the heart is the only place where the lessons will do any good. The only way that Verne can take them home with him, is by carrying them in his heart.

Two weeks ago, Verne's verse that he said for the superintendent was, "Be ye kind one to another."

Verne knew that verse perfectly, for he had said it over and over.

The next day, Verne's father sent him to borrow a tool from a friend that lived several blocks up the street. On the way, Verne passed the house where the Brooks family lived. Ragged, dirty-faced little Jennie was playing on the sidewalk, with a doll that was as ragged and dirty as she was. Verne snatched the doll from her hands, and put it up in the crotch of a





tree, just out of the little girl's reach. Then he laughed loudly and went on.

He soon came to a dog barking at the foot of a tree. Looking up in the tree, he saw a little kitten, afraid of the dog, and almost as much afraid of falling from the high perch. Verne hunted about until he found a long stick, then he pushed the kitten from the branch, and cried, "Sick 'em!" to the dog, clapping his hands and laughing loudly as the dog chased the kitten to another tree. Then he went on his errand.

"Be ye kind one to another" was not in Verne's heart, you see. He was not taking his Sabbath school lesson with him, although he had carried his Sabbath school paper home, and even then had it in his inside pocket, and though he had the colored memory verse card that his teacher had given him, and could have stood on his head and repeated the verse without making a mistake.



Phil, Verne's next-door neighbor, coming along after him, got Jennie's doll from the tree and handed it to her. And because Jennie was poor, and her father was sick and couldn't work much, he took out a nice juicy red apple that he had in his pocket, and gave it to her, to help her stop crying quickly, and to make her happy.

Then he saw the dog under the tree, barking at the kitten. He coaxed the dog away from the tree by getting it to follow him up the street; for he knew that with the dog gone, the kitten would find the way down and back home, where it would be safe.

You see, Phil was taking his Sabbath school lesson home with him. He may not have been able to say the verse perfectly in school, but he had it perfectly in his heart, which is the place where he could make the right use of it.





This little Red Cross nurse has dolly well bandaged.

## VI

# How Much Did Elsa Love Her Mother?

What interesting things you learn when you go visiting!

I went visiting to-day. I just had to stop at the house in the middle of the block. While I was waiting for a few minutes, Elsa, who is a golden-haired little girl with dark brown eyes, came in and whispered to her father (who was talking to me), and asked him what big thing she could do to show her mother how much she loved her.

And her father whispered back in her ear: "Run and give her a hug and a kiss, and then pick up all these scattered papers and playthings. That will please her, I know."

Elsa must have forgotten about visitors, or maybe I didn't count; for she said: "Oh, that! That isn't anything. I





love her a lot more than that. I want to do something as big as I love her!"

So Elsa's father looked over at me, as much as to say, "I'll have to tell my little daughter something that will help her to understand; and if you will pardon me, I'll tell her now."

And I looked back, saying with my eyes as much as I could, "That's good; tell her that she ought to remember the littles when she wants to do big things."

Elsa's father took her on his knee and said something like this:

"My old grandmother used to tell me of a Scotch saying, 'Mony a mickle makes a muckle,' which means that many littles put together make a great deal.

"We know that ten cents make a dime, and ten dimes make a dollar. That is littles making something big; and just as truly, many little deeds of kindness put together will make a whole lifetime happy.

“My little girl does not feel satisfied to do little-girl work; she wants to do grown-up work. But just think, Elsa, of all the work that would be done in the world this morning to make so many mothers happy, if every little boy and girl did just one thing to help. With so many children in so many homes, all the soiled dishes that must be cleared, rooms made tidy, errands run for mother, baby brothers and sisters tended! It is fine to think of, isn't it, Elsa?”

And then I couldn't keep still a bit longer, for I liked little golden-haired, dark-eyed Elsa very much; so I said:

“Just suppose a tiny feather on the breast of your canary that hangs over there by the window should say, ‘Oh, I'm too little to amount to anything! I want to give the bird a whole dress, a nice, warm one. One little feather! I might as well quit!’ But, you see, one little feather is really worth a good deal, for



many of them together clothe the bird beautifully.

“And to get thousands and thousands of mothers helped, each boy and girl must lend a helping hand with the errands and the picking up of toys and the tending of baby. Many little helpers can give much help, a very great deal, indeed. It just needs each one doing a little bit.”

Elsa hardly knew what to say, for father began to hum the words of an old hymn:

“I LOVE THEE, I LOVE THEE,  
AND THAT THOU DOST KNOW;  
BUT HOW MUCH I LOVE THEE  
MY ACTIONS WILL SHOW.”

Elsa jumped down and went into the other room. Her father and I looked at each other, and our eyes said many things. Then we talked about something else; but before I went home, I noticed that Elsa was picking up the papers, thus showing her deep love.



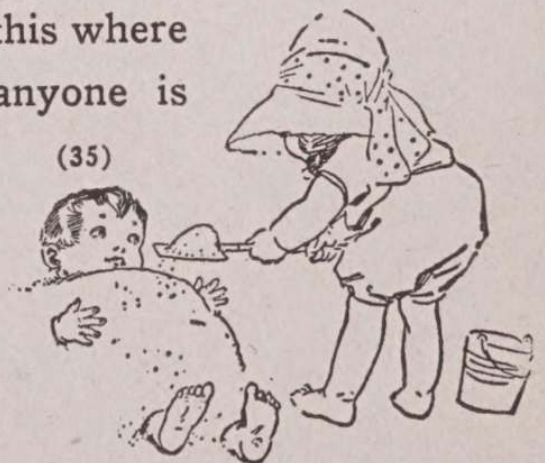
## VII

# Bruce Had a Strange, Strange Dream

Bruce, you know, lives downstairs in that big brick house in the middle of the block. He is a good little chap, very polite in most things. That is, he takes off his hat when he meets his teacher, and is kind to his little sister. But the boys and the girls used not to like him very well.

You see, he was afraid to share his good times and happiness with anyone else. He was afraid because he thought that if something good came to him and he told some of the other fellows about it, they would have some of his happiness and he would not have so much left for himself.

Whenever Bruce had anything nice, he would say: "I'll go off to enjoy this where no one will see me; for if anyone is





Dinner Time!



around, I shall have to divide, and that will be just so much less for me."

Then Bruce would take all his treats behind the shed to eat. Sometimes, when he had too many sweet things, as at Christmas or birthdays, he made himself sick.

For a long, long time, Bruce had been wanting a wagon. He told some of the boys that he wanted a wagon. Well, one day, his father brought home the wagon that Bruce wanted, the very one. How happy Bruce was! But then he didn't want to see the boys that he had told about the wagon. No, he didn't.

And he pulled that wagon around all by himself. He loaded it alone and played with it alone. When anyone came into the yard — any of the boys — he hid the wagon under the porch for fear that they would want to play with it. That was just the way Bruce was about all his things.



But every time that he said to himself, "I won't divide, or share this with anybody," the pleasure seemed to dwindle and grow smaller, until there was not half as much as he had thought there was going to be. Anyway, it seemed that way to him.

Then Bruce had that strange, strange dream.

He thought that Clyde (that's the boy who lives upstairs in the same big red house) came in the yard and found the little red wagon, and that they played with the wagon together. Yes, they really did!

Then suddenly the little wagon became two, one to draw and one to ride in! Then in his dream he shared his apple that his mother had given him, with Clyde. And instead of one apple, there were two, and the juiciest and best that he had ever tasted. Why, he never knew before that those apples were so good!





Then Bruce woke up. But he thought about that dream for a long time, for a small boy. He kept saying to himself, "I wonder! I wonder!"

Then the next morning, when he and Clyde were on their way to school, he found some nuts in his pocket, and offered Clyde some. Of course, Clyde was surprised. And so was Bruce. And he found that his dream came true. When he shared his pleasures with his playmates, he doubled them. He had two good times, where otherwise he would only have had one. When he gave away some of his pleasures, they suddenly doubled, and the ones left him seemed better than ever.

That's one of the queer things the boys on our block have discovered — for Bruce wasn't the only one. Some of the others had different ways of being selfish. And some of the girls, too, had little ways of trying to keep all the good times to them-

selves. But when they saw Bruce sharing his fun, they tried it, and — presto! — everyone was happy.

Now Bruce says, when he gets a new book, or new toys, or pictures, or things like that: "Who is going to enjoy this with me? I know; I'll share it with Ned, or Clyde, or Elsa. What a good time we'll all have together!"

And what a good time they do have together, too!



## VIII

# The Lists That Clara and Gladys Made Out

Everybody on our block likes Clara and Gladys. They just can't help it, you see. These two girls are so considerate and so kind and helpful that every single person, from the school-teacher to the generally gruff old milkman, likes to speak to and say a good word for these happy little girls whose back yards come together.

One day, Clara and Gladys were writing out a list of the names of those they loved best of all. And in both lists, along with father and mother and brothers and sisters and friends, was the name of Jesus; for Clara and Gladys both loved Him very, very much.

"Now let's write down something we can do for each one," suggested Clara, after they had read the names over to each other. So they did that. For





The world is so full  
of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all  
be as happy as kings.  
— Stevenson.

mother and father, for friends and members of the family, they wrote down things they knew would give pleasure or be of help.

Only after the name of Jesus was there a blank space. It wasn't because they loved Jesus less, or were less anxious to do something for Him. It was because it seemed easier to think of giving apples, or lending picture books, and running errands; but things like that would hardly do for Jesus. They wanted something special for Him, something that was a little better than for anyone else; and they could not think of it, try as hard as they could.

"Let's ask mother," said Clara. "She will know."

"Let's!" answered Gladys.

So they showed their lists to mother. And mother looked very happy when she read them.





“We can’t think of anything good enough to do for Jesus,” explained Clara. “What do you think we ought to do?”

“Why, girlies, you have written down ever so many things to do for Jesus,” replied mother. “Don’t you know that every single loving deed for others is a deed that you have done for Him? That is what Jesus meant when He said, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.’ Loving, helpful deeds for anyone, give Jesus joy and make Him happy. Still, there is a way that you can do something more particularly for Him alone. Think of some one who needs help, perhaps some one who is not lovable, or who does not even seem very nice, and try to help that one in some way, and do it for Jesus’ sake.”

Gladys and Clara thought a long time before they said anything.

“Like the people that the missionaries are helping?” asked Gladys.



“Like the poor people who live on the other side of town?” asked Clara.

“Yes,” answered mother; “some one that you can help in some way, and who will never have a chance to pay you back with a kind deed, or who may never know that you did anything for him.”

So Clara and Gladys wrote on their lists after Jesus’ name:

“Memory verse card books to the missionaries in China; flowers to the hospital; one of my dolls to the little colored girl that lives across the track.” But they were happy to know that all they did for father and mother and other dear friends, was done for Jesus too.





A Row of Smiles

## IX

### Just Suppose

"I was kept in to-day, but I don't care much!" said Norry, dropping down in front of the cheery fire that Uncle Casper always keeps going, in cool weather, in his study in the old stone house.

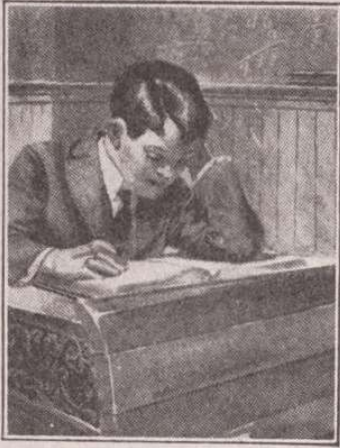
"Hmmm, that's strange! Sounds kind o' funny to hear you say that you don't care," said his uncle, as he laid down his paper and looked at his nephew.

"Oh, yes, I care; but I mean I'd rather be kept in than tell a story, as Woody Gales and Tom Dillon did," explained Norry.

"Why, that sounds interesting. Tell me all about it."

"To-day, Arthur and Woody and Tom and I were all whispering, and Arthur laughed out loud about something that Tom said; so the teacher came down where we were, and asked each of us if we were whispering. Arthur and I said





Yes, so she told us to stay in at recess; but Tom and Woody said No, so she let them go out."

"You were perfectly right, Norry," replied Uncle Casper. "While you should not whisper in school, yet, if you do, then you ought to take your punishment like a man, instead of trying to get out of it by telling something that isn't true."

"Tom and Woody make me think of a boy named Joe, who worked for father one summer, a long time ago, when I was a lad. We never knew when Joe was telling the truth and when he was not. If he said he had fed the chickens, we knew no more than we did before. If he said that he was sick and unable to do his chores, we did not know but he was just pretending."

"Suppose everybody was like that! What a world we would be living in! Suppose that I told you I would take you for a ride in the car to-morrow, but when

to-morrow came, I had no notion of keeping my promise, and even said I didn't make any! Or suppose your mother would tell you that she had put some nice sandwiches in your lunch, and when you opened the box, you should find it empty!

"And suppose the laws that govern this old world and the sun, moon, and stars, were no more trustworthy than people like that! Why, if you jumped off the fence, you would not know whether you would go floating off into space, or land on the ground! Or you might throw a piece of wood into the water, and perhaps it would sink and perhaps it would float! And suppose you weren't sure whether your apple tree would bear apples or pears or plums, or even nuts or pumpkins! Things would be rather mixed up, wouldn't they, Norry?"

"I should say so!" exclaimed Norry. "Wouldn't it be awful!"



“It certainly would. Such a world would hardly be worth living in; and such people, or even boys and girls if they don’t learn better soon, are hardly worth while as friends. By and by no one can depend upon them; and then they become unhappy themselves, because no one trusts them, and even when they tell the truth, no one believes them. I’m glad you were kept in, Norry! But next time that the teacher asks you if you were whispering, answer No, and be sure that it is true. I know you will.”

“I should say I would! I never dreamed that it would be as bad as that if even nature and God did not tell the truth and could not be depended upon.”



## X

### When the Songs Made It Easy

Johnny and Esther lived in the new bungalow that had just been built on the lot next to the corner. They hated to do the dishes. But their mother didn't have any servants, and she believed that it was best for her children to learn to do things. "Even boys should know how to wash and wipe dishes well," she used to say. And Esther and Johnny took turns with the work. First one would wash, and the other dry them; then they would change around.

But somehow they hated their jobs. And in spite of all that mother could say, they hated to see those dishes. Why, they began wishing that breakfast, dinner, and supper could be eaten without dishes. They began to think about those dishes even before the meals were ready, and that almost spoiled what they ate.





Gardeners



But it didn't do any good to hate to do the work; for that was a part of their daily duties, and they had to do them. Mother said she couldn't get along without the help of her two children. And the children really wanted to help, but they wanted to help in some other way than just dish-washing — "the hateful job!"

Then their Uncle Sherwin came to see them. Uncle Sherwin had sharp eyes that saw many things. He even saw some things that he wasn't supposed to see. Among other things, he noticed that Johnny and Esther needed some help about the dishes.

"Here, give me the towel," he said one day to Johnny, who was drying the dinner dishes; "I am a great dish-wiper."

"Why, Uncle Sherwin, company isn't supposed to do work like that," protested Johnny.





“Johnny, you mustn’t let uncle wipe those dishes!” said Esther in a most horrified tone.

“’Course, you mustn’t dry them,” said Johnny. “I wish I were company; you wouldn’t catch me doing any work, like washing dishes anyway.”

“I’ll own up that there are some things I’d like better,” answered Uncle Sherwin, as he took the towel and shook it out. “But you know you can have a good time doing almost anything if you go at it whistling and with a song.”

“I don’t think anyone would whistle washing dishes, not if he hated it as I do; and they have to be done three times a day, too,” said Johnny, in his most aggrieved tone.

“Yes,” said Uncle Sherwin; “a fine chance to limber up your voice and tune box, three times a day, too. What shall it be? Something lively, because we

don't want to be forever doing this little mess of dishes."

First they sang, all three of them; and then they whistled, all three of them, because Esther was quite as good at whistling as any of the boys on our block.

"It didn't take so long, did it?" said Johnny and Esther when the towels were hung up and the floor was swept, and they had gone outdoors. "Was it the singing and the whistling that helped?"

"It is this way," Uncle Sherwin began: "You two have been hating your work, and making yourselves hate it, every time you have it to do. Dish-washing isn't really so bad, after all. It is nice work, and makes things clean. You have hot suds, clean towels, and then shiny dishes to be put away for the next meal. If you think that you like it, it won't seem nearly so bad. But if you think that you don't like it, you only make it worse by telling yourselves how horrid it is. Just



start a lively tune, and start doing your work with vim. You will work faster, and you won't think so much about how horrid the work is.

“‘Work with a song.’ That's an old Sabbath school hymn. Practice it, and you will find that both whistling and singing will make things easier.”



## XI

### The Disease That Was "Catching" and Dangerous

Miss Allen, you know, teaches drawing in the little schoolhouse down at the end of the street.

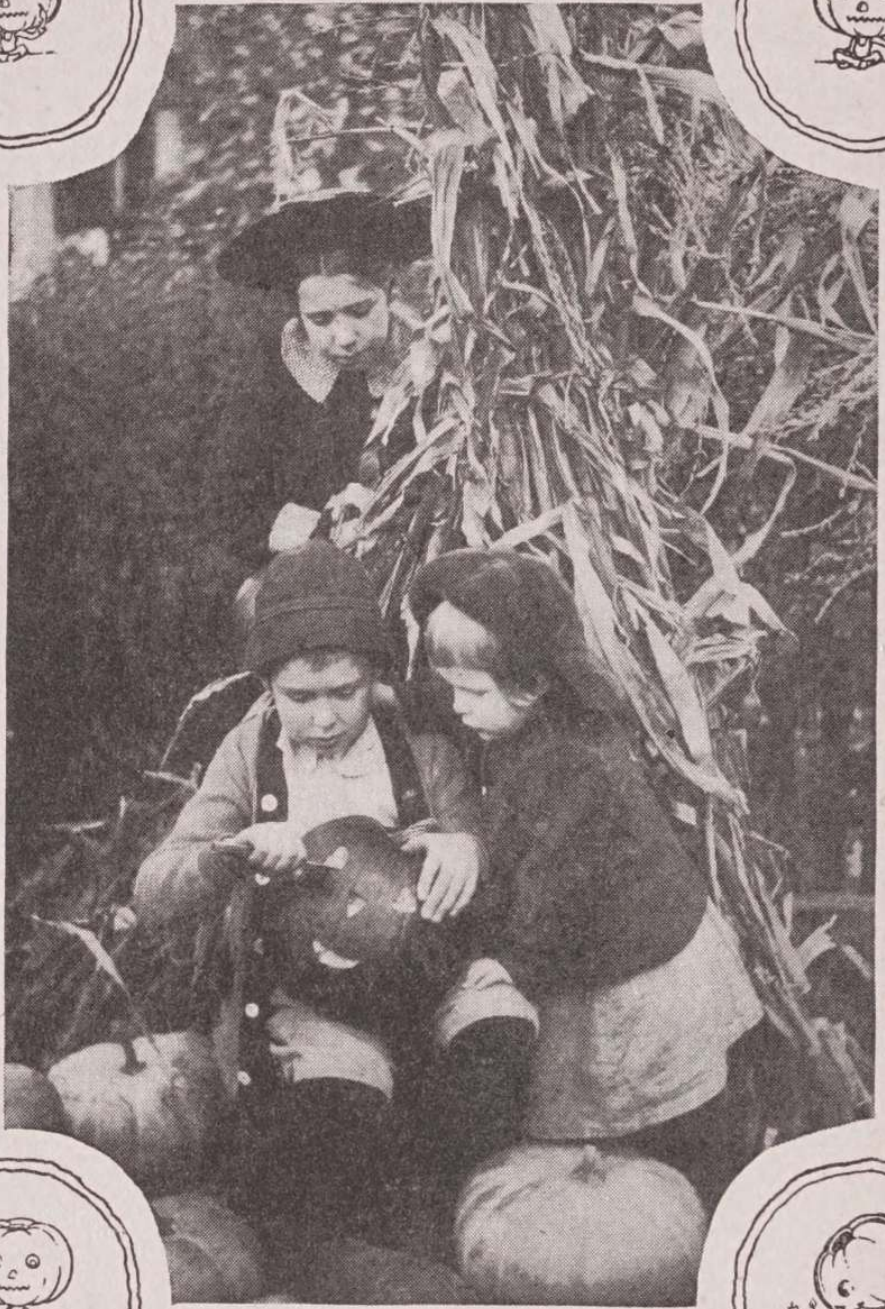
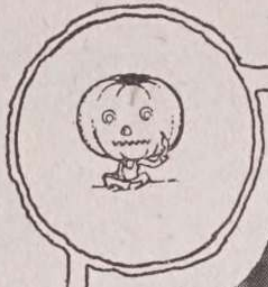
Well, one time, she held up a queer-shaped gourd before all the pupils in the third grade. After she had held it there for a few minutes, she said, "Now I want a few of you to come to the blackboard and draw a picture of this gourd."

Then she turned to Arnold, who sat on the front seat, and said, "Arnold, you may come first."

"Oh, I?" answered Arnold. "I can't do it."

Miss Allen looked very much surprised. "Ruth Lee may come," she said. Then — would you believe it? — Ruth Lee shook her curly head, and said, "I can't, Miss Allen."





Then the teacher called on every pupil in that row, and each and every one answered, "I can't."

Miss Allen didn't say anything for a minute; then she asked, "How many of you ever had chickenpox?"

About half the boys and girls raised their hands.

"I think there is a more dangerous disease in this room than chickenpox," Miss Allen said very soberly. "It is a very catching disease, too. First Arnold had it, then right away everyone else in his row caught it. The name of this disease is, 'I can't.'

"Now if Arnold had said, 'I'll try,' that would have been almost as catching, and not at all dangerous. Indeed, it would have been really helpful," went on Miss Allen.

Then Arnold stood up, and said, "I'll try now, Miss Allen."



"I'll try, too," said Ruth Lee. And almost before you knew it, everyone in that row had said the same thing.

Miss Allen gave them all a chance, too; and better than that, she had something good to say about every drawing that was put on the board.





## XII

### Just for Fun

A crowd of boys and girls had gathered out in front of Paul's house, down near the corner. Uncle Burton could be seen standing in the middle of the crowd talking. He was talking to Paul; and he was talking very seriously, too.

"What are you doing, Paul?" he asked. "Did you hit that toad? Really, did you do it! Why, that seems so cruel and so foolish for a boy that is in the third grade at school!"

Paul stood there with his head hung. He hardly knew what to say, with his uncle, who was generally so jolly and good-natured, standing there talking to him so, and all the boys and girls standing around listening.

"Why, it was cruel, Paul; because the toad wasn't doing any harm to anyone or to anything. And it was foolish, too; be-





Vacation Time

cause the toad really does a great deal of good in eating insects that destroy our crops. Tell me, why did you do it?"

"Why, I don't know. I—I—I just happened to see it hopping along, and—I—I—threw a rock and hit it—I—I guess," stammered Paul.

The small boys and girls who were standing around looked at Paul's uncle to see what he would say next. They knew that he must be going to say something very important, because they all liked him, and they knew that he liked them. It was hard to tell how they knew that he liked children; but somehow, all the boys, and the girls too, had found out that Uncle Burton liked them.

"But, Uncle Burton, why was it so bad for me to kill the toad? I saw you kill a snake the other day. And Cousin Ben shot a hawk last week, and everyone praised him for it. But you scold me





about the toad." And Paul was almost crying, he was feeling so bad.

Uncle Burton didn't say anything for a few moments. Then he looked around at the boys and the girls, and noticed that they were all watching him; so he said, "Come on around to the back yard, under the old oak tree, and I'll answer this question, because I think that you would all like to hear the answer." Then he led the way around into the back yard.

After all the children had found a place to sit down, and Uncle Burton had tipped over an old box for himself to sit on, because he was so tall that it might have been hard for him to curl up his long legs enough to sit on the ground, then he said:

"Now what you would all like to know is this," and he looked very kindly at Paul, who was right in front of him: "Why is it right to kill some things, and not others?"

Almost everyone nodded.

"There are three lawful and right reasons for killing things," said Uncle Burton, slowly. "These reasons are: for defense, for their skins and for food sometimes, and to save suffering. Do you know what defense means, Phil?" and he looked at Phil, who was leaning against the tree.

Phil shook his head.

"Well, suppose there were some wild animals in the woods over on the outside of town, and when we went through the woods sometimes, some of the animals would try to harm us. Suppose I had a gun or a club in my hands, and I should begin to fight them to keep them from hurting you and me. That would be defense. Do you all understand?"

"It's killing something to keep it from killing us, isn't it?" asked Herbert, who was sitting beside Paul.

"That's it exactly!" agreed Uncle Burton. "The snake that I killed the other





day was a poisonous one; and if I had not killed it, it might have bitten some one, and caused him to die.

“And now we come to the second reason — killing for their skins and for food. All the animals whose skins or bodies really serve man are put in this class. But we should never kill birds, rabbits, squirrels, and such things, just for sport — just for fun.

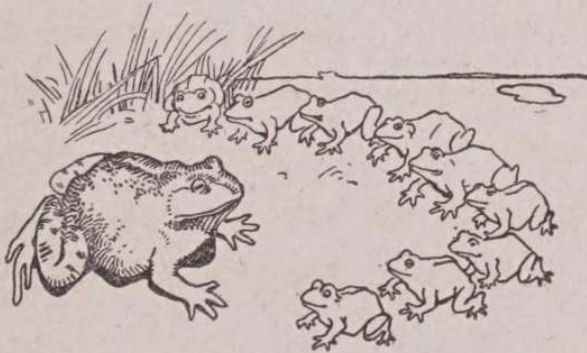
“The last reason that I gave for killing, was to save suffering. Sometimes an animal gets hurt so badly that we know it can never get well. In this case, if it is suffering very much, often the kindest thing we can do is to end its pain quickly.

“Now, I want all you children to remember this thing: No matter when we kill, or why, it should always be done in the kindest possible way — the way that will cause the least suffering. Even the animals that we kill for defense, do not harm us without good reasons. They are

merely looking out for themselves, as we would for ourselves. Snakes and spiders bite, and insects sting, to protect themselves.

“Then, too, Jesus is looking after all His creatures. He says that He even notices when a sparrow falls to the ground. He is a God of love; and as He has told us to be like Him, He wants us to love the simple creatures that He has put on this earth. Many of them, such as the toad, do a great amount of good. Have I answered your question, Paul?”

“Yes, Uncle Burton; and I will never kill anything again just for fun,” answered Paul very soberly. And the others nodded their heads.





How happy these children are with their pet!



### XIII

## “E,” “G,” “P,” “F,” Meaning Report Card Marks

Every single boy and every single girl that goes to school and that lives on our block, likes to get good marks on his report cards. And that isn't all; father and mother like to have these same boys and girls get good marks, and they like to sign up such a card and send it back to the teacher, feeling that their boys and girls are doing well at school.

But did you ever know that there were other ways to get good marks — and bad ones too?

Suppose father and mother kept a record of your doings at home outside of school, and gave you a report card at the end of every month or every six weeks. Do you think you would all have a good record? Would you be proud to take that “home report card” to school and



THE  
SCHOOL BELL

show it to the teacher, so that she and the boys and girls in the room might see what your record had been?

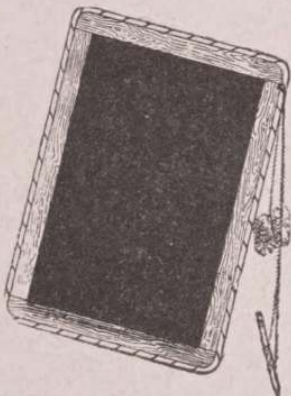
Would you boys have an "E" on "Weeding the Garden," or "Carrying Water," or "Piling Wood," or "Getting in the Coal and the Kindling"?

Would you girls have "E" on "Helping Mother," "Minding Baby," or "Dusting," or "Doing the Dishes"?

Would all of you, both boys and girls, get a "Good" mark on table manners and politeness? Or would it be a "P," or "F" for "Failure"?

Could you earn a "G" by being willing to run errands? How about "Kindness" and "Cheerfulness" and "Thoughtfulness"?

And these things are just as important and necessary as learning to read and write and add numbers and subtract and divide numbers.



But mothers are very busy people, and probably your mother would not have time to mark you on these "Home Studies." So here is a good plan: It would be well for each of you to take a little notebook and keep a report of these things yourself. Just have a little secret record that no one else sees but yourself. When you have been very, very kind to baby brother, or to sister, or very, very helpful to mother or daddy, be sure to mark a big "E" right after "Kindness" or "Helpfulness" in your notebook. And if you do forget and make a mistake (we all do, big folks as well as little ones), just mark your record "P" for "Poor." Then this mark that isn't so good will help you to remember and do your best next time.

Then, if you are trying your best, don't forget to ask Jesus each morning, as soon as you get out of bed, to help you. And at night, be just as sure to ask Him to



forgive the mistakes you have made during the day.

Really, you don't know what fun it'll be to keep a report card and mark it yourself. You see, you'll be a teacher to yourself. And if, by trying hard, and with the great help of Jesus, your report is "Excellent," you can show it to daddy or mother, just the same as you do your school report card.



## XIV

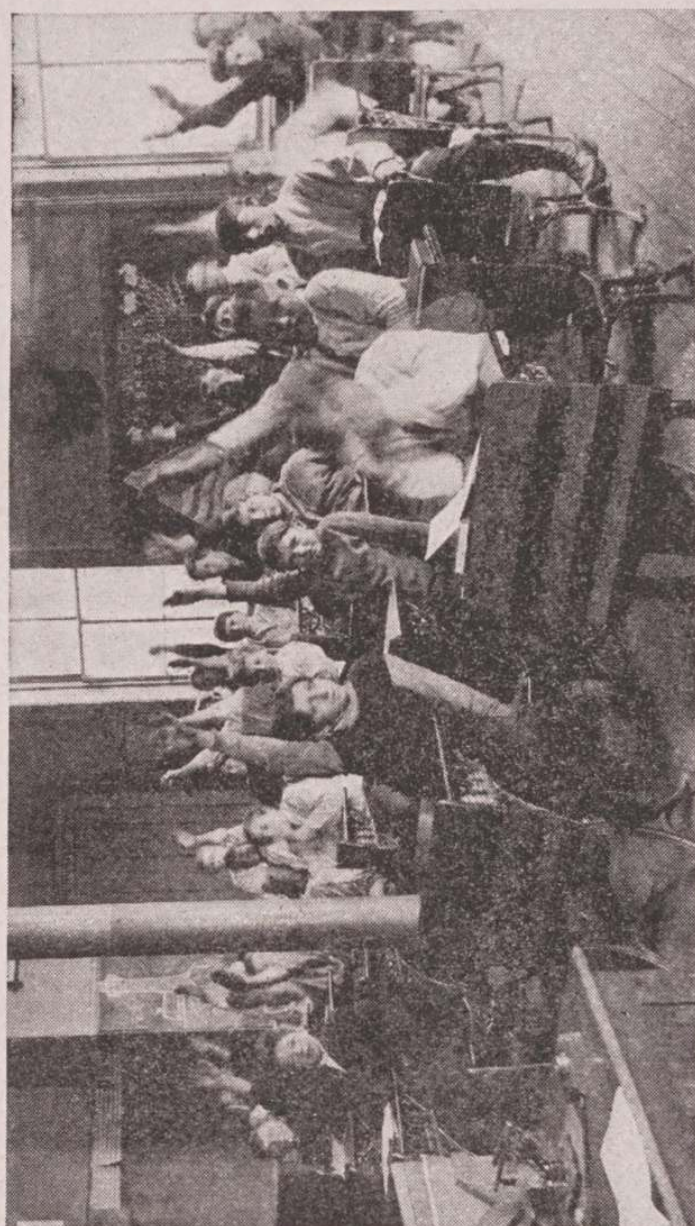
# And the Ball Sailed Right Through the Window

They were all out playing on the vacant lot down near the schoolhouse. You know where it is. And how they did play that ball game! They were having the very best kind of time, when Robert, who had just come "to bat," knocked the ball on a long drive right through the basement window of the schoolhouse. No one saw it happen except the boys that were playing. But they all stopped playing, and ran home as fast as they could.

And they didn't tell anyone what they had done, either, or what had happened.

The next morning at school, the teachers in all the rooms asked if anyone knew how the window got broken. In Robert's room were all the boys that had been playing ball, but not one of them said a





School Days

single word. They looked at each other and at Robert, kind of sideways, but they didn't "peach."

About a week afterwards, there was a new window in the place of the broken one. The boys asked the janitor if he had found out who broke the glass. He told them that he didn't know, but that he had bought a new pane of glass and put it in himself, because he didn't want the teachers to think he was not doing his duty in watching the playgrounds, and because it made things cold with the glass out.

This made Robert feel rather "funny." And when Robert told the boys who had been playing ball that same day about it, and what the janitor said, they felt rather "funny" too.

After they had thought about it, Jim said, "Well, we didn't tell a lie."

"No; and we didn't tell the truth, either," spoke up Verne.





“We kept still and acted an untruth,” decided Arthur.

So those boys did the right thing as fast as they could. Each took some money from his bank, and they paid the janitor the price of the window. It was a just lesson, which they never forgot.

. . . . .

Then there was Betty. She was playing one day around mother’s desk, and the first thing she knew, over went the ink bottle, and the nice paper and some books were all spattered up.

Mother wasn’t in the room then; but she saw her desk a little later, and she said at supper: “Some one had an accident and spilled ink on my desk. I wonder who did it.”

Betty looked down at her plate and didn’t say a single word. She was very busy just then mashing her potato, although it had been mashed before.

You see, there was a secret in her heart, and no one else knew for sure who



did upset the ink bottle, and Betty knew that no one else knew for sure. So she said nothing, and mother added, "Perhaps Tillie did it when she was dusting."

"Could it have been Fluff, Betty's kitten?" asked daddy.

But no one knew, and Betty didn't say a word. She didn't tell the truth, nor did she tell an untruth with her lips. But she acted something which wasn't true, didn't she? The worst part of acting an untruth is that so often some one else gets the blame, because that secret in the heart is hidden away down so deep that it can't be seen. And if it is kept there, it will begin to hurt after a while, because it is the wrong kind of secret.

The safest way and the best way, and the way in which you will be sure to have the most fun and enjoyment, is to look and talk and act the truth about mistakes and accidents, as well as about other things.





Pals

## “Eye Spy!”

The minister that preaches in our church, talked on a strange text last Sabbath. It was something like this: “Having eyes, they see not.”

There are many people — and boys and girls, too — who have each two good eyes, but who are absolutely blind, sometimes. It must be that way, judging by the way they act.

Harry and Mack got up from the table after breakfast the other morning, and started out through the kitchen toward the garage. Harry did not see anything along the way. But Mack saw all the soiled dishes that must be cleared away. He carried the empty dishes out to the kitchen sink for mother. Then he caught sight of the basin of scraps for the chickens, and he took that out.

By and by Harry came in, and seeing what Mack had done, he looked rather



guilty. "I'd have done it myself," he said, "but I didn't see anything to do."

Later Mack and Harry were very busily coloring pictures in the living room. Grandma came into the room with her sewing. Now there was in that room a particular chair that grandma always sits in. Grandma says that that chair fits her best.

Mack saw that this chair was not in its place, and that it was filled with paper. He jumped up quickly, took the papers out, and drew the chair up to the window where it belonged, then went back to his coloring.

"Why didn't you tell me, grandma? I could have done it just as well, only I didn't see it," Harry exclaimed. "I was so busy coloring!"

It is very sad to be really blind; to be shut out from the sunshine and all the beautiful trees and grass and flowers. But it is almost as sad when a boy or a

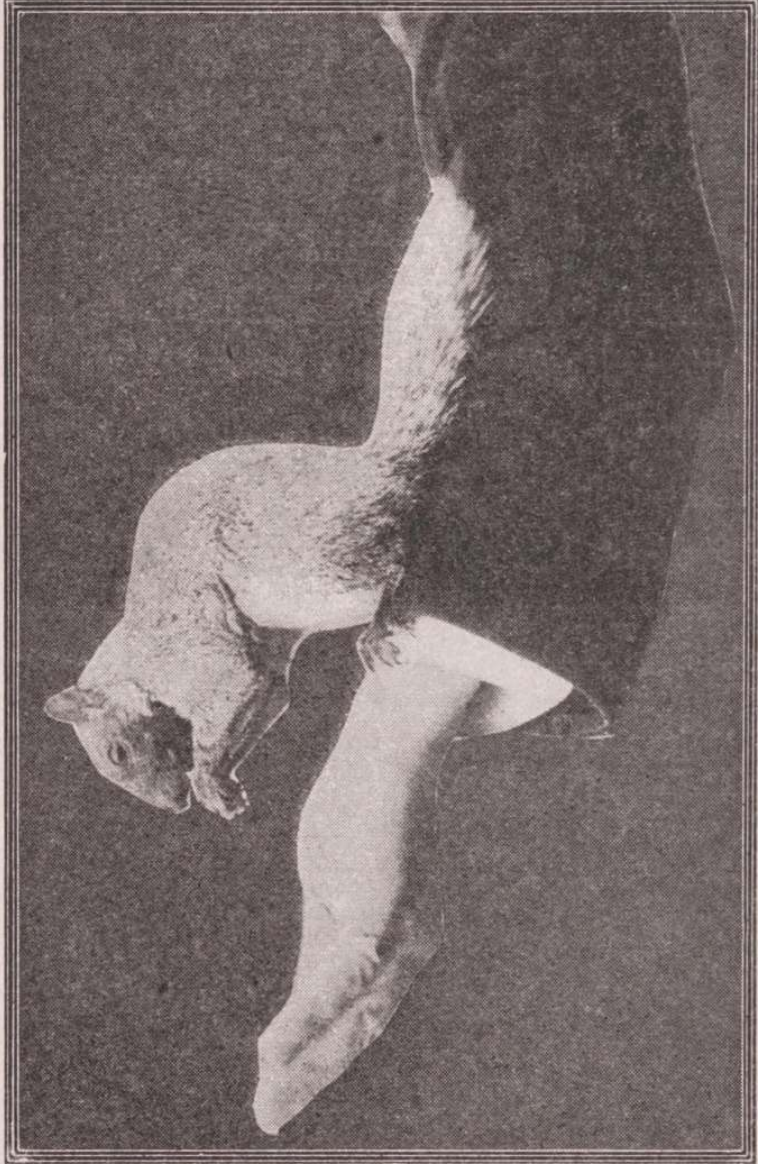


girl. with really good eyes is blind to all the chances to help. It is not that Harry does not want to help. He is generally perfectly willing. But, you see, he has to be asked. Grandma has to say: "My hands are full, Harry. Will you open the door for me?"

There is some blindness that can't be cured. Some poor children must go sightless all their lives. But this blindness can be cured if only you give some thought to it. Eyes can be trained to see. Ask Jesus to help. Ask Him to open your blind eyes, as He did the eyes of many people in olden times. Stop several times a day and ask yourself, "What can I see to do that would help?"

You can make a kind of game of it with yourself — a kind of "I spy," only we'll call it "eye spy!" You will find your eyes growing keener and quicker and even brighter, so that no chance to make others happy or to help will escape you.





Wouldn't you like a pet like this?

XVI

## When Mary's Lips Stayed Shut — Tight

We all like Mary. Almost everyone on our street likes Mary — now.

But a while back, many of the boys and girls didn't like Mary — no, not a bit. They said that she was "mean" and said "mean things." And they didn't want to play with her, either.

And Mary was sure that she spent one half of her time saying just what she felt like saying, and then spent the other half wishing she hadn't, and making up her mind to say: "I'm so sorry! Won't you forgive me?"

And it wasn't very pleasant, either. In the first place, there is no fun in being "mad" and saying mean things to people; and it wasn't pleasant to feel sorry afterwards. And Mary knew, too, that many of the playmates on our block didn't like





to play with her when she said these mean and ugly things.

You see, Mary wasn't a naughty girl at heart. She was just a little girl with a temper that she had not learned how to control.

"If you would only control your temper," her mother told her one day when she was having a very unhappy time, "then you wouldn't have to be sorry like this, and feel so bad."

"I know it, mother, but it comes so quick; and when I feel that way, I just want to say mean things and hurt people and make them feel bad."

"Suppose, no matter how you feel next time, you wait until the temper passes. Even if you do feel like saying mean things, don't do it. Just shut your lips tight, and wait. Don't you think that you can do that just once?"

Mary didn't know.





"Father, we thank Thee for the night,  
And for the pleasant morning light."



“And there is a prayer in the Bible that says, ‘Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.’ Jesus will do this for all of us if we ask Him.”

Mary remembered to ask Jesus to help her in guarding her lips and her temper. And she tried hard. Next time the tempter came boiling up, she remembered those words which King David said thousands of years ago, and she shut her lips up tight, and waited. It was pretty hard at first, and she felt all swelled up inside. But by praying to Jesus, “Set a guard over my lips right now, dear Jesus,” she managed to keep the ugly words penned in.

It was good not to have to feel sorry afterwards, and not to have to go to some one on our block and say, “I’m sorry that I said such mean things to you.”

Mary learned that every time she shut her lips tight and refused to let the ugly words out, it was easier next time. Mary

made up her mind not to say anything, no matter what happened, that would make anyone unhappy; and now everyone is happy and pleasant when with Mary.

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## This Is the End

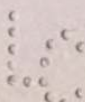
Of this little book. But there are still others "on our block" that we haven't talked about or visited with. And perhaps there are some that you know about on the block, and that you felt sure would be mentioned, but the reason why they are not is because we knew that you knew them well, and so you could help them to come along with you and be the very best boys and girls on our block. And you will have the very best time that way, too.



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