

Our Boys and Girls.

A HOUSE-CLEANING CAROL.

The melancholy days have come—the saddest of the year;
The carpet's on the clothesline, and incessant whacks we hear;
The bedding's on the kitchen, and the beds are in the hall,
The pictures are upon the floor while someone dusts the wall;
We eat cold meat and crackers from a warbly kitchen chair,
And this is glad house-cleaning time—so free from toil and care.

The neighbors line their windows and a hasty census take
Of all the bric-a-brac we have, and calculations make;
If it was bought with ready cash, or on the instalment;
We rescue our provisions from the hasty garbage man,
And life is gay and careless-like, it makes one want to roam—
To hide away—because the folks are cleaning house at home.

The melancholy days are here—the days of soap and brush.
Stove polish daubs the tableware—there's pie on Wagner's bust—
Piano holds some frying-pan—the bathtub's filled with books—
The women folks—ah! who could tell who they were by their looks!
Sing hey! The glad house-cleaning time of dust and soap!
It is a gladsome sight to see—through a big telescope.

—Baltimore American.

HOW THE BALL ROLLED.

BY MRS. M. H. COCHRAN.

"O grandpa, here are your glasses." A breathless schoolboy came running in the arbor where the old gentleman was seated.
"Where did you find them, my boy?"
"Over on Ned Water's porch. You know you sat there talking with his father last night."
"Yes, I remember taking them out to look at a photograph he showed me. But I thought you started out early to have a game of ball before school."
"I did, but Ned told me about the glasses—"
"And you gave up your game to come all this way and bring them to me?"
"I knew you'd want them, grandpa. I didn't mind."
The affectionate assurance beamed in the frank eyes which met the faded ones turned on him in loving recognition of the little act of unselfishness.
"You've been setting a ball rolling this morning, I think, Harold."
"I don't know what you mean, sir, I told you I left the ball game."
"Not that kind of a ball. But you are now due at school. I'll tell you later what I mean."
"I have a little more time. Please go on."
"When I was a boy," began his grandfather, "my mother used sometimes to say to me: 'Can't you set a ball rolling to-day?'"
"That's just like you, grandfather," said Harold, settling himself with a contented smile to listen. "You don't begin with a lot of moral talk when you talk to us boys. You go just right into what you have to say."

"She didn't say it very often," went on the old gentleman, "for that would have made it seem hackneyed. When she did say it, it seemed to come fresh, and stirred me up to try how I could work it, and I always found fun in it sooner or later. This was the kind of ball she meant—she had talked it over with me long ago and didn't need to say anything more—to make a special point of doing a kind, helpful thing to some one, and set it rolling by asking the one receiving it to pass it along in the shape of a kindness to some one else, the some one else to ask still another to have it passed on."

"That's jolly," said Harold, with a laugh. "It's like having other folks do your good things for you. Did you use to try it?"

"And did your ball ever go very far?"

"O, I cannot say as to that. You can't keep track of it very far, you know. It is like a good many more things that we do for the love of what is right—we have to leave the results with the Lord, in full faith that he will bless our efforts."

"I'm going to try it," said Harold. "I shall begin this very morning."

"Then come at night and tell me about it."

Harold sought his grandfather with a face which showed that he had a story to tell.

"I went to school after I left you, sir," he began. "I had my dinner basket with a good lunch and a bag of peanuts in it. Just as I crossed the corner of the woods I heard some shouting and Jack Pierce came running along after his dog. Rover had started a chipmunk. I knew he couldn't catch it, but it's always sport to see him paw and howl when the chatting little rascal goes up on a tree out of his way, so waited to see. I put my basket behind a stump and went a few steps into the woods. Just as I came out I saw a boy stealing along towards by basket. I hid behind a tree and watched. I saw him open the basket and take out the nuts. Then I gave a whoop and jumped on him."

"You rascal!" I said. "So you want my nuts, do you? I was just going to give him a shake when it flashed on me to think of your ball. My ball—I mean—the ball I was to set rolling. I thought this was a good chance, so I said:

"Billy, I don't believe you want to be a thief. I know you're not that kind of a boy. You just didn't think."

"He looked a great deal more astonished than he would if I thrashed him. He put back the nuts, saying:

"I'm sorry. I will think next time. You're real good to me."

"Well, I said, 'if you think so, you try to do something good yourself to-day. Now, is that a promise, Billy?' 'I will,' he said. Then I gave him the nuts—he didn't want to take them, but I made him. Then, it is a little strange, grandpa, but I did see a little of the passing on. When I came home from school I went round by a way I don't often go, and soon I was passing Billy's house, and on the porch was his little lame sister—they're dreadfully poor—and, grandpa, I saw Billy had kept his promise by giving them to her."

"I don't believe that was all that followed the starting of your ball," he said.

"It was all I know anything about," said Harold.

"You forgot perhaps that you had already set a ball rolling this morning in bringing me my glasses."

"O grandpa, dear, that wasn't what you call doing a kindness. That was, why—I don't call it just a duty, but just a little thing, I did because I liked to."

Grandpa patted Harold's head as he went on.

"But you see I took it as an obligation laid on me to roll your ball on. So I had to keep it in mind."

"You, grandpa," Harold looked highly amused, as he listened with a look of great interest.

"I must go back a little," said his grandfather. "As I went into town on the trolley two or three weeks ago, I saw a forlorn looking boy, evidently also on the way to the city, but not taking it so easily as I was taking it, he depended on his legs to get him there. An hour later he came to my office, asking me to take him in as an office boy and errand runner. He begged so hard, telling such a pitiful story, that I agreed to try him."

"As the days went on I found him active, willing and bright about comprehending all his duties, but notwithstanding all this I began before long to realize that he had a fault so serious as to overbalance all his merits. He was tricky and deceitful. I had reason to know that he was dishonest in trifles and would do things behind my back that he would not do before my face."

"I knew the little rascal was very anxious to stay, so I felt sorry to think of turning him out. But just as I had made up my mind to do it, he gave me a shock of astonishment, by coming to me this morning with a confession of his mis-doings made of his own accord."

"Ho!" said Harold, in great surprise.

"Yes, he said. He told me of small trickery—things I knew he had done, but he didn't know I knew. Then he said, between catches of his breath:

"I—don't want to be a thief. I ain't that kind of a boy. I—just—didn't think—"

"Grandpa!" Harold exclaimed in astonishment. "What is the name of your boy?"

"William Hart."

"Not—Billy?"

"Yes, the same Billy—whose way your ball rolled this morning. I talked with him and he told me about some one who knew he didn't mean to be a thief. 'And I don't,' he repeated. 'And I promised him I'd do something good—so I—had to tell you!'"

"Grandpa, what did you say to him? Did you turn him away?"

"You seem to forget," again with the loving smile, "that you had already sent a ball rolling my way. It was my bounden duty to send that ball rolling further. Poor Billy had given his honest shove in coming to me with his confession. So I forgave him and promised that he should remain on condition of his mending his ways. And with such a wise mentor as you, I have little doubt he will. It will probably," grandfather spoke more soberly, "be a turning point in the boy's life. If so, your ball will keep on rolling, who can tell with what beneficent results? For if Billy should turn out a good boy and a good man, instead of a bad one—think of the difference it will make to all within his reach."

"Yes, we never can tell how wide our influence may be, or how far the effect of a kind action may reach." — N. Y. Observer.

Better to be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo.—Emerson.



LOADED UP WITH IMPURITIES.

IN THE SPRING THE SYSTEM IS LOADED UP WITH IMPURITIES.

After the hard work of the winter, the eating of rich and heavy foods, the system becomes clogged up with waste and poisonous matter, and the blood becomes thick and sluggish.

This causes Loss of Appetite, Biliousness, Lack of Energy and that tired, weary, listless feeling so prevalent in the spring.

The cleansing, blood-purifying action of

BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS.

eliminates all the pent-up poison from the system, starts the sluggish liver working, acts on the Kidneys and Bowels, and renders it, without exception,

The Best Spring Medicine.

A WISE OLD HORSE.

The horse belonged to the late J. Lane, of Frescombe, Gloucestershire, England, and the anecdote was told by the Rev. Thomas Jackson.

Mr. Lane, on going home one day, turned the horse into a field to graze.

A few days before this the horse had been shod, but had been "pinched," as the blacksmiths call it, in the shoeing of one foot; that is, the shoe was so tight as to hurt his foot.

The next morning after Mr. Lane had turned the horse into the field to graze, he missed him. "What can have become of old Sol?" asked he. The name of the horse was Solomon. He was so named because he was wise.

When Mr. Lane asked where old Sol was, Tim, the stable boy, said: "I think some thief must have got him; for I cannot find Sol in the field or in the cow yard."

"What makes you think that a thief has got him?" asked Mr. Lane.

"Well, sir," said Tim, "the gate of the field has been lifted off the hinges, and left on the ground."

"That is no proof that a thief took the horse," said Mr. Lane. "I think that old Sol must have done that himself. I will tell you how we can find out. We will look at the gate, and, if there is a mark of Sol's teeth on it, we shall know he has let himself out."

So they went to the gate, and there, on the top rail, was the mark of a horse's tooth.

"Now, why should old Sol want to get out of this nice field, so full of grass and clover?" thought Mr. Lane.

"Perhaps," said Tim, "the blacksmith can tell us about him."

"I will drive over to the blacksmith's shop and see," said Mr. Lane.

So Mr. Lane drove over to the blacksmith's shop, which was a mile and a half off, and said to Mr. Clay, the