

## Our Boys and Girls.

### WILLIE'S QUESTION.

Where do you go when you go to sleep?

That's what I want to know;  
There's loads of things I can't find out,

But nothing bothers me so.  
Nurse puts me to bed in my little room

And takes away the light;  
I cuddle down in the blankets warm  
And shut my eyes up tight,  
Then off I go to the funniest place,  
Where everything seems queer;  
Though sometimes it is not funny at all,

Just like the way it is here.  
There's mountains made of candy there,

Big fields covered with flowers,  
And lovely ponies, and birds and trees,

A hundred times nicer than ours.  
Often, dear mamma, I see you there,  
And sometimes papa, too;  
And last night the baby came back from heaven,

And played like he used to do.  
So all of this day I've been trying to think,

O, how I wish I could know,  
Whereabouts that wonderful country is

Where sleepy little boys go.  
—The Independent.

### FATHER, MARY & CO.

ADELBERT F. CALDWELL.

The rambling, wood-colored house was just in from the hard gravel road, as one turned off at the right, on crossing the Little River bridge. From this out-of-the-way place it was fully a mile down to the grim iron foundry, where for years Lawrence Baker had had charge of one of the company's great, roaring furnaces.

The trees in the wide, unkept front yard stood bare and gaunt. Their brown leaves, exulting in a new-found freedom, were mischievously scurrying about, tumbling over one another in a wild, mad frolic for supremacy.

"I'd be willing to be a leaf—almost," declared Mary Baker, gloomily, looking aimlessly from the narrow, old-fashioned panes of the sitting room window. "I wouldn't care then if I had to stay here and toil—if I didn't get a place; wouldn't have ambitions, only to have them unfulfilled. I'd be a leaf—nothing to hope for, nothing to expect," and she sighed dismally. Could it be patient, faithful Mary Baker?

The silence in the room was broken only by the sharp whistle of the wind without.

"I'm not needed here. The boys are grown now and working with father. And Elizabeth—she's sixteen—could do all there is to do, with what help they could give her. I'm tired—tired—discouraged with it all! Wonder if mother ever felt as I do? She was appreciated."

Mary took a crumpled letter from the window-sill.

"I don't see why I had to be disappointed—why I couldn't have had the place at Cole & Emerson's, only that I never had any luck—never! I suppose that accounts for it."

She went slowly into the kitchen,

where the fire in the shining range was burning low. She hurriedly opened the oven door, whence issued appetizing odors of baking brown bread.

"I'll need more fire than this," with housewifely instinct, "if that's to be done for supper," and she stepped to the shed, bareheaded, for an armful of "fine" wood.

"It seems as though everybody else in the world but you, Mary Baker, has a 'pull!' And I did so want a place—somewhere! Oh, well,—

"Washing, ironing, making bread—It must be done; mouths must be fed."

She was setting the table for supper, and didn't notice the slow, tired step of her father on the kitchen floor. He had come in unexpectedly by the back way.

"I wouldn't mind it—the drudgery. I could wear the finger-ends off if only—but who cares? Nobody!"

An expression of pain passed over her father's worn, anxious face.

"I wonder if she got it—the place!" The look of anxiety deepened—the very thought hurt him.

The supper was being eaten in silence—only the monotonous click of the dishes was heard. They were almost through.

"Going?" Ralph looked up abruptly from the table. 'Twas the first reference made regarding the position at Cole & Emerson's, though they all knew Mary was expecting an answer that day to her application—and Bloomfield was so far away.

"No," divining her brother's reference, "I'm not wanted."

She scarcely glanced up from the coffee she was pouring, yet there was an evident look of relief in Ralph's dark eyes—she couldn't be mistaken. "Then he cares," she thought quickly; "but it's only for my work—it makes it pleasanter for them."

Yet Ralph's expression gave Mary a feeling—she couldn't describe it—that took away much of the disappointment she had felt since receiving the concise, business-like letter of the morning. She hadn't supposed 'twould make any difference to him—wouldn't Elizabeth do just as well?

"Then you're really going—to stay," and Tom squeezed his sister's hand shyly. He had waited for her in the kitchen, until she brought out an armful of dishes to wash. "You're a brick! What would we do—Ralph and I—without our"—

He fumbled his cap nervously. "You know you've taken mother's place, and"—

"Don't Tom—don't!"  
Mary almost let fall the dishes she was holding. 'Twas the first time any one had ever expressed, by a single word, any appreciation of her efforts and struggle in assuming the responsibility of the little family—the sole head since her mother's death. It bewildered her—the suddenness and pleasure of it all.

"I didn't suppose"—  
"Let me do them alone tonight, you look tired, Mary," and Elizabeth gently took the dish towel from her sister's hands. "Come, that's a good girl," coaxingly.

"Yes, you go in with father, and I'll help her. The one who got up such a good supper for us hungry boys tonight ought to be relieved from dish-washing. Bess and I—we want to do it," and Ralph—strong, handsome Ralph—playfully took his bewildered sister in his arms, and set

her down in the sitting room beside their father. "I'm just beginning to realize what"—

He softly closed the door, with his whispered sentence unfinished. But Mary understood.

"I've been thinking, Mary, lately," and her father's voice was low, "of forming a partnership, providing I can get somebody I want to consent to the contract."

"You're—you're not going to leave the foundry?"

"No—I—the voice was unsteady. "But I've been thinking for a number of days of the necessity of such a step. It should have been done before; but somehow I—we didn't think."

Mary failed to comprehend the drift of her father's words.

"Unless we form the partnership I refer to, we may lose the most valued member of our home-keeping. We've lived too much to ourselves—been too selfish and forgetful. But now under the partnership of Father, Mary & Co., we shall think to do more for the one who has made the loss of mother, all these years, less deeply felt. We hadn't realized what you've been to us until we thought of your leaving. Will you join the firm—that we may still be kept together?" He took Mary's trembling hand and drew it towards him. "What this has been to Ralph and Tom—mother knows."

"I was so selfish—I thought only of my own little soul-centered world." 'Twas after the rest of the family had retired, leaving Ralph and Mary alone in the small sitting room. "And I said—only this afternoon—that I had no luck. O Ralph! And who could have greater than to be admitted to father's firm—with you and Tom and Bess?"—*Zion's Herald.*

### A BLACK BOY'S HEART.

BY ANNIE W. WHITNEY.

They were the prettiest pair of ponies ever exhibited at the State fair, and their groom was only a colored boy who ran by their side as they went round and round the ring, obeying every word or motion of his. When they stopped before the grandstand, the ponies rubbed up to Cato as though they loved him.

"What is their price?" asked a horse-dealer, for it was known that they were for sale.

"Five hundred dollars," said Cato. "Stuff and nonsense!" said the horse-dealer. "I'll give \$300 cash for them."

Cato shook his head and turned away for another offer; but, though every one admired them, no one wanted to buy.

"There," said the horse-dealer, "you see no one wants them. Tell me who owns them. He will be glad to take my offer."

"De young missus, she ain't gwine to sell 'cept she git \$500 for 'em," said Cato.

"Humph!" said the horse-dealer. "A young girl owns them, does she? Well, if you will swear that one of them went lame, I'll give you \$50. You never had so much money in your lifetime; did you, now?"

Cato gave such a start that the ponies started too. Then, looking up, he said:

"Reck'n yer t'ink dat 'cause de Lord done give Cato a black skin, he give him a black heart too. 'Taint



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so, an' he ain't gwine blacken it dat way, nuther."

"Cato," said a gentleman standing by, who had overheard the conversation, "why does your young mistress want to sell her ponies?"

"De plantation, it bound to be sold nex' week," he said, "if me and Miss Helen can't raise de money. Marsar, he got all but \$500 an' he took sick an' de barn burn down. Dat how come Miss Helen sell de ponies?"

"Well," said the gentleman, "you take them back and tell her they are sold for \$500. My man will go with you and take the money. Tell her I am going to Europe for a year and would consider it a favor if she would use them while I am away. If she can buy them back, when I return, I shall be very glad to sell them to her."

"Ef Cato ever kin serve you, sir, he jes' boun'ter do dat t'ing."

"You have done it already, Cato."

"What, sah, I ain't never seen yo' befo'."

"True, but you have given me an opportunity to help another in trouble. You gave it to me just now when I overheard you refuse to blacken your heart for that man's money."—*Sunday School Advocate.*

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