

**Chat to . . .
Boys and Girls.**

POLLY'S BIRTHDAY.

"I do wish I could have a birthday like other people," sighed Polly, sitting on a log by the river, and splashing with her little bare feet. "I'd have a doll with lots of clothes, a Royal Reader to learn lessons out of, some pretty things to wear, and some real goodies to eat and—oh dear! I don't know what all, like Susie Marsh said her cousin had on her birthday. But I shall be eight years old tomorrow, and it won't make no matter to nobody." And Polly twisted up her funny little old-fashioned face in such a comical way as she squeezed back a big hot tear that there was a queer sound like a smothered giggle from among the thick branches of the maple tree overhead. Absorbed in her own thoughts, Polly didn't hear it, and continued. "Mother'll wash and iron and bake, just like any other day, and father'll stand me up against the door to see how near my head comes to the latch this year; then he'll pat my cheek, an' say his little woman is growin' up fast, an' poor mother 'll look worried an' say, 'Yes, Polly's stretchin' up, and aint gettin' no book-learnin' for want of boots;'" and I shall hunt eggs in my bare feet, and carry dinner to the hay-field, just as if I didn't own a single birthday, and—oh dear, dear! I wonder if God knows up in heaven how mis'able a little girl most eight years old can be! I've a good mind to tell him!" And impulsive Polly knelt down in the sand and putting up her hands said reverently and in perfect faith:—"Please God send me a nice birthday; let me have presents and things like other folks; I can't tell mother, 'cause she's poor and I don't want to fret her, but I do want a dollie, and I tell you because all the world is yours and all the pretty things in it; so please send me some, and make me a real good child for Jesus' sake" Then dear little Polly arose and walked slowly away, swinging her calico sun-bonnet.

When she was fairly out of sight, there was another sound from the maple tree, and out flew two of the strangest looking birds you ever saw; they were in form of two little girls, with bright eyes and flowing hair—Ethel and Maudie Burton by name, who, with mamma, baby brother and nurse, were staying at the Austen farm for the summer. Smoothing down their ruffled plumes, or rather their ruffled dresses, of pretty light cambric, they started at one another in amazement, till Ethel exclaimed:

"Did you ever know anything so funny?"
Don't see anything funny in it," said Maudie with tears in her brown eyes; "it must be perfectly, horridly awful, not to have any birthday presents, and nobody to make any fuss over you or give a party or anything! Oh I am sure I should just die."
"And to think of her praying for it! Do you think that was just right Maudie?"
"I don't know; let's go and ask mamma." This being their usual manner of settling difficulties, they ran off in the direction of the farm.

Mamma had driven to the station to meet Papa, so the whole story was told to Farmer Austen's wife.
Why bless her heart!" said that worthy woman. "it must ha' been that queer little tot, Polly Sims! A rare lonesome time she have to be sure! Never had a decent plaything in her life 'll warrant, nice people they are too, but poor as Job's turkey! She's allers settin' 'round the shore and fields, playin' with leaves an' flowers, an' everlastin'ly talking to herself, fur company like, I spose. Dear, dear! just think of the poor lamb prayin' for a good birthday! I'll tell you what, we'll give that child a birthday party that 'll make her eyes shine, or my name is not Sally Austen!"

"Oh thank you, thank you, dear Mrs. Austen," they both cried, "if you say so it will be all right; and won't we make her happy for once?" and falling on the farmer's wife they hugged her till she cried out laughing "Bless my heart you precious bears—do let me go."

The sound of wheels drew the children out to the veranda, and soon papa and mamma knew all they could tell about Polly Sims.

"Yes dear!" said mother in answer to Ethel's question "I think it was quite right for Polly to tell our Heavenly Father all her wants. And who knows 'but he may make us his instruments in answering her prayer?"

"Oh mamma, do you really think so? Maybe that is the reason we chose the maple tree to sit in this afternoon instead of the old oak; but what can we do mamma?"

"Gently, gently" said mother smiling at their eagerness. "I have just finished a new

muslin apron for Maudie—will she be willing to give it up?"

"That pretty one, with the cute little pockets? Oh yes, mamma."

"May I give her my newest doll cried Ethel, "you know she is all dressed, and looks so pretty."

"Why Ethel, you think so much of Ross, you can't mean it" said Maudie astonished at this sacrifice.

"Yes, I do love her dearly, but just think of Polly's delight! and I want to help answer her prayer with something that I really love myself," said Ethel solemnly.

"That is right dear, and the true spirit of self-denial, acceptable to Him who loveth a cheerful giver, you may also add a Royal Reader—Maudie will give a doll's cradle and I two pretty pairs of stockings."

"And I," said papa—"please don't leave me out; I shall drive you down to the village after supper to choose a pair of good strong boots, and a picture-book; also beg leave to ask some candies and nuts."

After this speech there was great clapping of small hands. The programme was carried out—Ethel and Maudie experienced the blessedness of giving, and Mrs. Austin had her tea party at which Polly was the most honored, and, certainly the most surprised guest—but the particulars of that eventful evening I shall have to tell you at some future time. AUNT BELL.

AUTUMN COATS.

Capes Not to be Worn by All Womankind, In Spite of Early Predictions.

New coats for autumn wear are a necessity of the immediate present, and they are many and varied in form. Very early in the season those who like at all times to be becomingly as well as fashionably dressed asked, "Do all smartly dressed women have to wear capes of one kind or another?" and foreign authorities answered, "Yes, no matter how ill-suited capes may be to certain individuals, all who would be strictly up to date in the matter of wraps must wear them. Capes are to be the fashion."

The word fashion has a broad and elastic meaning here, and is synonymous with taste, just as it is in Paris. It certainly is not good taste for a short, stout woman to appear in a long, befrilled cape, such as those in vogue that makes her look as broad as she is tall, and no American woman will do this. We long ago learned that philosophy can be applied to the cape as well as to everything else in woman's wardrobe. For every advantage it has a disadvantage. True, it is more easily put on and off than a coat, but it does not keep out the cold half so well. Indeed, a cape that keeps the wearer in any degree of comfort on a blustery day must of necessity be so heavy that its weight wears her completely out, whereas frequently the lightest coat is the warmest.

Some wit, a mere man, of course, has said, "With woman a fashion which is a fashion is no longer a fashion." This certainly applies largely to capes at the moment. They will unquestionably be used for rough and ready wear and also for very dressy occasions, but coats, as usual, will be universally adopted. The question of the fitness of things is always considered by a woman of genuinely refined taste.

Quite the newest cloth coats are very long in the back and are cut away over the hips. It may readily be seen by the first illustrated that this style of garment is tight fitting. As a rule they are lined with handsome silk and finished with elaborate revers and high collars. There is a great air of smartness about these cutaway coats when they are on just the figures to which they are suited, but, on the whole they are somewhat unbecoming, and this extreme style is not likely to be very generally adopted.

Rows of stitching are to be a feature of many jackets and coats of the most approved cut, and so are set designs, such as the bowknot in stitching, and the effect is good on smooth fawn, gray, and blue cloths. Fancy buttons and lace are also in evidence, and both are utilized in producing the dressy coat of fawn cloth next depicted. Full revers of ivory ribbed silk run down, forming a flounce in front, and a high collar finishes this, as well as other handsome wraps.

Some swell coats have long-tailed, tight-fitting backs and flaring fronts without seams, but gored under the arms, which open over either a tailor-made vest or a fussy front of silk, satin lace or embroidery. Touches of white caracule, a fur which is far more manageable than ermine, have been introduced with a good result on smart black velvet coats. Then, too, frequently vests of this caracule, handsomely embroidered in silver, and trimmed with applique daintily outlined and lined with silver, are worn with open-fronted coats.

The third model shows a chic Paris coat of grey fawn cloth, with a tight back and an Eton front. Revers, exquisitely braided with strips of the material and a novel

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rolling collar, complete this novelty, which is worn with a dressy front. Red and bright blue cloths are much employed in making coats of this order. Cape revers, collar revers and indeed, all sorts of revers are to be seen on even the simplest coats this season, except those exceeding plain and unbecoming little garments, cut for all the world like an old-fashioned riding habit bodice, and fastened straight up the front to the collar with a single row of handsome buttons.

For girlish figures nothing could be jauntier than the comparatively short coat with a semi-loose front and tight back like the one illustrated. The small woman with a graceful form who wears a long cutaway coat because other women do, not only makes a fright of herself, but also shows a lack of individuality, and she who invests in one of these half saques, as they are called, will make no mistake, so far as fashion goes. They are very good style. One thing that makes it certain that coats will be preferred to capes is the smallness of the sleeves. Coats are invariably worn when tight, plain sleeves are correct, and then, too, there is always a tendency to fashion rich materials into well-fitting garments rather than into more or less shapeless wraps on the mantle order.

Besides the beautiful smooth cloths in a dozen different shades of fawn, tan and mode, to say nothing of the blues, greens, and reds, velvet will be extensively employed for plain as well as fancy cloaks.

TRILLS OF FASHION.

Parisians favor deep mervilleux for elaborate gowns. It is as brilliant as silk, as light as muslin, as soft as surah, and is to be had in all the new shades.

Pipings are to continue fashionable on winter gowns, and good results are obtained in satin, velvet or ribbed silk. Plain

velvets and pliable corduroys are used for bindings on smart gowns.

Since big round and square collars are a feature of autumn gowns, sets consisting of a sailor collar and broad turned-back cuffs of Maltese lace are in vogue.

The newest chatelaine is made of amber and has entirely superseded those of gold, or silver. The amber clasp is mounted in gold and gold chains hold various amber appendages—powder box, pencil, purse, mirror, &c.—which are also mounted in gold or silver gilded filigree work.

Many smart frocks for little girls are braided in straight and zigzag lines around the skirt above the hem. The majority of the bodices end at the waist in a band, and jacket bodices usually are held in place by a belt. Yokes are frequently elaborately braided and supplemented by capelike trimmings on the shoulders, uniting in the epaulette, with a point falling on the fore part of the arm.

A new make of cashmere is particularly pleasing and attracts much attention. It has on one side a horizontal rib and on the other a perpendicular rib, the lining being used with excellent effect to make strapings and revers on severe gowns.

Word comes from Paris that the flounced skirt is a thing of the past there, but English and American women will not accept this announcement, since they have just taken to it with enthusiasm. The flounce has decided disadvantages for autumn wear, for it adds to the weight of a cloth gown and demands that the skirt be cut very long.

Many coats show very handsome applique braidings of the same shade as the cloth or of the cloth itself. Close-fitting jackets of colored melton, notably in national blue, hunters' green and cyrano, are made like a dress or habit bodice, being rounded in front and having their tails cut off square or in a slightly rounded style.

The newest stocks are quite original, and may be worn with any dressy bodice. They are fashioned of corded or tucked velvet, and are rounded in front, fastening to the collar band with a stud; but they open in the back, and a lace, chiffon or net scarf is attached long enough to go twice around

the neck and tie in a fluffy butterfly bow in front.

Parisians like the use of fancy wool fabrics in combination with plain silk goods. This is a style which gives an excellent opportunity for remodelling old dresses.

Many new fabrics have a kind of fluffy fringe interwoven. Grenadines and etamines have exquisite insertions, incrustations, and runnings of fine ribbon, all interwoven in a manner so marvellous that one wonders how machinery ever accomplished the ingenuity of the designers.

"Flowers are Always Friends."

"It is surely a nobler commemoration of those we have lost to give flowers to the living than to lavish them on the coffins of the unseeing dead," writes an Englishwoman to the Spectator, appealing for flowering shrubs to fill the empty conservatory of the Home of Peace for the Dying. The conservatory forms one side of a large ward, and the dying patients can see from their beds the sun shining on green leaves and bright flowers. "We need something to cheer us, lying here day after day," said one poor man, observing that the stock of plants and shrubs in the conservatory was almost exhausted. Disinfectants are very destructive to plant life. A dying woman, on being asked if she liked flowers, answered, "Oh yes! I am from the country and among strangers here, but the flowers are always friends!"

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