

Poetry.

THE LITTLE COMFORTER.

I have a little comforter
That clings upon my knee,
And makes the world seem possible
When things go wrong with me.
She never is the one to say,
"If you had only been
More careful and more sensible
This thing had been foreseen."
She blesses me,
And whispers, "Never mind;
Tomorrow night
All will be right."
My papa, good and kind,
To give me wise and good advice
I have of friends a store;
But then the trouble over is,
I know it all before.
And when one's heart is full of care,
One's plans all in a mess,
The wisest reasoning, I think,
Can't make the trouble less.
My Mamma's way,
"O papa, don't be sad;
Tomorrow night
All will be right."
And then we shall be glad.

Some think I have been much to blame;
Some say, "I told you so."
And when I am in trouble,
They say, "What could you do?"
But I know, I know,
That I have done my best,
And when I am in trouble,
I know, I know,
That I have done my best.

Then come, my little comforter,
And clasp upon my knee,
And make the world seem possible
When things go wrong with me.
For you're the wisdom far beyond
The reach of any age,
The loving, tender hope of trust,
That best can strengthen age.
Say, "Papa, dear,
Now don't you fear;
Before to-morrow night
The come you dread
Will all have fled,
And everything be right."
—Harper's Weekly.

The Fireside.

WHAT JOSIE HEARD.

Josie stood in the museum with her ray chin
half buried in her soft collar, and her small
hands hidden in her pretty grey suit, while her
bright eyes watched the graceful motions of some
small furry animals in the cage before her. There
was a family of six; the two old ones like small
rabbits, and the four young ones like small
rats. Josie would never have compared them to
anything so ugly as rats, for she thought they were
the prettiest creatures she had ever seen.
They had large, beautiful black eyes, and great
round ears, nearly as long as their heads. Their
tails were long and bushy, but they did not carry
them over their backs like a plume, as squirrels do.
They had dainty little fore-paws, very much shorter
than the hind ones, and they sat up, kangaroo-
fashion, and held their food in their hands. The
loveliest thing about them was their fur, which was
long and thick, and almost as fine as velvet, and of
a delicate ashy grey. Josie stood patiently waiting
for Aunt Alice to tell her about them, and as she
pressed closer to the cage one of the pretty creatures
rubbed his nose against her muff.

"Why, they're just exactly like my muff and my
clock trimmings," exclaimed Josie. "They must be
chinchillas. Oh! I wish Aunt Alice would hurry;
or I wish you could talk, you dear, cunning little
things, and tell me all about yourselves."

The little chinchilla sat up on his hind legs, looking
very wise, and Josie heard a soft voice say:
"I am almost afraid to talk to you, little girl.
You have on the fur of about twenty-five of our
enemies. When we are at home we live in Chili;
I suppose you know where that is. We do not live
in cages there, but in burrows underground, and
great sport we have running round on moonlight
nights, and hunting for the sweet roots that we
love. The natives kill us, and sell our skins to the
people of this country, and I can tell you that it
takes a great many to amount to much, for the very
longest of us is only nine inches; and I've heard it
said they catch only one every year. We are so
gentle that we only defend ourselves by being in the
hand, but in spite of that no one ever attempted to
make pets of us until within a few years. My wife
and I had a very hard journey here. We went on
a sailing vessel to England, and from there to New
York, in the care of a sailor named Bob. We
lived in his chest and slept in a big fur bag. These
children that you were born on the ship. They
are about six weeks' old."

Just then Aunt Alice laid her hand on Josie's
shoulder.

"Oh, auntie," said Josie, "are you really there?
I was trying to pretend it was the chinchilla talk-
ing. But auntie's lovely, and isn't it too bad to
kill such pretty little creatures to get their fur? I
like my muff and my trimmings ever so much, but
I do wish chinchillas were great horrid creatures
like buffaloes or bears."

"You might have had emine," said Aunt Alice,
"that is very pretty fur."

"Yes," said a voice from a case near by, "you
might have had me. My fur is as costly as chin-
chilla's, if you get the real article and not a cheap
imitation." Josie looked at the animal and said, "Oh,
you are an emine, are you? Why, you are smaller
than the chinchilla, and you look just like a weasel,
only you are white."

"Why shouldn't I look like a weasel? The
weasel is my first cousin, or I am his—I am not
sure which way it is. I suppose you have only seen
him with his summer dress on, but in winter his
changes to a white one, like mine."

"Oh, and do you live in Chili, too?"

"Not exactly, though you might call it chilly
where the thermometer goes down to thirty degrees
below zero on midnights, and the ground freezes
so hard I should have to very poorly if I depended
on roots like my little neighbor in grey. My home
is in Russia and Siberia; and I can tell you what
is the best living, birds and mice and fowls of all
sorts."

"I don't like that at all, and you look very cruel
with your sharp white teeth and shining little eyes."
"That is because I am stuffed. They cannot
keep me unless they stuff me, for I cannot be tamed
like that silly chinchilla, and I can only through the
smallest crack. You can see I am only about ten

inches long, so it takes a great many skins to amount
to anything, but people will buy them at any price.
Why, there used to be a law in England, that only
the royal family might wear emine, and they have
a law still in Austria. So you see it is royal fur."

"Royal fur!" exclaimed a beautiful creature
about twice the size of the emine. "Was there
ever such conceit! If you talk of royalty, look at
me. I am a sable."

"Why," said Josie, "you are not very black;
only a sort of dark, dark brown; not nearly so
black as auntie's fur trimming. I thought people
said sable when they meant black as midnight."

"They ought not to say so. No sable was ever
very black unless I tell you a secret—the Siberian
squirrel told me, and he hid it from his friend
very skilfully. People have found out how to dye fur
very skilfully. Your auntie's trimming is only
beaver, colored black and with the long hairs pulled
out. I suppose she could not afford sable, for
small as I am, my skin sells from twenty-five to
fifty dollars before it is dressed, and sometimes a
handsome crown sable brings as much as two hun-
dred dollars. Just touch my fur; the hair is so
soft in all directions; and then I can tell you it
is no easy matter to hunt me among the frozen
regions of Russia."

"So you live in Russia as well as the emine;
and now I think of it, you look like him. Are you
cousins, too?"

"We are cousins, I suppose, and I love him very
much; so much that I—just him."

"Oh, you horrid thing," said Josie, and she
walked very soberly out of the museum.

"After all," she said, "I'd rather have my pretty
grey chinchilla."—Emily Huntington Miller, in
Christian Weekly.

THE SMALL BOYS FIRST SMOKE.

I never shall forget the sight of that boy.
Somehow or other he had picked up the idea that
it was a manly thing to smoke.

The older boys thought it was manly. They
smoked in the streets as they came to school, and
as they went home. The small boy felt very small
as he saw them doing such a manly thing and re-
flected that he had never learned how to do it.

Somebody had told him that the first smoke would
make him dreadful sick. He asked the biggest
boys about this, and they told him it was even so.
But they advised him to try it even if it did make
him sick for a day or two, for they had all been
sick with it, and had got well again. The idea of
being sick was not a pleasant one to the small boy,
but he thought he would risk it, for the prospect
of soon getting well again seemed pleasant enough
to make up for it. So, the small boy got two large
cigars. Exactly how and where he got them he
never knew, but I think some of the older boys
gave them to him. At all events he felt very
proud when he got them, and marched off in a
happy frame of mind because he was now going to
be as big as anybody else, and quite as much of a
man.

This happened nearly forty years ago, which to
some of my young readers may seem a long while;
yet the picture of that small boy is photographed on
my mind so clearly that it cannot be rubbed
out. I saw him after he had enjoyed his smoke
on the sly, and unbeknown to his parents. The
enjoyment was all over, and it was time for the
miserable to come along. The misery had come in
full force, and had taken possession of the whole
boy. The poor fellow was crouching in the shelter
of a large cellar door, looking as if he wanted to
escape from the sight of every other human being.
At best he was not a handsome lad. He had short
and bristly red hair, a few freckles, a pug nose,
and one squinting eye. His face was covered with
freckles, and his mouth was not of a pleasant
shape. Now that he was suffering from the effects
of the tobacco, every feature showed evidence of
pain, and his whole expression was one of most
horrible ugliness. He sat doubled up like a
jack-knife in a position of great discomfort. His
bright eyes watched the graceful motions of some
small furry animals in the cage before her. There
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MINNIE LEE AND HER KITTEN.

Travelling from Attica to Rochester in New York,
some years since, I changed cars at Avon. A
moment after entering the car a lady and a little
girl came in and took the seat directly in front of
me. The child's face was radiant with joy, as she
frequently raised the cover of a little basket on her
lap, and looked curiously into it. Her sweet
little face had no wrinkles of care or unrest. As I
contemplated it, memories of childhood joys and
days made me feel like a child again. My own
curiosity was excited by her own constant looking
and I leaned forward to ascertain the cause of
such happiness. The little girl, with the quick
intuition of childhood, raised the cover of her basket
as I supposed to view a kitten. I said, "That is
a beautiful kitten; what is its name?" "Daisy,"
she was quick reply. "I wish you would give me
Daisy," I said gently. "Oh! no, sir; I can't give
you Daisy—I love Daisy so much." "But, Minnie,
I want Daisy, and I will give you a dollar for her."
Oh! no, sir; I can't do that." "You love Daisy
very much, Minnie?" "Yes, sir, I guess I do."
"Well, then, you can get your basket almost full
of candy for a dollar." "Oh, sir, I love Daisy
more than I do money or candy."

She was so simple and happy I was confident she
had been taught, in the Sunday-school, and at home,
to love the Sabbath. I then asked her if she went
to Sunday-school. "Yes, sir, I go to Sunday-school
every Sunday."

"I don't like that at all, and you look very cruel
with your sharp white teeth and shining little eyes."
"That is because I am stuffed. They cannot
keep me unless they stuff me, for I cannot be tamed
like that silly chinchilla, and I can only through the
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Somebody had told him that the first smoke would
make him dreadful sick. He asked the biggest
boys about this, and they told him it was even so.
But they advised him to try it even if it did make
him sick for a day or two, for they had all been
sick with it, and had got well again. The idea of
being sick was not a pleasant one to the small boy,
but he thought he would risk it, for the prospect
of soon getting well again seemed pleasant enough
to make up for it. So, the small boy got two large
cigars. Exactly how and where he got them he
never knew, but I think some of the older boys
gave them to him. At all events he felt very
proud when he got them, and marched off in a
happy frame of mind because he was now going to
be as big as anybody else, and quite as much of a
man.

This happened nearly forty years ago, which to
some of my young readers may seem a long while;
yet the picture of that small boy is photographed on
my mind so clearly that it cannot be rubbed
out. I saw him after he had enjoyed his smoke
on the sly, and unbeknown to his parents. The
enjoyment was all over, and it was time for the
miserable to come along. The misery had come in
full force, and had taken possession of the whole
boy. The poor fellow was crouching in the shelter
of a large cellar door, looking as if he wanted to
escape from the sight of every other human being.
At best he was not a handsome lad. He had short
and bristly red hair, a few freckles, a pug nose,
and one squinting eye. His face was covered with
freckles, and his mouth was not of a pleasant
shape. Now that he was suffering from the effects
of the tobacco, every feature showed evidence of
pain, and his whole expression was one of most
horrible ugliness. He sat doubled up like a
jack-knife in a position of great discomfort. His
bright eyes watched the graceful motions of some
small furry animals in the cage before her. There
was a family of six; the two old ones like small
rabbits, and the four young ones like small
rats. Josie would never have compared them to
anything so ugly as rats, for she thought they were
the prettiest creatures she had ever seen.

They had large, beautiful black eyes, and great
round ears, nearly as long as their heads. Their
tails were long and bushy, but they did not carry
them over their backs like a plume, as squirrels do.
They had dainty little fore-paws, very much shorter
than the hind ones, and they sat up, kangaroo-
fashion, and held their food in their hands. The
loveliest thing about them was their fur, which was
long and thick, and almost as fine as velvet, and of
a delicate ashy grey. Josie stood patiently waiting
for Aunt Alice to tell her about them, and as she
pressed closer to the cage one of the pretty creatures
rubbed his nose against her muff.

"Why, they're just exactly like my muff and my
clock trimmings," exclaimed Josie. "They must be
chinchillas. Oh! I wish Aunt Alice would hurry;
or I wish you could talk, you dear, cunning little
things, and tell me all about yourselves."

The little chinchilla sat up on his hind legs, looking
very wise, and Josie heard a soft voice say:
"I am almost afraid to talk to you, little girl.
You have on the fur of about twenty-five of our
enemies. When we are at home we live in Chili;
I suppose you know where that is. We do not live
in cages there, but in burrows underground, and
great sport we have running round on moonlight
nights, and hunting for the sweet roots that we
love. The natives kill us, and sell our skins to the
people of this country, and I can tell you that it
takes a great many to amount to much, for the very
longest of us is only nine inches; and I've heard it
said they catch only one every year. We are so
gentle that we only defend ourselves by being in the
hand, but in spite of that no one ever attempted to
make pets of us until within a few years. My wife
and I had a very hard journey here. We