

Our Boys and Girls.

THE OLD FIREPLACE.

The blessed old fireplace! how bright it appears!

As back to my boyhood I gaze,
O'er the desolate waste of the vanishing years

From the gloom of these lone latter days;

Its lips are as ruddy, its heart is as warm

To my fancy tonight as of yore,
When we cuddled around it and smiled at the storm,

As it showed its white teeth at the door.

I remember the apple that wooed the red flame,

Till the blood bubbled out of its cheek,

And the passionate pop-corn that smothered its shame

Till its heart split apart with a shriek;

I remember the Greeks and Trojans who fought

In their shadowy shapes on the wall,
And the yarn in thick tangles my fingers held taut,

While mother was winding the ball.

I remember the cat that lay cosy and curled

By the jam where the flames flickered high,

And the sparkles—the fireflies of winter—that whirled

Up the flue as the wind whistled by;

I remember the steam from the kettle that breathed

As soft as the flight of a soul,
The long handle skillet that spluttered and seethed

With the batter that burdened its bowl.

But the fire has died on the old cabin hearth,

The wind clatters loud through the pane,

And the dwellers they've flown to the end of the earth,

And will gaze on it never again;

A forget-me-not grows in the mouldering wall,

The last, as it were, of its race,

And the shadows of night settled down like a pall

On the stones of the old fireplace.

—Selected.

MISS BARBARA'S RASPBERRIES.

"I do hope that boy over at the next house won't be troublesome," Miss Barbara murmured, as she and Miss Julia carefully carried in the parlor lamp. "I just can't have him running out and in here half a dozen times a day tracking in dirt."

Miss Julia's word and tone were assuring: "If we don't take any notice of him whatever, I don't believe he'll trouble us."

So Robbie watched and waited in vain for an opportunity to make the acquaintance of his new neighbors.

When the goods were unloaded, the truckman went away with his span of white horses and big farm wagon. Miss Barbara and Miss Julia went into the house and shut the door, and the boy who had been standing on the steps of the next house went in to talk with his mother.

"They don't look half so nice as Mrs. Royce," he told her.

"But you cannot always tell how good and kind a woman is by her looks," his mother counseled.

"Who do you suppose will have the raspberries now?" Robbie asked, after a pause.

"I think the new neighbors will want the berries themselves," his mother replied.

Down on the bank at the back of the house, where Mrs. Royce had lived, was a thrifty black raspberry bush; and, as Mr. and Mrs. Royce did not care for the berries, Mrs. Royce had given Robbie leave to pick them whenever he liked, which was a privilege that he greatly appreciated.

Brother Roger and papa were talking about Godfrey de Bouillon, about whom Roger had been reading, and Robbie's attention was attracted; for he always liked to hear about great men. How grand the Crusaders must have looked marching along, shouting their war-cry, "It is God's will," each man with a red cross embroidered on the right shoulder! Robbie and mamma talked about Godfrey de Bouillon when papa and Roger had gone down town. Robbie asked a good many questions about the great Crusader who was willing to forgive an injury to himself if good might come thereby.

"I think it's almost as hard to forgive people when they treat you badly as it is to fight battles," Robbie said, thoughtfully.

Robbie spent that morning working in his flower-beds at the back of the house where Mrs. Royce had lived, where flowers grew luxuriantly. Mrs. Royce gave Robbie a little set of gardener's tools, divided her packages of flower seeds with him, and taught him how to plant the seeds the first year that she lived in the cottage; and since that time he had been an enthusiastic gardener. In the afternoon he thought he would go down on the bank just to see if the raspberries were ready to be picked. As Robbie stood looking at them, he wondered if the new neighbors had noticed that the berries needed picking. Then he picked one, and ate it; it was delicious. He picked another; and ate that, and then another; and then—then some dreadful cold thing came dashing with such force as almost to knock him down. He screamed, and turned to meet Miss Barbara, with an empty water pail in her hand.

"Why, are you here?" Miss Barbara asked in well-feigned surprise. "You better keep right away from this raspberry bush, for I'm going to take the best of care of it. I presume I shall wet it every day this warm weather, and you'll be liable to get wet again if you're over here."

Robbie did not wait to hear more. He ran as though for his life for home. When he reached his mother's arms, he cried as he had not cried for a long time, and between his sobs his mother could distinguish these words: "I hate the stingy old thing! Yes, I do!"

Miss Julia met Miss Barbara as she came in at the back door.

"What did he say? I saw you give him a good wetting."

"He didn't say anything; but he made tracks for home, and I think he'll stay there now."

"But don't you suppose his folks will be dreadfully put out about it?" Miss Julia asked, apprehensively.

"If they keep on their land, I shan't trouble them; but just as long as we pay our rent here, we're going to have what belongs to us, and we're not going to be troubled by boys either," Miss Barbara replied in a very decided tone.

Somewhat later the two ladies were greatly surprised to see the "troublesome boy" coming up the front walk.

"What on earth can he want now?" Miss Barbara ejaculated.

There was a timid knock at the door, and Miss Barbara answered the summons. There were still traces of tears on Robbie's face, but he spoke bravely:

"I didn't pick but just three of your berries, but of course I hadn't any right to touch one. Mrs. Royce didn't care for black raspberries, and she always gave them to me, so I guess I was so used to picking them I didn't think; but I won't never do so again. I thought you must be real busy, seeing you've just moved in; and won't you please let me pick the rest of them for you to make up for what I ate? I won't eat one single one of them," he added impressively.

Miss Barbara stared in astonishment. "We are pretty busy, but I guess we can find time to pick them ourselves," she said, hesitatingly.

"But I want to make it right, and I can't think of any other way; and I wish you'd let me do it," Robbie pleaded.

And Miss Barbara surprised herself and her sister by saying, "Well, if you want to so bad, you may."

Then she brought a bright tin dish from her pantry for Robbie to pick the berries in. After Robbie left the house, the sisters looked wonderingly at each other. Then Miss Julia broke the silence:

"He's a perfect little gentleman! But I should not think he would have dared to come over here again. Don't you suppose he hated to?"

"I don't believe he enjoyed it very much," Miss Barbara said, meditatively.

O Miss Barbara, you never dreamed how hard it was to come!

When Robbie came in, the dish was heaping full of berries. "I picked every one that was ripe," he said, smilingly.

"I think you must have," Miss Barbara replied. "I want you to take some of them home, for you have more than paid for the few you ate."

"Oh, I don't want to, indeed I don't!" Robbie protested, earnestly.

Miss Barbara could see that he meant what he said, so she forbore to urge the matter; but, as Robbie was about to go home, she said, apologetically—and it was a very unusual thing for Miss Barbara to apologize—"I guess you're a real good boy after all, and I'm afraid I was too hard on you; but I know we shall be friends hereafter."

"Here comes a conqueror, I am sure," mamma said, with one of her brightest smiles, as she opened the door for Robbie when he returned.

"Yes, I conquered. It was awful hard to do, almost as hard as some of Godfrey de Bouillon's battles, I guess; but I'm so glad I did it, for she says we're going to be friends now."—*Jessie L. Britton, in Presbyterian Banner.*

WHY JOHNNIE WEPT.

Johnnie and Jennie were having a tea-party.

"You can pour out the tea, Jennie," said Johnnie, graciously.

"Well," said Jennie, greatly pleased.

"And I will help at the cake," went on Johnnie.

"We-ell," repeated Jennie, doubtfully.

So Jennie poured out the tea, and Johnnie cut up the cake. Mother had given them a large piece, which John-



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nie cut into five smaller pieces, all of about the same size. He helped Jennie to one piece, and began to eat another himself. Jennie poured out the tea, and the feast went merrily on. Presently arose a discussion; and then came a prolonged wail from Johnnie.

"What is the matter?" asked mother. "Jennie's greedy, and selfish, too!" cried Johnnie. "We each had two pieces of cake and there was only one left, and Jennie took—she took it all."

Mother looked perplexed. "That does seem rather selfish of Jennie!"

"Yes, it was!" Johnnie wept; "cause I cut the cake that way, so's I could have the extra piece myself!"—*Selected.*

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