Our Boys and Girls.

WHEN MOTHER WENT AWAY.

O, very many weeks ago,
  There was a dreadful day;
The very worst I ever knew,
  For mother went away.
And we all promised to be good,
And mind Aunt Jane as children should.

But baby chewed th Noah's ark,
  Which made him very ill;
And Kenneth opened father's ink—
  The kind that's sure to spill;
And Ted fell down and bumped his head
So very hard, he went to bed.

Then nobody at all was left
  To play, but only me.
And so I thought I'd live a while
  Up in the apple tree.
But then I tore my sailor dress
In fourteen places, more or less.

And all of us just cried a peck
  Of tears, or maybe more,
Until the silk of mother's skirts
  Came swishing in the door.
I think she'll never go again—
At least she said she wouldn't—then.

—*Carolyn S. Bailey.*

* * *

HOW HAROLD FOUND A HOME.

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

It was a "red-letter" day in Harold's life when he was told that he was to have an outing—two weeks in the country. Whether he was Harold Brown or Harold Jones or Harold Smith or Harold something else I do not know. He was known in the slums simply as Harold. He had been an orphan as long back as he could remember. His home—if the wretched back room in which he lived could be thus designated—was in the most dismal part of the slums. He shared it with an old rag collector, who had no love for him, but was glad to give him bed and board for his assistance. Harold's bed was a bundle of rags (as was his employer's), and his board—for the greater part—scraps. "Old Jake," the rag collector, made life lively for Harold in one respect, cursing at him and calling him vile names, and—even at times using a lash. Could you have seen the boy's emaciated and bruised body you would have wept. Could you have known of the sorrow and longing in his heart it would have made your's ache. But at last there came a break in the dark clouds over Harold's head. He had been asked to go to the country. The old rag collector would not consent to Harold's going, but as he had no claim on the child, the latter was taken from him. For the first time in his remembrance he was thoroughly cleansed and neatly dressed. It was noon when he, in company with nine other children and a caretaker, left the city in a trolley car. At three they reached the terminus of the road, where there were carriages in waiting.

A few days before Harold was asked to go to the country an old couple sat on the porch of a small house talking earnestly. They had outlived their children and found life lonely. The old man was rheumatic and often really needed young hands to help him with the chores.

"Samuel," said his wife, "the Hunts are going to take two fresh air children—did you know it?"

"Yes, 'Liza, Tom Hunt told me about it today, and there are two going to Silas Greer's, two girls, Tom said. I wish we could take a boy," wistfully.

"Do you really mean it, Samuel?" her face lighting up, "Would you like to take a boy?"

The old man laughed softly.

"I'd like to have a boy around for a week or two just to see how it would seem, and I'd like to give that boy a good time. I'd like some poor little homeless chap—an orphan—who doesn't know what a good time means."

His face lighted up for a moment and then the light faded.

"But it won't do," he added, "it won't do."

"What won't do?" the old lady asked.

"It won't do to take a boy—it would make too much extra work for you—cooking and so on."

"I'd like the extra work," was the answer, "I'd like to cook for a hungry boy."

Her face glowed at the thought. His caught the glow.

"Would you?" he said, "then let the boy come."

And the boy came—it was Harold. Samuel Smith sent the message through the agency of Tom Hunt.

"Ask for a boy who has never had a good time," was the message.

Perhaps there had never been a more surprised boy than Harold was when the Swifts welcomed him. He had not looked for a welcome, but when the old man took his hands in a gentle but close clasp and the old woman kissed his cheek and smiled upon him, a new world dawned. A lump come into his throat and choked him so that he could not find his voice, but when the lump disappeared joy was born. The Swifts were not rich, but they were in "comfortable circumstances," to use an old-fashioned phrase. They owned the small cottage in which they had lived all their married lives and the few acres of good land around it. They always had the best of food. Best of all they were truly good and it was characteristic of them both to be ever ready and willing to lend a hand to anyone in trouble. The moment they looked into the face of their small guest they knew that life had been hard to him. Had a guest come to them from the upper walks of life he would not—in fact he could not—have received better treatment nor a warmer welcome than Harold did. The boy's heart went out to them in the first love he had ever felt. They saw it in his eyes and heard it in his voice and they felt happier than they had felt for years. A small, pleasant room next to theirs was Harold's. When the boy was stretched out in the soft bed it seemed that the old world had passed away. The simple, sweet old home was—to him—the most beautiful place in all the beautiful new world into which he had come. It could not have seemed so beautiful had it not come after a life in the slums. The boy's heart was full of joy and gratitude. After the restful sleep in the peaceful room came the call to breakfast. On the bed of rags there had been a kick to awaken him. Now as he dressed he heard a bird sing outside the window and he felt the sweet breath of new mown hay as the soft wind touched his pale cheeks.

And, oh that morning greeting in the cozy kitchen when the breakfast table was laid! He would never forget it—never. Then there was the breakfast—bacon and newly-laid eggs, toast and coffee with real cream. In all his poor little dreary life Harold had never—until the night before—sat down to a table to eat.

The two weeks seemed to have wings it was morning—blessed morning and then it was night. How to describe the time between night and morning I do not know except to say that it was all joy—pure joy. If the boy had been the Swifts' own grandson, he could not have pleased them better. After the first morning he was never called. He awakened when he heard the old folks stirring. By the time Mr. Swift was dressed, he was with him feeding the chickens and pigs and hunting for fresh eggs in the barn. Before the first week ended the old folks felt as if years had rolled off their shoulders. The young lad whom they were helping, was helping them. He was growing stronger every day and more necessary to them. His great love for his new friends made him long to help them in any way that he could. Old Mrs. Swift said he was the "handiest boy" she had ever known. At the breakfast table one morning old Mr. Swift remarked:

"It doesn't seem as if it was two weeks since you came here, Harold, but it is."

The young face that had become so dear to the old folks, clouded.

"Oh," the boy cried out, "Oh! It's the day to go—isn't it?" and the bright world suddenly seemed to darken.

"To go where?" questioned Mr. Swift.

"Back—to—the—slums."

"It is time for us to tell you that we love you and want you to stay with us all the time," "if you *could* call us Grandpa and Grandma we'd like it."

Harold could not speak, but in his loving big brown eyes there was an expression that made them strangely beautiful. His lips quivered and his eyes filled with tears. Presently he arose from the table and—throwing his arms around first, Mrs. Swift's neck—then Mr. Swift's, he cried out, "Grandma! Grandpa."

After that life grew still more beautiful in that humble home. The lovely summer passed away. There were no bird songs now, no green grass or sweet flowers, but the joy was there to stay. In November "Grandpa" had a severe rheumatic attack, but he did not seem to mind it much.

"For," said he, smiling, "I have a pair of hands that I call *blessed* hands—they do so much for us old folks."

It was a "picture beautiful" to see, Harold doing the chores during these cold days. He fed the chickens and pigs, cut up turnips for the cow, cared for the turkeys that Grandma was fattening for Thanksgiving and looked after things generally as if he were the man-of-the-house. As for Grandma, he helped her in various ways, looked out for the wood and water, peeled potatoes and apples.

Over and over he told himself joyfully. "It's home—home—my home and them. Dear old grandma and grandpa."

Chris. Work.

* * *

HALF AN APPLE.

A TRUE STORY.

One cold winter morning, about thirty years ago, a number of girls and boys were gathered around the stove in a school room. They talked and laughed among themselves, paying little heed to a new scholar who stood apart from the rest. Now and then they cast side glances in her direction, or turned to stare rudely; but nobody spoke to her.

The little girl had never been to school before, and she began to feel shy and homesick. She wished she could run home to mother, and have a good cry in her arms. One little tear-drop trembled in her eye, and seemed ready to fall; but it never did for then something happened.

Suddenly the other door flew open, and a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl rushed in. She brought plenty of the clear, frosty air with her, and she imparted a cheer to the school room that it had not had before. She walked up to the stove quite as if she were at home, and, after saying good morning to everybody, her eyes fell upon the new scholar.

"Good morning!" she said, sweetly, across the stove pipe.

The little girl on the other side brightened up at once, though she answered somewhat timidly.

"Cold is it not?" the newcomer went on, pulling off her mittens and holding her red hands over the stove. Then she sent one of the plump hands down to the depths of her pocket, and when it came out it held a fine red apple. Wtih her strong fingers she split it in two, and, with a smile, she passed half of it to the new scholar.

"Do you like apples?" she said.

The little girl did like apples very much, and she thought none had ever tasted half so nice as this, it was so juicy and crisp and tart.

"My name is Libby," said the owner of the bright eyes; "What is your's?"

"My name is Hetty," replied the other little girl.

"Well," said Libby, "do you want to sit with me? There is a vacant seat beside mine, and I know the teacher will let you."

Hetty thought she would like that plan very much, so the two little girls went off to find Libby's seat, where they chatted happily till the bell rang.

"Where is Hetty Rowe?" asked the teacher; and then, before anybody had

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