Our Boys and Girls.

HIS FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL.

She lost her little boy to-day;
Her eyes were moist and sweet
And tender, when he went away
To hurry down the street.
She stood there for the longest while
And watched and watched him; then
She said—and tried to force a smile—
"He'll not come back again."

Inside the house, her tears would come,
She sank into a chair
And sobbed above the battered drum
And trumpet lying there.
The sunshine stole into the place—
It only made her sad
With thinking of the pretty grace
His baby tresses had.

She minded all his little ways;
She went to see his crib
Up in the attic; then to gaze
At platter, spoon, and bib,
And all the trinkets he had thought
So fair to look upon—
Each one of them this murmur brought:
"My little boy has gone."

She wandered through the house all day,
To come on things he'd left,
And O, she missed his romping play
And felt herself bereft!
When he came home, with shining eyes,
To tell of school's delight,
She kissed and held him motherwise
With something of affright.

This is the pain in mothers' hearts
When school days have begun;
Each knows the little boy departs
And baby days are done;
Each mother fain would close her ears
And hush the calling bell
For, somehow, in its tone she hears
The sounding of a knell.

—*Chicago Tribune.*

JIMMIE'S ACCOUNT.

The dead twigs of the bare trees snapped and whirled hither and thither in the cold, sleety wind. Some of the twigs struck Jimmie in the face as he ran toward home, carrying his school books. He had found that the stinging cold did not pinch his feet so badly if he ran fast. Poor feet! A toe peeped out here and there through the rents in his old shoes.

Though Jimmie's feet were aching, his heart was full of joy, for he had in his pocket the last dime needed to pay for a new pair of shoes. Mr. Boulder had kept the shoes for him for two months now, waiting until Jimmie could make up the full amount, one dollar and a half. He had paid all but twenty-five cents, and the dime in his pocket, added to the fifteen cents hidden at home, would settle his bill and give him the shoes.

Jimmie was the son of the drunkard, Tom Hillbrecht. Although but twelve years old, this neglected boy was able to earn many a dime, which he sadly needed. His father often took his money away from him, and passed it over to Mr. Saybright, the saloon-keeper. Jimmie had learned that the only way to save money enough for his shoes was to hide some of his earnings. He did not leave his money in the house any length of time, for his home was a small, shabby place, and his father always succeeded in finding the hidden money.

When Jimmie reached the door of his home this cold wintry day, he did not burst into the house with a shout as most boys would have done; he was too cautious for that. He opened the door noiselessly and looked at his mother inquiringly. She seemed to know what he meant, for she shook her head and smiled at him. Then he eagerly cried:

"I have enough money to pay for my shoes, mamma! Can't I go right over and get them before father comes home?"

"Not to-night, Jimmie. The last stick of wood is in the stove and you must gather some more at once."

Jimmie nevr disobeyed his mother. After he had gone up the rickety stairs to his corner overhead, and hid away his precious dime, he got his cart and hurried off to the woodyard to gather up some refuse wood which the owner had kindly given him.

He had not been gone long when Mr. Hillbrecht came home. For once sober. He had no money to buy drink that day, and the bartender would not trust him. He had been a kind husband and father before the drink habit mastered him, and his wife still clung to him, never giving up hope.

He glanced at the table spread for the evening meal, and saw how meagre was the supply of food. Then a thought came to him, and he stumbled up the stairs to the loft overhead, to hunt for his long-neglected rifle. He used to be a good shot; perhaps even now he could win the turkey in the shooting match next day. He took down the rifle, dusted it, and looked around for something with which to clean it. A wad of old rags was stuffed behind a rafter. He pulled it out, and down rolled something metallic on the floor. He stopped and picked up a dime. His eyes glittered. He could get his usual glass, and with the thought he started toward the stairway. But stop! There might be more money, so he shook out the rags, and there fell from them a paper wad. He undid it, and found another dime and a nickle. As he thrust them into his pocket, he noticed writing in figures on the paper. This is what he saw:

Oct. 2.—Paid Mister Boulder a dime. Earned it carrying water for Mrs. Green. O how my back aked.

Oct. 15.— Paid Mister Boulder 15 cents. Earned a quarter but had to give father ten cents for likker.

Oct. 25.—Paid 10 cents more on my shoes.

Nov. 2.—Got up at three and raked leaves for Squire Green. Got 25 cents. He's going to pay Mister Boulder so father won't get it for likker.

Nov. 9.—Sold the bread bord I made at shoyd. Mother said she could get along without it as wel as she had done. Got fifty cents and paid to Mister Boulder.

Nov. 20.—Tom Saybright twitted me to-day of being a drunkard's son. My! wasn't I mad! "Who made him a drunkard?" I sang out. Tom laffed and said something more hateful still about the frills on my shoes. O dear—shall I ever get new ones? Paid in 15 cents to-day. Only 25 more to pay.

Nov. 23.—Earned 15 cents. I wonder if I had some real heavy stockins if I couldent get along with these shoes. Mother needs so many things before snow comes. Couldent see Mister Boulder to-night. Father dident ask for enny money. Seems to have enough and is drinking awful. Mother cries a lot.

A flush of shame crept over Mr. Hillbrecht's face as he read by the fading light. He began to revive the past years and to see to what depths he had fallen. He did not hear Jimmie coming up the stairs, and was only aroused by his little son's cry of dismay as he saw that his father had found his money.

"Don't take it from me, father!" he begged piteously.

The poor drunkard gazed at the handsome boy with his threadbare garments and tattered shoes, and then thought of the pampered son of the saloonkeeper. What made the difference? He knew, and he vowed that Jimmie should have a fair chance with other boys.

Taking Jimmie'es hand he said, "Come with me." Jimmie did not dare disobey, but as they left the house and went toward the business part of town, his little heart throbbed with fear and pain, for he felt that his father was going to the saloon to spend the hard-earned money. His father had never before taken him to the saloon, and as they stood in the doorway Jimmie held back, but the father drew him in and up to the counter.

"I've come to tell you that this is the last time I'll ever cross this threshold," said Mr. Hillbrecht to the astonished saloonkeeper. "I'm going to give my boy a fair chance with yours. It's my money and the money of such fools as these," he added, as he looked round at the loafers who had been his companions, "that keeps your family in such fine style, and gives them a chance to sneer at our ragged children. You'll never get another cent from me."

Then he stalked out of the saloon, still holding Jimmie by the hand; he hastened home; father, mother and children rejoiced together. Traps and snares were laid for him, but he stood true to his vows and he became a good husband, a loving father, a true Christian and a law-abiding citizen.

A LONESOME BOY.

The boy sat cuddled so close to the woman in grey that everybody felt sure he belonged to her; so when he unconsciously dug his muddy shoes into the broadcloth skirt of his left-hand neighbor, she leaned over and said: "Pardon me, madam, will you kindly make your little boy square himself around? He is soiling my skirt with his muddy shoes."

The woman in grey blushed a little and nudged the boy away.

"My boy?" she said. "My goodness, he isn't mine."

The boy squirmed uneasily. He was such a little fellow that he could not touch his feet to the floor, so he stuck them out straight in front of him like pegs to hang things on, and looked at them deprecatingly.

"I am sorry I got your dress dirty," he said to the woman on his left. "I hope it will brush off."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," she said. Then, as his eyes were still fastened upon hers, she added: "Are you going up town alone?"

"Yes, ma'am," he said. "I always go alone. There isn't anybody to go with me. Father is dead and mother is dead. I live with Aunt Clara in Brooklyn, but she says Aunt Anna ought to help to do something for me, so once or twice a week, when she gets tired and wants to go to some place to get rested up, she sends me over to stay with Aunt Anna. I am going up there now. Sometimes I don't find Aunt Anna at home, but I hope she will be at home to-day, because it looks as if it was going to rain, and I don't like to hang around in the street in the rain."

The woman felt something uncomfortable in her throat, and she said: "You are a very little boy to be knocked about in this way," rather unsteadily.

"Oh, I don't mind that," he said. "I never get lost. But I get lonesome sometimes on the long trips, and when I see anybody that I think I would like to belong to, I scrooge up close to her so I can make believe that I really do belong to her. This morning I was playing that I belonged to that lady on the other side of me, and I forgot all about my feet. That is why I got your dress dirty."

The woman put her arms around the tiny chap and "scrooged" his up so close that she hurt him, and every other woman who had heard his artless confidence looked as if she would not only let him wipe his shoes on her best gown, but would rather he did it than not.—*New York Times.*

SNAKES' EYES.

Snakes may almost be said to have glass eyes, inasmuch as their eyes never close. They are without lids, and each is covered with a transparent scale, much resembling glass. When the reptile casts its outer skin the eye scales come off with the rest of the transparent envelope out of which the snake slips. His glassy eye scale is so tough that it effectually protects the true eye from the twigs, sharp grass and other obstructions which the snake encounters in its travels, yet it is transparent enough to allow the most perfect vision. Thus, if the snake has not a glass eye, it may at any rate be said to wear eyeglasses.

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