

YOUNG FOLKS.

A Bedtime Story.

The shadows were creeping in the corners, the fire was blazing on the hearth, the kettle singing and bubbling for Honora to make tea. Papa's train was coming across the meadow; Jack was wiping the frost from his skates and mamma was saying to baby what a cold night it would be when Little Brown Bess put on her red cloak and mittens and slipped out of the door. She had a tiny basket on her arm in which were some kernels of corn and a piece of bread. Where was Little Brown Bess going just at nightfall, alone?

The two kittens amused themselves by jumping in and out of the boats, running around the float and chasing each other's tails in a mild scramble up and down the ladder that led to the water. The little boys and girls who went out in the boats gave funny shrieks as the boats tipped over when they stepped into them. But Punch and Judy jumped over the seats and around the sides, and from boat to boat quite easily, and were never frightened.

"Do they like fish?" asked Millie one day. "We'll bring them home some." "That's just what they do like," answered the man who kept boats. "But you needn't go away from the float to get the kind that suits them." "How?" inquired Millie. "I'll show you," said the man. So he went and got a big crab net. Oh, you must know what a crab net is! Into it he threw a few bits of meat and lowered the whole cautiously into the water.

"They don't stay plump, do they?" exclaimed Millie, in despair. "But never mind! It's fun to catch the fish for 'em!" The kittens seemed to enjoy it, too. As for the fish, nobody asked their opinion. Sacred Serpent, Egypt. A general belief in the divine character and healing powers of the sacred serpent is to be met with all over Egypt. Even the myths which the old Egyptians associated with the snake are still prevalent. Egyptians of all classes still believe that when a serpent grows old, wings grow out of its body, and that there are serpents which kill by darting flames in the victim's face. How old such beliefs are in this country need not be repeated to those who have seen the pictures in the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes. The seraf, or "flying serpent," and the snake from whose mouth flames issue are among the commonest of the figures painted on their walls.

Wh at is an Accident? To the non-legal mind the term "accident" would appear to be easily defined, but the late Lord Chief Justice Cockburn thought not, and on several occasions in the courts of law it has been decided that an injury is not an accident, but that it is an accident, if it is covered by the policy. The relatives of a man who, while bathing in shallow water, was seized with a fit and suffocated, sustained their claim, as did those of a man who, when similarly seized, fell under a train and was killed. Again, a person having fallen and dislocated his shoulder was put to bed and carefully nursed, but in less than a month he died of pneumonia. The connection between that complaint and a dislocated shoulder is not at once visible, but on the ground that the restlessness and susceptibility to cold produced by the accident led to the disease which killed him, the relatives were held to be entitled to claim.

BRIEF AND INTERESTING.

The Manchester Ship Canal will be opened in January next. "Bread and Cheese Land" is the parish of Biddenden, in Kent. Mutton is brought from New Zealand to London at the rate of about a penny per pound. There are 14,108 houses licensed for the sale of drink in the Metropolitan Police district. Exports of coffee from Ceylon last year were 43,145 cwt.—less than half the quantity shipped in 1891. In the Established Church of Scotland the average income of the beneficed clergy is about £300 a year, with a manse. Ten years ago the quantity of sugar used in breweries in the United Kingdom was 1,126,353 cwt.; last year it was 2,092,302 cwt. Including the London police stationed at the various dockyards in England, the strength of the Metropolitan Force is placed at about 15,000. The cost of the Albert Memorial was £150,000. While Scotland has only 68 building societies, England has over 2,000. Half-a-million packs of playing cards are made annually in Britain. The Scotch are more generally well educated than the English, Welsh or Irish. Paris has now a new water supply brought to the capital in an aqueduct 63 miles long. Seven of every thousand of the population of England are fined for drunkenness in the course of a year. It is calculated that the principal English railway companies have lost nearly two million pounds through the coal strikes. The Queen has never yet allowed a lady to smoke a cigarette in her presence. She has the greatest horror of a woman smoker. Brazil produces on the average 300,000 tons of coffee per annum—that is, about four-fifths of the whole amount consumed in the world. There are nearly 2,400 miles of railway open in New South Wales. The Tartars take a man by the ear to invite him to eat or drink with them. Artificial limbs are usually made of willow wood on account of its lightness. Chinese gardeners are reputed to be the most expert fruit growers in the world. In Germany there is a law forbidding restaurateurs to serve beer to people who have eaten fruit. A man has been known to stay for five minutes in an oven in which the temperature was 380 degrees. The first mention of the pipe organ in history is in connection with Solomon's Temple, where there was an organ with ten pipes. From Boston comes the news that an aged spinster named Mary Wales has departed this life, leaving \$8,000 to her tom cat Otto. Cremation is becoming increasingly popular in Paris, and the crematorium erected at the cemetery of Pere Lachaise has already been found to be too small. There are over 2,500 public schools in New South Wales, with accommodation for 222,411 pupils, and an average attendance of 132,580. It is estimated by the Canadian authorities that at least 100,000 pounds of opium, refined in British Columbia, are annually smuggled into the United States. There are only 58 prisons in England. Less than 20 years ago there were 113. Absolute uniformity prevails in them all, alike in regard to diet, discipline, and clothes. The Queen has granted to the daughters of the late Mr. Wagland, who was for many years her chief coachman, the use of the cottage and grounds of Bushey House, as a residence during their lifetime. The old wooden line-of-battle ship Benbow, which took part in the bombardment of St. Jean d'Acres, has been condemned at Sheerness as unfit for further employment, and instructions have been given for her to be sold out of the Royal Navy. Lady Colin Campbell is an exceptionally tall and striking-looking woman, who pays great attention to her wardrobe, and is always well in advance of the fashions. The Prince of Wales, simple and unostentatious as he always desires his private visits to be, cannot be fittingly entertained for even two or three days without an expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000. Before men can obtain a license to drive cabs in the British Metropolis, they are required to get through an examination at Scotland Yard. The examination extends to a knowledge of the chief thoroughfares, public buildings, and railway stations in and around London, and the most expeditious routes to and from them. In his hunting expeditions in India this year it is stated that the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este shot 2,800 head of game, including almost every variety of animal and bird met with in that country. Amongst the large game are five elephants, one buffalo, 43 black bucks, 39 wild boar, 20 tigers, and 17 jackals. The quantity of fruit in South Lincolnshire, England, this season has exceeded all previous years. Some farmers in the district have been feeding their stock on apples and pears. Among enthusiastic tricycle riders is to be counted Miss Mabel Besant, the sister of the novelist. She thinks nothing of taking a "spin" of thirty or forty miles. Statistics show that in the third week of last month London had a total of 96,420 persons receiving parochial relief; in the corresponding period of 1892 the number was 88,126. Children were last year admitted to Dr. Barnardo's home from 161 different districts in the British Metropolis; from 262 cities, towns, and villages in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and from fifteen places abroad. Mountaineering on stilts is the latest fad in Switzerland. M. de Lespaul, a professor of Montreux, is preparing in this wise to ascend the Roches de Naves by way of Glion Caux and Recourbes. The Professor does not anticipate a broken neck. M. Worth, the great Paris dressmaker, is now almost seventy years of age. He is the son of an old English solicitor, and was born at Bourne, in Lincolnshire. When his father died he went to London. It was in 1855 that he finally set up an establishment in Paris. A colporteur was recently arrested in the Galata district, Turkey, for selling the Epistle to the Galatians, on the ground that it was a seditious document. The Turkish authorities called for a certificate of the author's death to assure themselves that the document was not of recent origin. A curious discovery has been made at Lyons, where a concierge, while cleaning out a cellar in the Croix Rousse Quarter, came across a bombshell half embedded in the ground. Further examination of the cellar led to the finding of four more, of which one is of the calibre of nine inches. Two of the projectiles were empty, and three fully loaded. The military authorities, judging by the appearance of the shells, consider that they were hidden away in the cellar during the Revolution of 1848. The paupers of Lewisham workhouse, England, are credited with consuming a goodly portion of food and strong drink, 462 bottles of brandy were consumed in 1892-93, as against 306 in the previous year. The number of eggs was 97,663, as against 72,871; the quantity of milk 24,890 gallons, as against 15,769 gallons; of cocoa, 2,934lb., as against 1,694lb.; and of meat 9,529lb., as against 81,190lb. But the most amazing item is mineral water, which stands at 30,782 bottles as against 12,860 bottles. One of the problems which the theatre-goer in winter has not solved is what to do with his wife's cloak and his own overcoat at such theatres as have no cloak rooms or too small cloak rooms. The architect of the new concert-hall of the Gewandhaus, in Leipzig, thinks he has solved this problem by providing a cloak room so large that it contains a locker for every person who buys a reserved seat. The concert-goer at the same time that he buys a seat for a concert will be presented with a key for his private locker. The leaves and stems of the Laportea gigas, the "Burning Tree" of India, are covered with stinging hairs after the manner of the common nettle, but of a far more virulent nature. When touched the sensation felt is as of being burnt with red-hot iron, the pain extending over other parts of the body, and lasting several days. The use of the knot by the Russian police as a punishment for various offences is on the eve of abolition. This step, it is stated, is due to the direct intervention of the Czar, who, having by some means at length become aware of the excessive and, in many cases, unnecessary use of this instrument of punishment, ordered the governors of the various provinces to specially report on the subject. Women, girls, and even children have not been exempt from this barbarous mode of punishment, which in many cases has resulted in the victim being maimed for life.

MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

The Head of the House Dressed in a Hurry Hence the Family Jags "Are you sick, dear?" anxiously queried Mrs. Bowser as Mr. Bowser came home the other evening with that peculiar drag to the legs which she well knew signified that something was wrong. "Who is supposed to run the interior of this house?" she demanded as he let his hat fall on the floor and sat down in a way to jar the house from cellar to garret. "I am, of course," she replied. "Has anything happened to the interior of our house?" "If there is another house in North America run on your system, I'd like to be driven to the verge of desperation and committed some awful deed. Mrs. Bowser, I give you fair warning—that—that—"

SWARMS OF WILD GEESE.

One of the Terrors Which Beset the Wheat Grower in California. I had an experience with wild geese in California, and it is so big that few, except those who are familiar with them, can readily believe it," said State Senator Dare to a San Francisco Examiner reporter. "I own a ranch of 14,000 acres at the Yolo landing, on the Sacramento—wheat, and every year as soon as the wheat comes up the country is overrun with geese. I have seen droves of them two or three miles long, and so thick that when you shoot into them with a rifle you are bound to hit some of them. They are so plentiful that I am obliged to hire herders to keep them off. They settle in great bands. A band will settle down on five acres, say, and you won't hear a quack nor a squawk, but the geese are there and very industrious, and before you know it they have pulled up and eaten every bit of the grain. They have a skillful way of grasping the tender shoots in their mouths and pulling and relaxing and pulling again till they get the swollen grains with the blades and then eat the whole. A storm is almost sure to bring them in large numbers, but they often come in entirely fair weather. I keep many herders to drive them away. If it were not for this I wouldn't have any wheat. The men are armed with loud-sounding Winchester rifles. At night the geese don't bother, but early in the morning and all through the day they literally swarm. The herders go out very early in the morning and stay all day. It is a continual battle. The geese must be kept going all the time or the wheat is gone. When the men are plowing they get very close to the geese. Take fourteen or sixteen teams, each with a big plow that turns four furrows. They come along in a string. The first one is a good way off. The next is a little closer, and so on till the last one is fifty feet or more nearer than the first one was. The geese don't notice this and a man can knock them over as he goes by. I saw one man take a monkey-wrench and bowl away and kill one. In fact, if anyone wants geese he may easily kill them by thousands, and I was almost going to say millions, up there. I have killed them myself many a time. The annual visitation of the geese at Knight's Landing is not a joke. It is the sternest kind of reality and means a heavy loss if warfare is not kept up against them."

How to Dry Wet Shoes.

When, without overshoots, you have been caught in a heavy rain-storm, perhaps you have known already what to do with your best kid boots, which have been thoroughly wet through, and which, if left to dry in the ordinary way, will be stiff, brittle, and unlovely? If not, you will be glad to learn what I heard only recently, from one whose experience is of value. First wipe off gently with a soft cloth all surface water and mud; then, while still wet, rub well with kerosene-oil, using for the purpose the furred side of Canton flannel. Set them aside till partially dry, when a second treatment with oil is advisable. They may then be deposited in a conveniently warm place, where they will dry gradually and thoroughly. Before applying French kid-dressing, give them a final rubbing with the flannel, still slightly dampened with kerosene, and your boots will be soft and affected by their bath in the rain. The slipper was probably the very first home mission board.

Punch and Judy.

On the shore of a little river a quee house stood. It was built on high poles that stood up out of the water. The lower floor of the house was on a level with the bridge that crossed the river, and here there was a little candy shop. On the upper floor of the house lived a man and his wife and their little curly-headed boy. The man made his living by letting out boats to people who wanted to go fishing or rowing for pleasure. In front of the house there was a long board platform built of boards and called a float. It reached far out over the water and to the edge of this the boats were tied. In this queer house lived Punch and Judy, two gray and white kittens.