

## Children and Youth.

### BESSIE'S STRAY LETTER.

Bessie gave a wistful glance toward the window. She knew that out of doors the sun was bright, and the weather delightfully cool and pleasant. She believed that Marjorie, her little friend who lived next door, was playing in her own back yard. Perhaps she looked sad; perhaps she wandered now and then to the letter box that Bessie's father had put in a hole in the fence between the two yards, so that the two little girls might play writing letters and keeping post-office. But today, alas! there could be no letters, for the little friends had quarreled.

Bessie thought it over, went through the whole trouble from beginning to end, and finally came to the conclusion—honest child that she was—that she was more to blame than Marjorie, for she had started the dispute which had ended so badly. Besides, hadn't she told Marjorie that she must never, never write to her again so long as she lived? The more Bessie thought over the matter the more she was sorry for her own ugly words, and at last she felt that she must ask Marjorie to make up with her. Taking a little sheet of paper and a small-sized envelope from her writing-desk, she sat down and wrote the following:

"My Dear Marjorie—I am so sorry that we have been mad. Ain't you? I think it is foolish and wicked to be cross and not speak when we might be happy and have good times. Let us forget all about it and make up for now and forever. I know you are willing, and I am. Forgive me. Baby is asleep, and can't come down, for I musn't leave him. "Your Own Bessie."

On the envelope she wrote:

"My best friend Marjorie,  
"Next door house,  
"Letter box No. 1."

Then she read the letter over, saying to herself as she did so: "I am not quite sure that I spelled foolish and wicked just right, but I can't find out, and Marjorie will be too glad to care."

The next thing she did was to hunt up an old stamp and fasten it with mucilage on the left-hand corner of the envelope.

"That makes it look like a real letter," she thought, "but I won't

paste it up because it spoils the envelope to tear it open." And now, how was that letter to be posted? Bessie had been left to take care of Baby Ned, for her mother had gone to the store. She couldn't leave even long enough to run down into the yard, for he might wake up and roll off the bed. In her impatience to make up with Marjorie she felt that she couldn't possibly wait until her mother returned. While she was wondering what to do, in came Tommie Boyle, the milk boy, with the morning's milk.

"O, Tommie," Bessie cried, giving a sigh of relief, "you know our postoffice-box—Marjorie's and mine—don't you?" Somehow she had an idea that everybody who came to the house knew about that wonderful box.

But she was mistaken in regard to Tommie. With his mind on the letter box on the corner lamp post, he answered readily, "Of course I do."

"Well, will you put this in it?" and she handed him her letter. "Certainly."

Now it so happened that Tommie did not notice the queer address, the old stamp, or the fact that the letter was not sealed. For reasons of his own, he was in a great hurry to get through with his route that morning. Taking the precious missive, he dropped it into the corner box and went off, feeling satisfied that he had done a kindness for Bessie.

A short time afterwards along came the postman to collect the mail. When he came to Bessie's letter he was at first surprised, then greatly amused.

"How could anybody expect a thing like that to go through the postoffice?" he said to himself. "It was written, of course, by some child, but what am I to do with it?"

Noticing that the letter was not sealed, he opened it, hoping to find some clue to the owner. Somehow the contents made him feel very queer. He couldn't laugh now. Indeed, something very much like tears came into his eyes.

"It was foolish and wicked," he told himself, and then putting the letter carefully into his pocket, he added: "And we, too, will make up for now and forever."

At twelve o'clock he was on his way home. Just as he reached

his own corner he came upon a young man who glanced at him and then turned aside.

The postman put out his hand. "Don't go yet, Jack," he said, "I have something to show you."

Jack gave him a glad look and replied, "All right, Hal."

It was the first time in six months that the two brothers had spoken to each other.

In the meantime poor Bessie had been waiting for some word from Marjorie. As soon as her mother returned from the store she had gone down into the yard and looked into the letter box. It was empty. Could it be possible that Marjorie was not willing to make up? But, no, Bessie could scarcely believe that. Several times again she went to the box, and still no reply to her letter. Perhaps oh! now she knew, Tommy had not understood, and he had put that letter into the real letter box. It was easier to believe that than to believe that Marjorie would not forgive her. But Bessie had to wait until the following morning before she could find out. The minute, however, that Tommie appeared she asked him about the letter.

"I put it in the box on the corner," he said,

"O, Tommie," Bessie cried in dismay, "our box is on the fence in the back yard."

"I didn't know that you had a letter box there—I'm sorry, honest, I am; never mind, I'll get that letter; I just saw the postman passing," and Tommie shot out of the house before Bessie could say another word.

On the corner he met the postman. "Say," he cried to him, "I put a little letter in your box there for Bessie Matthews—it was a mistake, it ought to have gone into an old box in her back yard, I didn't know about it—can—can—"

"Yes, I can," said the postman, with a smile at Tommie's troubled face, and from an inside pocket he drew forth Bessie's little letter. "Is that it?"

"Yes," the boy answered eagerly, "I am so delighted to find that it isn't lost."

The postman smiled again. Then he astonished Tommie by saying, "And I am delighted that it was lost."

A few moments later Bessie had put her own letter into her own letter box. Of course, she soon received an affectionate reply from Marjorie. That night

she told her mother how happy she and Marjorie were, now that they had made up, but the dear child never knew that her loving little letter had brought gladness to the hearts of two young men as well.—B. S. Jennie Smith, in Central Presbyterian.

### GOD'S ORGAN.

The day had been very sultry, and hardly a breath of wind stirred the hot air. But in the afternoon, thick masses of cloud gathered abruptly, and the low rumbling of the distant thunder gave token of the coming storm.

Soon the splashing of many raindrops told us that the "windows of heaven were opened," and quick flashes of lightning came and went as though through the open window the eye of Jehovah was glancing out. Nearer and nearer came the storm, more vivid grew the lightning, and deeper and louder the thunder.

Suddenly the room seemed filled with flame. So thick and lurid was it, that I could not see the affrighted scholars, whose heads were pillowed in my lap. Then succeeded a terrific peal of thunder. A barn near the schoolhouse had been struck, and as the boards, riven from their places by the lightning, flew through the air, scream after scream burst from the trembling children.

But little Hattie, whose brow only four summers had kissed, said in a clear voice that rose above the noise of the tempest, "Don't be frightened, Sister Mary, it is only God playing on His organ, and he won't let it hurt us." Hattie had just come from California, and it was the first thunder storm she had ever witnessed. — Congregationalist.

### LAST WORDS OF EMINENT MEN.

It is God's way. His will, not ours, be done.—William McKinley.

Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.—Bismarck.

May God have mercy on me.—Lord Chief Russel, of England.

Lead a good life.—Thomas Hill Green, English Philosopher.

True contentment depends not on what we have. A tub was large enough for Diogenes; but a world too little for Alexander.