

OUR BELONGINGS: THE BOYS.



"GOOD-BYE, dear! I really am sorry for you!" said my friend, Madeline Hay, as she rose from her comfortable chair, put down her tea-cup, and gave me a parting kiss.

"Sorry for me, dear! Why?" I asked with surprise.

"Did you not tell me the boys come home on Thursday? I *know* how dreadful it is!" was her reply.

"Oh, yes! They are all three coming, but it isn't all woe to have them," I answer, somewhat nettled; for although one likes a good grumble about the racket the boys make, and the length of the holidays, it is not quite agreeable to have the creatures talked about as if they were pests. When I had seen Madeline into her pony-cart, and waved my hand for the third time in answer to those farewell gesticulations so many women are fond of keeping up, I came back to the drawing-room; and as it was too hot to go into the garden, I sat looking at the purple shadows of the beeches on the lawn, and thinking of my boys, and how merry their voices would sound next week, and what laughter, and scoldings, chatter, and squabbles, there would be in the old garden. The boys! what queer creatures they are, with their extraordinary reticences, their remarkable frankness, their strange ideas of fun, their code of honour, the peculiarities of their tempers, and the varieties of their dispositions. They are exacting, but soon pleased; easily annoyed, quickly pacified; sensitive, and yet very thick-skinned. Whatever they are,

the house is a changed place, when, with their lumbering boxes, their slang and their chaff, they come home for the holidays.

Do you not know the boy who hates girls? How disagreeable he makes himself when they are about; sometimes he hides, sometimes he sulks, occasionally he absconds altogether, when perhaps Aunt Maria and his three smiling cousins are come for the day, and wish to talk to, and play with, James. No James, or at best a very ill-mannered one, is forthcoming;



and James's mother is well aware that Aunt Maria will for ever have a very poor opinion of her method of training. Then there is the boy who loves girls; he is at his best when Emily, and Lucy, and Mabel, and Gladys, are to be entertained; he is so careful about damage to their crisp print frocks; so thoughtful in finding the best racquets and the nicest balls for tennis; so attentive with the strawberries and cream, and so sweet-looking in his Eton suit or his spotless flannels, that his mother is filled with pride and joy. We are apt to laugh at the boy with a poetical

twist in his mind, and to think his fondness for beautiful sunsets, "lush" greenery, and the loveliness of spring, rather humbug, and we sometimes trample over heavily on the verses we find, where the lines won't scan, and the rhymes are far-fetched and uncomfortable.

Who does not know the grumbler? Nothing pleases him. If we are going to have a pic-nic, he prophesies rain; if the little ones are happily playing he shows them what rubbish amuses them; he complains of the dinners, the drives, the cricket, the sunshine, the rain, the cold, the heat. Everything comes amiss to him, and his past, present, and future are alike distasteful; one is sorry for this boy, and foresees that life will hold sharp discipline for him.

Then there are the boys who amuse themselves from morning till night, without trouble to any one,



The Grumbler.

ties, straw-hats, "toppers," and boots and shoes; he is aware what is the proper kind of tweed for his morning suits, and the correct cloth for his Eton jackets. This species is not very common, and it strikes one with wonder to see his bottle of pink hair-oil, his perfumed soap, his hair-brushes, and the starchiness of his linen. More familiar, by far, are we with the "grub," who possesses not one tidy set of garments, whose buttons never keep on, whose clothes never fit, whose hands are for ever dirty, and whose boots never take a polish. His hair will not part; he cannot find his gloves; his caps have broken peaks, and his hats have been sat upon; his jerseys go into holes, and his flannels shrink abnormally. He never cares, or wishes to be different now, but we believe a time will come when all this is changed!

The dunce is a tiresome specimen. He cares neither for classics, mathematics, geography, history, nor literature. He is always at the bottom of his class, and does not feel any humiliation at his position. His father lectures, his mother puts away the term reports with a sad sigh, but still the dunce goes on his way unmoved; and, oddly enough, does not seem to outsiders the ignoramus the verdict of masters and companions announce him. He must absorb knowledge by his pores, for he is often possessed of a large amount of general information, and he does not come out so badly in the school where men are scholars.

The "grind," too, is a boy whom we know well. He is continually in the front rank, and the hours he works, the books he "does," and the place he takes, are known afar. Cricket and football have no charms for him; the world may be bathed in sunshine or hidden in fogs; all outer things are shadows, his companions are the myths and men of olden time; and the queries of Euclid, the intricacies of algebra, or the charms of dynamics, are to him the only realities. His boyhood rushes by as he sits surrounded with his books and papers, his hand holding a pen in place of a bat, and his busy brain solving problems and construing hard passages, instead of scoring



The Athlete.



The Naturalist

who appear at breakfast clad in some ancient suit and carrying a large tin for insects and treasures of the like kind. Given a small bag of sandwiches, and a great stick with a net at the end, the naturalist will betake himself to the woods and streams, the ditches and dells, and will only reappear at dinner-time, very dirty and tired, but as happy as a king. One envies these lads, to whom a sixth sense seems to have been given, and who find in Mother Earth an inexhaustible treasure-house. Then there is the athlete, who knows all about the forthcoming sports and matches within twenty miles of home, and whose only tribulations are the sins of the laundress, who will not send home his flannels quickly enough, and the irritation of the trains, which do not always suit his needs. If a pony, or a tricycle, or the use of a dog-cart be accorded him, this variety of boy will not weary us with too much of his society in the holidays. Then we have the "masher," to whom clothes are a subject of interest—who knows all about



The Dunce.

runs and considering records. His father wonders at, and his mother delights in, the "grind," while friends prophesy either the Woolsack or an exhausted brain for him in the future, according to their dispositions.

Who invents boys' argot? Why should a "decent dinner" mean the same as a "ripping spread"; and "don't get hairy," or "keep your hair on," be used instead of a request "not to cut up rough"? What is a "scut"?—a "swag"? What induces a boy to ask

another to "bunk," to "mizzle," to "vamosé"? Who can say?

But whatever they do, we love our boys. We wonder at them, we fear for them, we wish they would alter; we would not have them change; they plague us, they upset us, they are selfish, uncomfortable, and delightful, and we use our best endeavours to render their lives happy, and to make them good and useful inhabitants of this workaday world.



Love's Conquest.

Words by WILLIAM COWAN:

Music by BERTHOLD TOURS.

VOICE. *p*

PIANO. *Andante espressivo* (♩ = 100). *p*

I pressed thy trem-bling arm, sweetheart,

Fond - - - ly I pressed; And in that ten - der hour

love's reign Our thoughts con-fessed : *p* It seemed as if the vast sweet

p

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Andante espressivo' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The music is in a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'I pressed thy trembling arm, sweetheart, Fond - - - ly I pressed; And in that tender hour love's reign Our thoughts con-fessed : It seemed as if the vast sweet'. There are dynamic markings of 'p' (piano) throughout the score.