

The Changelings.

By F. ANSTEY.

Illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I.

LETTER No. 1.



FROM Jane Busbridge, Upper Nurse at 135, Prince's Gardens.

To the Rev. Adrian Worlingworth, care of James Allerby, Esq., K.C.M.P., 210, Eaton Square.

By Special Messenger—Urgent.

Tuesday Night, Jan. 4th.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Pardon the liberty I humbly take in writing, likewise the Goliwog at the top of the notepaper, not having no more serious stashionary at present so obliged to borrow some of Miss Stella's. But indeed I do not know who else to consult in the truely awful trouble I am in, and you when calling the other afternoon to inquier how I was getting on in the situation as upper nurse here obtaned by Mrs. Worlingworth's kind recomendation happening to mention as you was staying for a few days with Miss Mildred [as was] and her husban at Eaton Square, I thought this might find you if sent first thing to-morrow morning.

You may reclect me telling you that the Master and Mrs. Dering was away winter-sporting at a place called Grindewald, Switzerland, and the children, Miss Stella, Master Rupert, and Miss Molly, left at home in my charge, and a mercy almost their poor Papa and Mamma is not expected home till next week, though unless some change for the better before then a dreadful blow in store for their return. But I am in hopes that you, dear and Rev. sir, being a clergyman will know what is proper to be done, even if no simular case has ever come under your notice, which is only too likely for had I not beheld it with my own eyes should certainly have said it was beyond all possibility, still happen it has and me at my wit's end which is the reason I write to you.

I had better give you the ezact narative of hat took place so as you can judge for

yourself how far I am risponsible, which however I may be to blame have been bitterly punished.

This afternoon, Mrs. Dering having accepted for them before her departure, I took the children to a juvenile party at Mrs. Champney's, Sussex Square, acrost the Park, and as custimary helped with the other nurses to give the children their tea in the Dining-Room and looking after my own three in particlar.

There were some children there by the name of Posener, who I reconised having seen at another party last week, three in number and similar in age and sizes to mine, but otherwise no resemblance, conducting themselves different in every respect. I was so struck by their manners that I had took occasion to hold them up to mine as examples when more than usual opstropolous, and the Nursery only another name for Beargarden. So I noticed them the more special seeing them again, the two girls dressed artistic with their hair platted so neat in pigtails, and the boy with his hair left long, a frill collar, cream silk blouse, brown velvet nicker suit, and tan stockings, and behaving as beautiful as ever at table, asking if they might have warm milk instead of tea or caufy, and touching nothink as looked the least rich or unolesome. And seeing Miss Stella and Master Rupert taking twice of everythink and reaching out that bold for crackers, I couldn't help nidging them, and telling them to take pattern by them little Poseners. Master Rupert said he'd be sorry to be such a little Rotter as the young Posener boy, and Miss Stella laughed and said, "It's no use, Nana, we'll never be like them, not if we tried ever so" "I know it," I says, "and more's the pity!"

Soon afterwards we went upstairs to the drorin-room, where they had a Cunjeror, and the moment that Cunjeror comenced I felt oncomfortable. It wasn't his tricks, which though clever enough were nothink out of

the way, but his eyes were that peircing they went right through you and took in everythink. Master Rupert come forward and asisted him in his performance, and Miss Stella and Miss Molly *would* nurse a rabbit as he took out of their brother's westcoat, but though I frowned at them not to make themselves so konspicuous, I didn't like to interfere. The Posener nurse, who was standing next me by the door, said what a treat it was to see children so lively and natural as mine. I will own to feeling proud of them myself, though I kep from showing it. All I said was that you might have too much liveliness and high spirits, and there were times when my head fairly went round with them. Just then the Cunjeror took and made a cake in

When I saw Miss Stella the first to get hold of a bit and bring it to me, I *had* to speak to her. "How can you act so unladylike?" I said, "And after the tea you had, too! You don't see the little Miss and Master Poseners behaving like that!"

"I got it for *you*, Nana, not for myself," she says. "Didn't you hear that it's a magic cake? So praps if you eat it and wish, your wish'll come true."

"Then," I says to her, improving the occasion like, "I'll wish this. I'll wish you and Rupert and Molly were more like some children that shall be nameless!" And so saying, I swolloed a piece of the cake, and all but choked, for I saw that Cunjeror had heard and had his eye full upon me.



"IT'S A MAGIC CAKE."

Mr. Champney's tall hat, which he cut up and a downright scramble for it, saying it was a Magic Cake, and them as ate a piece and wished would either have their wish granted, or else they wouldn't—he wouldn't guarantee which not knowing the gentleman's hatter.

She went back to her seat without a word, but I could see what I'd said had took effect, for she made herself quite friendly to the little Poseners, particularly the boy, who was glad enough to be took notice of by her and small wonder, Miss Stella being far the handsomest child in the room, or any room

she goes into for that matter, and she got Master Rupert and Miss Molly to talk to him and his sisters, too, which was more than I expected.

As soon as she had gone that Posener nurse says: "Whyever did you speak to your young lady so harsh? I'm sure you've no reason to wish them any different."

"I may have, or I may not," I says, "that's my affair. And I only spoke for her good, and she well knows I don't mean half I say to her. Not but what I should like to see my three children taking more after yours."

"If I was you," she says, "I'd be satisfied with what they are."

"Thanking you kindly for your advice," I says, "though not required."

The Cunjeror had done by then, and there was going to be dancing, so I slipped downstairs to have a chat with the housekeeper, being acquainted, and there in the hall was the Cunjeror with his traps in a bag waiting for a taxi. I was meaning to pass him, not caring to meet those eyes of his again even under a bowler hat, but he seemed to know me. "Bright jolly little kiddies those of yours, Nurse," he says; "just what kiddies ought to be."

"That's according," I says, not desiring compliments from him; "they're not so good but what they might be better."

He give me a sardinic glance. "Take my word for it," he says, "you'll be a lucky woman if they're never no worse." And with that he took up his bag and went out.

At the time I didn't think much of what he'd said, beyond the liberty, and I sat talking in the Housekeeper's room till astonished when told the party was breaking up. I went back to the Drorin-room which was almost empty and my children nowhere to be seen, nor yet the little Poseners, though their nurse was there hunting all about for a mitting which it seems one of her young ladies thought she had dropt.

Passing through the hall I saw them Posener children waiting all muffled up and good as gold, and I was going on to the cloakroom, when informed by Mrs. Champney's manservant as our motor was at the door and my children already got in, which, as I told them as soon as I was in myself, they didn't ought to have done without me there, and the little Misses and Master Posener would never have behaved so thoughtless and independent.

They didn't answer me back beyond making a sort of choke, having their shawls tight round their heads and over their

mouths, which I never encourage talking on the way home, motors being catchcoldy concerns of a night, even with the windows up, and for once they kep still as mice till they got home, going up to the nursery in their wraps and very sedate, instead of two stairs at a step as was their usual habit.

But when their hoods and cloaks and that were off them, "Why," I says, "you don't belong to me—you're the little Master and Miss Poseners. It's my belief as Stella and Rupert put you up to this, for never would you have done it of yourselves."

They looks at me as solemn as so many images, and one of them says: "We shouldn't have come," she says, "if you hadn't wished for us instead of them."

"Wished?" I says, "stuff and nonsense! A nice trick you've played me between you. Not as I blame *you*. You'd better stay here for the present, while I go down and arrange for your being took home."

Down I went and found Corbyn our butler, and says, "Mr. Corbyn," always treating him civil though not intamit, "will you oblige me by seeing if there's any party on the telledphone list by the name of Posener?" Which he ascertained there was at West Hampstead, and give me their telledphone number. "Put me on to Mrs. Posener," I says, "and I can do the rest myself." "You seem put out, Miss Busbridge," he says. "Nothink wrong, I hope?"

Naturally I was not wishful to own how I'd been took in, so I told him I'd brought back some things belonging to her by mistake and wanted it put right, which I'm thankful now I didn't say no more.

Corbyn he got put on, the cook at the Poseners answering that her Missus and Master were both away for the night. "Ask for the nurse," I told him, but the reply was that she had taken the children to a party in Sussex Square and they hadn't returned yet. "Tell her to ring me up the minute they're back," I said, "and then I needn't trouble you no further."

I find I have come to the end of Miss Stella's paper, so must continue on pages out of one of her copybooks, which of course, dear and Rev. Sir, you will pay no attention to the morrels on the top lines.

Well, I waited there by the instrumint I don't know how long before being rung up, the fourwheeler of course taking more time than a motor, and Hampstead so to speak in the wilds, but at last I heard the bell, and when I put my ear to the trumpet thing, reconised the Posener nurse's voice asking who I was.

"I'm Mrs. Dering's head nurse," I says, "and as you're probly aware by now you've been and brought home my children in mistake for yours."

"I'm not aware of having done nothink of the kind," I heard her say rather stiff. "Why-ever should I do such a thing as that for?"

It wasn't till then that I began to feel realy uneasy.

"You may have done it unbeknown," I says. "Anyway, those I've brought back are the living images of yours, so for mercy's sake see if it isn't mine as you've got "

"They've run up-stairs now," she says,



"and I certainly haven't noticed any difference. But just to ease your mind, I'll go and take a look at them, and you hold on to the line till I come back."

I didn't see no line, but I held on to that trumpet, and hours it seemed before I heard her voice again, though less distinct. But I made out, though even then I couldn't hardly credit it, that it *was* her children all right, and she'd just given them their supper, and didn't see no reason for worrying.

"My good woman," I says, "how am I to help worrying? Can't you understand my position? If your children are all right, it's more than mine are. They're turned into regiar little character cures!"

She answered back rather short that, whatever they were, it didn't



“‘PUT ME ON TO MRS. POSENER,’ I SAYS.”

lay with me to find fault, having ony myself to thank for it. I says “What do you mean?”

“Didn’t you say yourself,” she says, “as you wished you had children more like mine? Now you’ve got ’em, so you’d better make the best of them.”

“Anser me,” I says, “you don’t think that Cunjeror’s cake had anythink to do with it? It wasn’t more than just a morsel I took.”

It may have been somethink inside that tellephone, but it sounded like her laughing, and then she said somethink about parties not always liking to be took at their word. “You might have some feelinks,” I said, “instead of ony jeering, and me in such a state of mind as I am! I don’t know who or what these children are now, and however I’m to break it to their poor Pa and Ma, I can’t think!”

The instrument began buzzing and popping louder than ever, but as far as I could hear, she advised me to keep calm, and put up it, as it was too late now, and if they

came round next morning no need to tell their parents anythink, and I was just telling her what I thought about her taking it so heartless—for how did *she* know if the poor children would ever “come round” as she called it, when she rung off sudden, and not another word could I get through to her.

I was more dead than alive when I got up to the Day Nursery, and none of the usual racket there, but them three setting wispering together as wierd as whiches. “For goodness sake,” I says, “don’t stare at me soowlish! Can’t you beyave more like yourselves, even if you don’t look it?”

For my idea was that they were still my Miss Stella and Molly and Master Rupert, in spite of being altered so, but as I stood there it come upon me all of a sudden that it was worse even than that. Those three were nothink else but changelings, sent to fill their places as a judgment on me, and what is more they

knew it, and the thought of it set me a-trembling from head to foot. They feature the little Poseners, it is true, and dressed much the same though more fantastickle—but, even if I did not know that the real little Poseners were safe at home, I could tell by the un-earthly looks and ways of them that they were never no human children!

Their names are enough, for not knowing what to call them, I asked, and the eldest girl’s, according to her, is “Mellysand,” and the other’s “Easold,” and the boy’s “Sintrim,” which I could have sworn they had never been cristened, and they own to it.

I tried to get out of them where my poor Stella and Rupert and Molly had been sperited away to, but it was no good, they ony smickered and asked if I wasn’t pleased to have them instead, being more what I

liked children to be, which made me downright shudder.

Nor yet they wouldn't say when the change was made, but my belief is it was while we were in the motor on the way home; for I remember noticing them quiver while I was scolding of them, but being so wrought up, their cloaks and that prevented me discovering the alteration till later.

In what had been Master Rupert's overcoat I found a quantity of rings and pins and broaches off the crackers, but that Sintrim and his sisters wouldn't have nothink to do with them, saying they were ony shams, and shams was bad art, which of course it is not likely that changelings would care for innercent things such as crackers, which Master Rupert and Miss Stella and Molly had used to think a deal of.

I knew Dorcas the undernurse would be up soon with the supper-tray, so I slipped out and waited for her at the top of the servants' stairs. "Dorcas," I says, "if the children aren't quite what you'd expect, remember it's not your place either to show surprise nor yet pass remarks. Above all, as you value your place, not a word belowstairs."

Which she promised faithful—but all the same, when she came in and see them three looking that old at her, I thought she would have dropped the tray. But to do the girl justice, she *said* nothink, though it would have made your blood run cold as it did ours to hear the way they went on about their food, asking if the milk had been steriased, and talking of basilisks and microbuses as seem to be a sort of imps that they know quite familiar. Aparently Changelings are brought up on some stuff called Protides, and their drink Snattergin, which spirits may suit *them* but would be poison for any human children.

Next they took notice of Dorcas wearing large round spectacles, as the being that calls himself Sintrim told her was caused by aridity, and her Pa and Ma both having poor sight. "They never ought to have married one another," he says, and seeing the poor girl put out of countenance, I told him to hush and not talk about subjects that were not fit for the likes of him. But he declared that it was a subject he'd been taught to know all about. "If I'm not careful about my elth" he says, nodding at me like some little goblin, "I can't expeck when I grow up to have elthy children."

They wouldn't say no grace after meals, as they told me they hadn't been brought up to

believe in it, being little Acrostics, which it upset me to hear at the time, though after all ony to be expected from such.

After supper I told Dorcas she could put the youngest of them to bed, letting the other two stay up half an hour and amuse themselves. But all they did was to set down by the fire-guard and talk mysterious below their breath, and when in their bedrooms would have the windows wide open—why, unless for convenience if the fancy took them to fly off wherever they came from, I can't think. It was against all my prinisples, but I let them have their way, for indeed it would be a relief to find them gone by morning, if only Miss Stella and Molly and Master Rupert could be sent in their place.

Having written so far, I have just been into the night nurseries, hoping agenst hope to find they had changed, but no difference at present, except that when asleep anyone who did not know might almost have took them for the real little Poseners, ony a very little salower and more wisend like in the face.

But after reading this account you, dear and Rev. Sir, cannot doubt that whichcraft in *some* shape and form have been employed, as it cannot be denied there are witches in the Old Testament, so why not in these days if less frequent? I know for a fact from Mamsell Berth the French maid, as Mrs. Dering herself, who was educated most expensive, ocashunaly consults soothsayers and such in Bond Street, though never did I expect myself to be brought in contact with Powers of Darkness, least of all, in the form of Changelings!

It may be that you have never been called upon to deal with a similar case before, but being a clergyman, Rev. Sir, you will certainly know some way of exercising these unwholy little cretures, for it cannot be any more difcult than laying ghosts, which has often been performed by bishops when required. But if that is too much to ask, I shall be thankful for your advice and suport in this awful triall, if you will kindly step round tomorrow as soon as you can and see these changelings with your own eyes if still to be seen. I shall endeavor to keep the matter quiet as long as possible, and not write to Mrs. Dering till I see or hear from you, but I feel that I cannot stand the strane of it much longer, being half distracted as it is, so do not delay a moment longer than you can help.

Yours respectfully with Duty,
JANE BUSBRIDGE.

LETTER No. 2.

From the Same to the Same.

Wednesday Morning, Jan. 5th.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Percy the knife-boy have just returned with the news that you had returned to the Rectory yesterday afternoon, which it came as a dreadful blow, though promised my letter would be sent on immediate for there have been no change for the better since I last wrote. The three are now up, and I have made them put on Miss Stella's and the others' morning clothes, which sights is no word for them, yet I must say they do not look quite so unhuman as overnight, leading me to believe that they may praps not be changelings as I thought, but my Miss Stella and Molly and Master Rupert, ony altered like them little Poseners as I was wicked enough to wish for.

I have done the girls' hair loose, though thin compared to what it was, which was lions' manes for quantity, and at times I half think I ketch a look of their old selves. And I'd sooner it was so than think they were somewheres else, but otherwise small comfort. If it is realy Master Rupert, he certainly does not look the little gentleman he did in his tweed Norfolk jacket and nickers. But they won't own to any other names but the ones they give themselves last night, and my apinion is that they have no reclection of what they once were. Not a mouthful would they eat at brekfast of their nice olesome poridge and golden sirup, saying they were accustomed to some outlandish fruit called 'grape-nuts' nor yet they won't touch any animile food, which will mean trouble with Cook, who is short-tempered at the best of times, when I have to arrange about the Nursery dinner.

What I went through with them at brekfast I cannot describe, putting questions to me and Dorcas such as "would I call it more corect to say: 'The yoke of eggs *are* white, or *is* white?'" which of course I gave it in favour of "are," when they cakled that impish and told me they always thought the yoke of an egg was *yellow*. And finding fault with my grammer, which they never would if their natural selves, and so gahstly polite with it all I dursn't hardly open my mouth at last!

They always have three quarters of a hour after brekfast to amuse themselves before lessons begin, but from the way these went on I am in horid doubts again whether they can be anythink excep changelings, and if so, what may not my own poor dear lambs be suffering this moment wherever they may be? These girls ony just looked into the

dolls house, and turned away, saying the rooms was papered so unartistic it made them downright ill, and the Sintrim thing wouldn't put on Master Rupert's toy elmet and curass and sword, because he said they ony excited some evil spirit as he calls "Millitrim" and has been taught to beware of.

It frightened me to hear him also declaring there were things he named as "jurms" lurking behind the pictures as arbored them, and advising me to have them took down, likewise objecting to their subjects being mostly sporting, and telling me if he had *his* way he would put a stop to pursecuting a poor armless thing like a fox. And to think that ony last September, when at his grand-papa's place, Master Rupert came home from cubunting his first day with the brush tied to his cob's bridal, and Miss Stella, so Checkley the coachman has often told me, with as pretty a seat and hands as he ever saw on a child.

But none of these will even get on the rockingorse for fear of spraning themselves internal. They are now laying flat on the floor practicing somethink they call "deep brething," and whether nearly transformed or Changelings in the true sense of the word, I cannot see how the unhappy parents can ever get reckonsiled to finding them so diferent.

I still trust that when you arive you will find some means of restoring them to their proper selves and save me being compelled to write to Mrs. Dering and break the callamity.

I must now stop, dear and Rev. Sir, as I must go down and intersept Miss Dudlow the daily governess and send her away, for let her see the children as they are I dare not, for I do not trust her discession, being but a young person and sure to let the cat out of the bag if given the chance. So I shall get this posted at once, and write again should anythink fresh develop, though hoping to see you before then if you take the next train to town after getting my first letter, as I beg and pray you will do, for you will surely reconise that there is somethink unhalowed in all this, which who knows but a few sollem words from you would put to flight with Duty.

Yours respectfully,

JANE BUSBRIDGE.

From the Same to the Same.

Wednesday Evening, Jan. 5th.

DEAR AND REV. SIR,—Not having seen or heard from you I hope you have recieved



the wire I sent to say all was now well and unnecessary to trouble you further. I will now go on from where I left off, or I shall only get everything mixed up.

As soon as I see Miss Dudlow from the Dining-room window I went and let her in myself, taking her into the Libry, right at the back of the house, and explaining as Miss Stella and Master Rupert wouldn't be able to have their lessons in consequence of having been to a party overnight. That didn't satisfy her, as it should have done, coming from me, and question on question did she put as to what was the matter with them, and

me on tenderhooks to get rid of her. I was that worn out with the strain that I had to leave her to let herself out of the

house, for go as far as the hall I could not, but forced to set down on the libry sofa. I couldn't have been there above a minute or two when the libry door opened, and all of a sudden who should walk in but Lady Wantley, as is own sister to Mrs. Dering, and living close by in Queen's Gate.

I jumped up with my heart in my mouth.

"Oh, my lady," I says, "I wasn't aware you'd called, not having heard the visitors' bell." . . . "Miss Dudlow was just leaving the house as I come up the steps," she says,

"and told me I should find you here. And I should like to know what all this means about the children being too unwell to have their lessons?"

I told her they seemed a little out of sorts, and I'd considered it best not to have them troubled with the governess that morning.

"Really," she says. "Then I had better go up and have a look at them."

"I wouldn't indeed, your ladyship," I says, feeling all in a palpitation. "I'd sooner they were kept quiet for the present."

She looks at me very sharp. "Busbridge," she says, "you're keeping something from me. You'd better tell me the truth at once."

"Whatever it is, my lady," I told her, "I

"THEY ARE NOW LAYING FLAT ON THE FLOOR PRACTICING SOMETHING THEY CALL 'DEEP BRETHING.'"

do assure you it's nothink infecshus. But, indeed, while they're like this they didn't ought to see visitors, however near relations."

"Nonsense!" she says, in her masterful way. "I don't believe a single word you've said, and as I promised your mistress to keep an eye on them I am going up to the nursery immejit."

And out she sweeps into the hall, and was halfway up the first flight of stairs before I could move a step to stop her. It wasn't till the second landing that I caught her up. "My lady," I says, half beside myself, "it's nothink but my duty to tell your ladyship—"

"I do not wish to hear another word from you," she says. "I intend to see into this myself." And on she goes, making straight for the nursery.

"But your ladyship *must* hear me!" I says. "I can't let such a shock burst on you unprepared. You won't find the children like what you expect. Who and what they now are is not for me to say—but they've changed too awful for words!"

"Don't talk rubbidge," was all she said, and flung open the Day Nursery door, and storked in, with me after her. "Where on earth have you come from?" I heard her beginning, and I was just about to try to tell her when I stopped sudden.

For I'd seen that them three children weren't Changelings no longer, but my very own Miss Stella and Master Rupert and Miss Molly, and dressed too the same as they'd been at the party.

"My darlings," I says, rushing at them, "I've got you back at last. I *knew* the dear good Rector was to be depended on to do it if possible!" (thinking, dear and Rev. Sir, that you might have interseded even if in the country). And I hugged them close, and they hugged me, and I all but broke down with the relief of it.

"I understood you to say, nurse," said her ladyship, "that the children were unwell. They appear to me to be in their usual health"

"They do now, my lady," I says, "and thank Heaven for it. But if your ladyship had only seen them—or I should say what was supposed to represent them—not a quarter of a hour ago."

"I *did* see them," she says; "they drove past me in a four-wheel cab with a portmanter on top. And I should be glad to hear how you reconsile that with what you told Miss Dudlow and me about their being too ill to have their lessons."

I don't know what I should have said, but just then the door to the Night Nurseries opened, and in came that Posener nurse with them three as I'd took for Changelings, looking less strange now they'd got their own morning clothes on, though still oldfashioned enough.

"And pray who are *these* young people?" asks her ladyship.

"It's Mellysand and Easold and Sintrim Posener, Aunt," puts in Miss Stella; "you see, we agreed to change nurseries just for the night because—well, for fun, you know. We shouldn't have done it only we knew it would please Nana."

And then it all came out. Miss Stella and Master Rupert had talked over them little Poseners into exchanging wraps with them and getting into the motor while me and the other nurse were out of the way, me busy in the housekeeper's room and her sent upstairs on a wild goose hunt for a mitting that hadn't never been lost.

"What I can't understand," says her ladyship, "is why you two nurses, when you discovered the trick these naughty children had played, didn't bring them back last night."

"Miss and Master Derings kep so quiet in the cab," says the Posener nurse, "that I hadn't found them out when Miss Busbridge rung me up on the tellephone last night, and at first I couldn't believe she wasn't joking. Then I went up and saw it was true enough, but they begged so hard to stay, and it being a long drive from West Hampstead to Prince's Gardens and back I took on myself to tell Miss Busbridge that her children were all right, and it was too late to change now, so the ony thing to do was to make the best of it, and they should come round this morning."

That was *her* story, and all I can say is that it's a pity she couldn't speak more distink, for it stands to reason that if I'd understood her correct I should have been spared all this anxiety and trouble. But my own belief is that woman did it delibrit, to pay me out for being so short with her at the party. I heard that little Sintrim telling Miss Stella that they'd done azactly as she'd told them, and kep the secret.

"But your nurse," he says, "didn't seem so glad to have us as what you said she would," says he, "and we *much* prefer our own nursery."

"So do we ours," says Miss Stella. "And as for your medsin, it's simply beasly!"

I can't say I was sorry to find they'd had things to put up with, though the medsin (as



"THEY DROVE PAST ME IN A FOUR-WHEEL CAB."

I took leave to tell the Posener nurse) a liberty all the same with other parties' children, even if ever so armless a seditive.

"To tell you the truth, Miss Busbridge," she says, "I thought they'd better have somethink to quiet them down after playing 'Peter Pan' and pillerfighting till I don't know how late. I've not been used to such perceedings."

"I can well believe it," I says. "There was no pillerfighting *here* last night, nor yet being Pirits out of 'Peter Pan,' which I don't expect your young ladies and gentleman was ever took to."

"They did go once," she told me, "but came home low-spirited at having acted a falsehood by clapping their hands out of peliteness as a sign they believed in fairies, which they do not, knowing they are fabulus. They're wonderful grown up and thoughtful compared to your children, owing to being brought up by sistim," she says.

"I noticed it," I says, "and, if you'll excuse the remark, they'd be none the worse if they didn't think quite so much of their little sistims and what's going on inside of them."

But I will say that them little Poseners thanked me pretty enough on going away, hoping as they'd been good and hadn't given me no trouble, though the load off my mind when I'd seen the last of them no words can describe! Even now I can't believe but what that Cunjeror hadn't a finger in it somehow, for his eyes were like no ordinary eyes, nor yet his cake.

Not a word have I said to Miss Stella and the other two on what I have been thro since yesterday evening. But I'm afraid they have guest that I've had a warning against rash wishing as will last me for life. Her ladyship have give them a good talking to, though I could see more amused like than downright angry, and promising not to tell their parents, which I have likewise agreed to say nothink. I am sure, dear and Rev. sir, you will excuse me for taking up your valuable time, and be glad to hear that your services are no longer required, the children being quite themselves again, and having their tea with Duty.

Yours respectfully,

JANE BUSBRIDGE.