

"Ah, did I? I beg pardon; the feathers I took were but to keep in remembrance of your lovely plumage, which I have so often admired in the distance."

"You will have to admire them still farther off," cried the retreating duck, "for I can tell you that I shall never come so close to you again, even if

there were fifty snails within a yard of you—that's *quite* certain."

So saying the wild duck was soon out of sight, and the fox stealthily crept out of his uncomfortable resting-place, muttering—

"It does not do to come after game of this kind; I had better keep to the barn-roosters." J. G.

## CHILDREN OF ALL NATIONS: THEIR HOMES, THEIR SCHOOLROOMS, THEIR PLAYGROUNDS.

### IV.—AMERICA.



ROASTING MAIZE. (See p. 217.)

AMERICAN ideas of liberty begin with babyhood. At least it is thus I explain the fact that new-born infants are not allowed in America to wear caps, as almost all other babies do. "Put a cap on my baby!" the American mother exclaims in surprise, if you mention the matter of a cap; "oh, no indeed, my baby's head must

be free!" And a very free and independent little being is the American baby, in every way. His clothing is like that worn by English babies, which of course means that he is not tied down to a pillow as German and other babies are, but is allowed to kick and strike out as much as he likes. One cannot help fancying that this is really the best way of dressing infants, because women born in continental Europe, accustomed all their lives to seeing babies swathed and sewed up, and fastened down to pillows, abandon the habit when they go to America, and have babies born there. These little American citizens of foreign descent are dressed in petticoats and gowns, though the cap is generally retained. Many rich American mothers also put caps on their babies, because a baby's cap is a very becoming finish to a tiny face, especially when the little cap is trimmed with laces and bedecked with embroidery; but the generality of American babies, the rank and file of the baby army, are left capless.

To amuse the American baby all sorts of odd things

have been invented by clever American men. The "American Baby-jumper" is a contrivance that is pretty generally known all over the world of civilised babies, but its use is nowhere so frequent as in America. In its first shape it consisted of nothing but a belt to be buckled around the baby's waist, with two rubber bands fastened to this belt which are drawn over two strong iron rings fixed into the ceiling. The baby is placed at just the right distance from the floor to enable it to occasionally touch bottom with its feet; the rubber bands expand and contract with baby's weight and motion, and thus a movement takes place which amuses baby, or is supposed to do so. In principle, the baby-jumper remains what it was when it was first invented, but in these grand days of ours, when grown people will have nothing but the best of everything, and even babies seem to have elevated and, so to speak, "uppish" ideas about their "jumpers," a first-class baby-jumper is a very elaborate affair.

The baby is no longer suspended by a mere plain leather belt; no, indeed, the belt is provided with silver or metal clasps, and there is also a fine little easy chair for the baby to sit in, after the belt has been buckled, and in addition, the chair is hung about with toys. I believe the chair claims to do away with a great objection which used to be made against baby-jumpers; which was, that when a baby was suspended by the waist he was likely to injure his legs by striking his feet against the floor in the effort to jump.

I have travelled in many countries, and made the acquaintance of many babies, and I think there are no babies in the world who are expected to take care of themselves so early in life as American babies are. English babies get a deal more nursing and knee-trotting and cradle-rocking than American babies do. America is a country where good servants are hard to get, and it often happens that American ladies are obliged to do a great deal of necessary work for the house, because they

cannot get good faithful servants. And of course if it should unfortunately happen that a lady has the dinner to cook, she cannot rock the baby while she is cooking it; so one of two things must take place—either the dinner must be left uncooked or the baby unrocked; and you can easily imagine what her choice is, can't you? Fancy papa coming home from the office and saying, "Wife, where's my dinner?" and mamma replying,

for mamma by all means, and me in mamma's lap."

American babies do not, as a rule, have many brothers and sisters. There are very few families which boast of seven, eight, and nine children. One or two is the rule, three or four the exception. The consequence is, I regret to say, that American children run great risk of being spoiled by their fond parents. The habit of living in hotels



MAKING "JACK O' LANTERNS." (See p. 217.)

"There's no dinner, dear; but the baby has been thoroughly rocked." I know a young American wife who did make that very reply; and then her husband cried out, "Very well, then, we'll eat the baby!" and he seized the baby and nearly gobbled him up—with kisses.

I dare say you have all seen American rocking-chairs. These chairs were invented by an American man on purpose to give mamma a chance to be rocked, as well as her baby. I think it rather selfish in a baby to lie in a cradle and be the only person rocked in the whole room, don't you? I am sure no right-minded English baby would consent to such a thing, if he were consulted about it. No, indeed, he would be too much of a gentleman. He would reply, "The rocking-chair

instead of private houses, which prevails in America, is ruinous to children's health, manners, and morals. Having no nursery they are generally allowed to run and play in the public halls and drawing-rooms, and to take their meals at the public tables. Here they meet entire strangers, who pet them, or are rude to them, as they feel in the mood, and in either case are far too intimate with them. Sensible American fathers and mothers very much dislike living in hotels, on account of the harm it brings their children, but sometimes it is necessary to do so. It is a great misfortune for the children.

American children begin school-life at a very early age. The district school system is the great pride of all Americans. It is, indeed, a noble thing to reflect upon, that there is not a being in

all the land, no matter how poor or lowly, who cannot have his children well educated, free of all expense. Like everything else in America, the school-houses are on a very large scale. An American school-house, if it could be dropped down into a small English town or village, would seem like the abode of a giant. In America every small town has its big school-house; at eight o'clock every morning the school-bell rings, and from all points of the compass come trooping the children. They are taught all the ordinary branches of a sound English education, and in some parts of the country the German language is also taught the scholars, beginning with the smallest ones in the school. If the American "common school education" is not what may be called a very finished one, it is really an excellent one in the main. Some American parents will not permit their children to attend the public schools, because they meet the children of poor people there. For such persons who are willing to pay large prices for their children's schooling, there are plenty of private academies, ladies' seminaries, male and female colleges, young ladies' and young men's institutes, etc., where a more or less ornamental education may be acquired. But some of the greatest men America ever had received their only education in the public schools, even in days when the teaching did not include so many branches as it now does.

American boys and girls read the same stories as English children, but they have one hero of whom they talk whose name is not so familiar to English nurseries. This is Kriss Kringle—some call him Santa Claus—a jolly old greybeard, who is supposed to live somewhere in the banks of snowcloud, and who drives down to earth every Christmas in his sleigh, drawn by eight or ten reindeer. In England at Christmas-time we hear a good deal about old Father Christmas, and sometimes we see for sale in the toy-shops, or perched upon the top of Christmas-trees, the figure of a little old man in a loose snow-flecked overcoat and with a cap drawn over his head, who may be called Old Father Christmas without offence. But this ordinary-looking little old fellow is not Kriss Kringle, not Santa Claus. Oh, dear, no! That grand old person is never seen without his sleigh drawn by reindeer. The sleigh is overflowing with presents for good children, and whips—or else nothing—for naughty ones, and the reindeer are fleet of foot than any horses could possibly be. This of course is necessary, because America is a very large country, and Kriss Kringle must get about quickly at Christmas-time, having so many boys and girls to visit. The story which American boys

and girls are told about Kriss Kringle is that he is a good-natured giant, whose business it is all the year round to keep a strict account of what children in all parts of the country are doing. Every hour in the day he makes entries into his great ledgers, either for or against a child's credit, and at the end of the year he decides what sort of gift each child should have at Christmas-time. The stocking is hung up by the fireplace, and Kriss Kringle, who is supposed to be galloping over the roofs of the houses in his sleigh drawn by reindeer, stops at each chimney and climbs down, without soiling his clothing at all, and crams toys and books into the stockings of all good children. When I was a child I had heard so much about this wonderful old man, that I made up my mind that if I never slept a wink all night on Christmas Eve, I would see him. I suppose I did sleep, in spite of myself, but however, this I know, that in the dim early hours of Christmas morning I heard a slight rustling noise, and opening my eyes very wide I saw my dear mamma herself filling my stocking with all manner of pretty gifts. So now I have told you all I know about Kriss Kringle.

The sports of young Americans differ from those of young Englishmen, because the climate of America is very different from that of England. The American winter is long and very cold; snow lies on the ground for months without melting, and every little brook and streamlet is ice-bound by the sharp and snapping fingers of Jack Frost. I am sure I may safely say that there is not a boy in all the Northern States of America, having the use of his legs, who is not a famous skater. Oh, such grand skaters as they are, those American boys! And the American girls are not far behind them, I promise you. You see, they have such an immense amount of practice: for not only do they keep up their skating diversions all through winter, but even in summer. Just look at our illustrations (page 216) and you will see how they manage to skate in summer. Every child, little and big, straps on roller skates, and whiz! they go, over the smooth asphaltum-paved walks. A favourite pastime is for a lot of children to harness themselves together, and then, with a famous shouting and squealing, to "roller skate," furiously crying out "Here goes the express train," or "Out of the way of the locomotive," or some such phrase. Grown people, walking on the feet of every-day life, have no rights which roller-skaters are bound to respect, so all we can do is to jump out of the way of roller-skaters trundling hoops, or skating to school, or else we might get run over, if perchance we did not trip up a young skater, like the little miss who has met with an accident in the corner of the picture.



*a favorite Pastime*



*Roller skating in Madison Square New York*



*an accident*



*First Lessons*

Next to his skates the American boy prizes his "sled," a small sleigh upon which he indulges in "coasting." Coasting is sliding down a steep icy hill, sitting or lying on the little sled. A boy flies almost like the wind down a sharp incline of this sort, and if he chance to knock against any obstacle, a bad accident may occur. But care is generally taken to coast only on hills where there are no stumps of trees, and where Jack Frost has kindly iced the way to the smoothness of glass. I think "coasting" may be called rather hard-working sort of fun. To slide down hill is easy enough, but there is no way to get to the top again except to walk up and drag the sled. Of course every boy's sled has a fancy name, just as every boy's boat has. The "Lively," the "Enterprise," the "Nonpareil," "Greased Lightning," are some of the titles chosen, while to others are given the names of persons, like "General Grant," "Abe Lincoln," "President Garfield," &c.

Summer in America brings heat of a kind rarely felt in England. In some parts of the United States the change from bitter cold to great heat is very sudden, and children playing in the woods in the early spring scrape away snow from the ground and find that lovely flower, the trailing arbutus, beneath the icy covering. American children spend a great deal of time in the woods in the summer. School excursions are organised, and everybody (except the miserably poor) goes picnicking. The ground is so dried by the parching heat that there is not the slightest danger from dampness. Thunder-storms—a deafening cannonading from the skies which glare with fearful-looking forked lightning—are frequent, but they are not so dangerous as they seem. Children are early taught to keep in open places, and not run under trees. There is not much likelihood of the lightning striking persons in the roads or fields; it strikes the trees and other high objects. These terrific deluges—summer thunder-storms—come up quickly and finish quickly, and although the rain may be very heavy, the parched earth drinks it up to the last drop, so that often, half an hour after a heavy rain-storm, the ground will be as dry as ever. This great heat ripens many fruits in the open air which are never seen, except in hot-houses, in England. The most delicious peaches, plums, grapes, apples, pears, bananas, and melons grow so abundantly that they can be sold in the markets and by street pedlars very cheaply indeed. Indeed, at the end of a very hot day in New York, I have often seen fruit-sellers give away their fruit to any one who wanted it, knowing only too well that it was "full ripe"—that is to say, dangerously near being over-

ripe—and that it would be quite worthless before morning. America, indeed, is a land of profusion, and food of all kinds—beef, poultry, fish, fruit, and vegetables—is very cheap. There are a great many vegetables growing in America which American children like, but which English children never see.

Now perhaps you wonder what those boys shown in the picture on page 213 are doing, kneeling down there, and stirring up something in a gipsy fire in the woods. They are roasting "green corn," as they call the Indian maize, which is so delicious in the early spring-time. They bite the sweet little white kernels off the cob, and like "corn" ever so much when it is young and tender. In the autumn the kernels get hard, and of a rich yellow tint, instead of pearly white; then persons do not eat it, but the farmers take it and grind it up into "meal," or they give the corn as fodder to their horses. By the time the "corn" has got hard there are other good things ready for boys and girls to eat. Pumpkin is very nice; a sort of sweet mashy stuff, which is very good as a sweet filling for tarts. Boys have a great deal of fun with pumpkins. Do you see those lads making "Jack-o'-Lanterns?" (page 214). They take the biggest pumpkins they can find, scoop out the inside (the seeds and such), then cut holes in the rind for eyes, nose, and mouth, as you see in that one on that boy's knee there; then they stick a bit of lighted candle inside, fastening it by driving in three nails to hold it steady. Now Jack-o'-Lantern is ready, and the first dark night, if you happen to be sitting quietly in your drawing-room, you may be chilled with fear at seeing a hideous face (unlike any you have ever before beheld, except in nightmares) peering at you through the window-pane!

Nature herself being so lavish, I suppose American fathers and mothers think they must imitate her example, and so they often give their children a great deal more to eat than is good for them. This is the only explanation I have to offer of what all English travellers in America notice and speak of—namely, children being allowed to order what they like from the bills of fare of the hotels.

In America there are a great many black people. In the British Islands one seldom sees a negro, although there are British colonies where there are hundreds of thousands of negroes. But these negroes are generally beings not only of a different race, but of a different way of thinking from the English people, who live in the black man's land. They are heathen and speak some rude language of their own, not at all like our beautiful, clear, and melodious English. Now the American negroes are as much like white people as they can possibly be. They are Christians of different denominations, and very devout. They speak nothing else

but English, though of course it is a common funny sort of English; still all English-speaking people understand it. In the Southern States, if a white baby has any nurse at all besides his own mother, he must have a black nurse, because there are no white servants. These black nurses are called "mammies," and as they are affectionate by nature they generally dearly love the white children whom they nurse, and so of course the white children get to love them. And it is a funny sight indeed to see a fine white child kissing the black cheeks or thick red lips of his black nurse and calling her his mimmie! It would make you laugh to see it. Little black children now go to many of the common schools and sit on the forms beside white children, and this is the reason some parents send their children to private schools; they cannot endure the thought of negroes associating with their children as playmates.

I said the young American was a very free and independent being even as a baby, and he loses none of that independence as years go on. Very early in life many small boys resolve to strike out into the world and do something for themselves. Americans are great readers from the very day

they learn how to read; and as soon as they are able they read the histories of great men, not only in America but in England, who have risen from poverty and low estate and grasped the world's highest prizes, solely by their own efforts. It is the ambition of every American boy to become President of the United States, the ruler during a period of four or eight years of fifty millions of people. This dazzling prize is constantly held out to children by American parents, teachers, and nurses. "If you are a good boy and study well," they say "you may become President of the United States some day." Lincoln and Garfield were both poor little boys, and yet they reached this high position, and many another poor boy will reach it, just as they did.

American children are, perhaps, more petted while they are babies than English children are; but with rare exceptions the petting stops at an early age, and the young citizen is allowed to leave school and begin the battle of life. His success in that will depend, as in England, on his cleverness and on the good principles he has had imparted to him while he was what you are now—one of the Little Folks.

OLIVE LOGAN.

### SOME TRUE STORIES ABOUT DONKEYS.

—"evil is wrought by want of thought,  
As well as want of heart."



SOUND like "Whack—whack—whack—whack." The blows were heard from end to end of the street, and reverberated from the lordly pile of granite buildings that ran at right angles to it, though fully three hundred yards away.

Whack—whack—you see it was what is called a fast-day in the north of Scotland, the

town was very quiet, and with the exception of this boy and his donkey-cart there was not a vehicle in sight or the sound of wheels anywhere. The lad was, on the cart, a great mutton-shouldered boy of fully sixteen years of age, and weighing apparently about as many stone. The cart, too, was laden with fine sea-sand, which its owner retailed to the good citizens for the low sum of a penny a bucketful.

But the donkey had stopped suddenly in the middle of the street, and there he stood stock-still, with his nose between his knees, and evidently he did not mean to budge, let his master whack as

long and as hard as ever he pleased. But the whacking of the poor beast with a thick ash sapling had so cruel a ring in it, that I at once rushed up and ordered the boy to desist. Had he dared to disobey, I should have pulled him off the cart very quickly indeed.

"Why doesn't he go on then?" cried the boy. "I want to sell my sand, and get home to my dinner. And what business is it of yours?"

"Not so fast, please," I said quietly, "first and foremost look here. This is what the poor donkey wants."

As I spoke I picked up a large crust of bread, which some school-child had dropped, and which the donkey had determined should not be wasted. I handed it to the animal, and as soon as he had munched it, and before even I had time to finish my little lecture to his master, he positively began to trot off of his own accord.

Now I knew that that boy was not bad at heart, for he had listened respectfully to what I had to say, and as the donkey started off he turned round laughing, and cried, "Good day, sir, I must say I never saw my old donkey trot like that before."