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 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
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 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
runs and considering records. His father wonders at, and his mother delights in, the "grind," while friends prophesy either the Woolack 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 "vamose"? 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.

TASTY DISHES.

Fricasseed Rabbit.—Cut the rabbit into neat joints and wash well in salt and water; drain, then roll the pieces lightly in seasoned flour, and fry them in beef-drippings until a nice brown all over. Lay them in a stewpan, and cover them with clear stock made from bones and trimmings. Add an onion, a piece of celery, a carrot, and some strips of smoked bacon, a pinch of pepper, or a few peppercorns. Cover closely, and let the stew simmer for an hour; then remove the rabbit on to a hot dish, and cover at once. Strain the gravy, thicken it with browned flour, put in a tablespoonful of tomato sauce and one of walnut ketchup, add more seasoning if required, then boil up and pour over the rabbit.

A Game Pasty.—The crust for this should be fairly rich, and requires to be mixed with an egg. To a pound of flour put ten ounces of Brittany butter, and make a stiff paste with a beaten egg and sufficient ice-water. Roll out twice, the second time divide the pastry, then roll out again the exact size and shape of a shallow baking-dish, keeping a small portion of paste from which to stamp ornamental leaves, etc.

The filling for the pastry should be previously prepared by stewing for a long time any pieces or trimmings of venison, game, rabbits, hares, or whatever may be available. When thoroughly tender, remove all bones and skin, also all superfluous fat, and cut the meat into pieces as nearly equal in size as possible. Lay the meat on the lower crust. Season the gravy highly, colour it with browned flour, add a pinch of mushroom-powder or a spoonful of ketchup, and pour over the meat as much as the depth of the dish will allow it to contain. It will be better to have dissolved a little gelatine in the gravy, in order that it may be a jelly when cold. Cover the pastry with the upper crust, wetting the edge that they may adhere, then ornament according to fancy. Let it bake in a moderate oven for upwards of an hour, shielding it if inclined to burn. When nearly done, brush it over with beaten egg to give a fine glaze.

Game Cutlets (imitation).—Try in a little dripping a quarter of a pound of lean bacon or ham, then half a pound of calf's liver, cut into thick slices. When the latter is done, drain, and put both together in a chopping-bowl and mince them until very fine indeed, adding to them any scraps of meat or poultry you may happen to have. Add half the quantity of stale bread-crumbs, a tablespoonful of dried and sifted mixed herbs, a teaspoonful of salt, half a one of black pepper, a pinch of mushroom-powder, and mix the whole with a teaspoonful of good brown gravy. Shape the mixture into small cutlets, coat them with beaten egg, and cover with fine brown rapsings, fry them on both sides in a little boiling fat; let them be crisp, but not too dry. Drain them, place a tiny piece of macaroni at the end of each to imitate a bone, and serve them hot with thick gravy if liked, or with a well-dressed salad.

Ham Savoury.—Cut a slice of stale bread half an inch thick, trim off the crust, and make rounds or triangles of the crumb. Fry these on both sides in a little butter, when lightly browned drain them. Spread each one with a very thin layer of mango chutney. Cut some raw ham into very thin slices, fry these quickly that they may curl up, and place one curled piece on each crouton. Serve hot. These are a delicious dinner savoury.

Cheese Savouries.—Line some small tins with short pastry; make a light mixture with two heaped tablespoonfuls of cottage cheese, add a small quantity of salt, mix it to a paste with a little flour, and put a tablespoonful into each case, bake them in a very quick oven for ten or fifteen minutes, then serve hot on a doiley.

Apple Syllabub.—Pare and core, and cook with a very little water, six sharp apples. Cook them quickly that they may make a white froth. Set this aside to become cold, then whip the whites of two eggs, and when these are firm whilst the apples with sufficient white sugar to well sweeten them, and afterwards lighty whisk in the whites of egg. Place a little bright-coloured jelly at the bottom of some wine-tumblers, fill them up with the syllabub, and serve with sweet biscuits.

Cottage Pudding.—Beat together two eggs and two ounces of caster sugar, add to them two tablespoonfuls of finely-chopped met, three ounces of flour, one ounce of rice-flour, and rub a teaspoonful of baking-powder into the last; mix with a little milk if needed, but the batter should be rather stiff. Pour into a well-greased mold, and cover with a buttered paper. Steam the pudding for an hour and a half. Turn it out when required for the table, and pour around it a sauce made by dissolving half a pound of jam, with as much water, boiling it for a minute or two, then pouring through a strainer.

Orange Salad.—Choose thin-skinned, rather sour oranges, slice them evenly through, removing the pips. Lay the slices in a shallow dish, sprinkle with caster sugar, and let the salad "lie" for an hour before it is required for the table. Serve this with

Roast Wild Duck.—A simple stuffing of potatoes boiled and mashed is the best for this. Baste the duck freely while it is cooking, as this is a bird with drier flesh than the tame species. Cover with buttered paper while it is cooking, and give a rather longer time than for the ordinary kind.

There is more flesh upon all game-birds than is usually imagined, so that they are profitable to the housekeeper, although somewhat high in price.

A Roast Guinea Fowl is an excellent dish, a nice salad accompanying it well, with gravy and brown crumbles.

Browned Bread-crumbs, the usual garnish for all game, are made by grating some stale white bread on to a tin, placing bits of butter amongst them, and putting the tin in a very quick oven. Stir the crumbs frequently, that they may brown all alike.

L. H. YATES.