YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

A PROBLEM IN THREES.

If three little houses stood in a row,
With never a fence to divide,
And if each little house had three little maids
At play in the garden wide,
And if each little maid had three little cats
(Three times three times three),
And if each little cat had three little kits
How many kits would there be?

And if each little maid had three little friends
With whom she loved to play,
And if each little friend had three little dolls
In dresses and ribbons gay,
And if friends and dolls and cats and kits
Were all invited to tea,
And if none of them all should send regrets,
How many guests would there be?

—Eudora S. Bumstead, in St. Nicholas.

THE TWO ROADS.

A Double Mistake, a Double Joke, a Double Sleigh-Ride and a Double Driver.

"Now, John," said Aunt Clara, as she cuddled Baby Fay a little closer, "have we got every thing in the sleigh, my dear?"

"Well, I should hope so!" laughed Uncle John. "Here are all the lap-robes and the handbag and three children and two dollies and the great big dinner-basket! If it were not first-class sleighing, I don't believe old Prince could draw so much."

And he tucked the robes about Kitty and Jessie, who were nestling and giggling on a snug little seat at his feet. Then he shook the lines, and gave the word to Prince, and away they flew to Uncle Charley's farm.

"Let's take the spring road this time, papa," said Kitty, "for it is such a lovely day, Uncle Charley's folks *might* be coming to see us."

"And they always come by the spring road," put in Jessie. "Harry told me so."

"And such dinners as they bring!" cried Kitty. "You can't get such things in town."

Now I must tell you about the dinners. Uncle John's folks and Uncle Charley's folks were very fond of visiting each other; and they liked to have the dinner ready beforehand, so that the two aunties could have plenty of time to talk together, and to play games with the children. That is why each family took a great big dinner-basket when they went to see the other.

It was a little later that same morning when Uncle Charley put an armful of sweet hay into his big farm sled, and tucked the quilts and blankets around Aunt Mary and their three children.

"We must go by the hill road this time, papa," said Harry, "for what if Uncle John's folks should be coming to see us? You know they always come that way; Jessie said so last time I saw her,"

And so just as Uncle Charley is fairly out of sight on the hill road, here comes Uncle John on the spring road!

"Well, I declare!" he says, as he knocks and tries the door. "We've missed them, sure enough!"

"You will find the key," says Aunt Clara, "under the left-hand edge of the kitchen door-step. Aunt Mary would want us to go in and warm, of course."

So they went in and found the fires still bright.

"Why, they've only just gone!" said Uncle John.

"And what's this? Oh what's this?" cried Jessie.

"It's the dinner! Oh it's the dinner! Their great big dinner basket!" cried Kitty. And they began to jump and dance about it, and to peep under the cover, giggling and talking, both at once.

"Oh they forgot it!" "Oh dough-nuts!" "Oh chicken-pie!" "A big, big chicken-pie!"

By this time Aunt Clara had taken off her wrap and Baby Fay's, and had made up her mind what to do.

"They will soon be back," she said. "I will lay the cloth, John, and set things to warm. Aunt Mary shall not do all the work this time."

So Uncle John put old Prince into the barn and Aunt Clara put the big, big chicken-pie into the oven. And Kitty and Jessie played with Baby Fay while she set the table. When all was ready, and Uncle John had come in and sat reading, there came a loud knock at the door. They all went to open it, and then what fun there was!

"Why how do you do, Mrs. Brown?" said Aunt Clara to Aunt Mary. "I'm *very* glad to see you! I hope you are all well. We thought you might possibly visit us to-day!"

"And how do *you* do, Mr. Brown?" Uncle John was saying. "How do you like our new house? Finest farm in the country, Mr. Brown! Come and put up your horses. Plenty of room in our barn."

The little folks laughed very hard at this, and the two babies chuckled and crowed as if they knew all about it.

And there was more fun that day than ever before, for you see there was a double joke and a double sleigh-ride and, best of all, a double dinner.—Eudora S. Bumstead, in Youth's Companion.

LITTLE FAILINGS.

Hints to Some Children as to How and Where They May Improve Their Conduct.

So many little girls, and boys too, intend to do just right, and do *not* do just right in a variety of little ways, perhaps it may help some of them to be told just how and where they can do better.

A dear little friend of mine is very sweet tempered and obliging indeed, but she is very fond of her book and her play and she rarely likes to go to bed at the proper hour in the evening. Her name is Lucy, and she is a great pet in the home where she belongs.

Now Lucy, like all little girls who play and get tired, needs just about nine hours sleep out of the twenty-four. It takes a few moments to get to bed at night, to undress, say her prayers, etc.; about one-half hour all told, or if she is very spry, fifteen minutes to twenty minutes in time. The family breakfast punctually at seven o'clock in the morning, and as this is the best time for visiting with her papa and her brother she has during the day, they like to have her with them at breakfast. The rising bell rings at half past six, and Lucy needs the full half hour to dress in. So unless she gets off to bed punctually at nine in the evening she can not possibly get sleep enough to keep her strong and well. It is no use trying to cheat old dame Nature. Little children who are growing must have nine hours sleep at least, sometimes they need more than that. Very rarely, indeed, can they get along with less, and the old lady is exacting of every minute of time and takes her pay for cheating her out of it by nervousness and tears. Lucy has to pay whenever she tries to do without nine hours sleep; sometimes with a headache, sometimes by being cross.

Now Lucy's mother is a very kind and wise woman. It grieves her that her little girl is so dilatory in the evening about getting to bed. But she knows all habits must be formed by a willing mind in the brain of the little girl to make them of any real service And so when she sees Lucy quite absorbed in her book or play, she simply says, "Nine, Lucy." "In just a minute, mamma," replies Lucy. And in just one minute her mamma sometimes reminds her. "The minute is past, Lucy." "Oh, mamma!" exclaims Lucy. But mamma is firm, and the book or play must be dropped. Lucy is too conscientious and too amiable, and her mamma has trained her too wisely to have her do any thing but obey at once. In fact, her habit of putting off going to bed was noticed almost as soon as it began to form by her wise mamma, who is thus checking it and helping her little girl into better ways.

But you say your mamma does not say any thing to you when nine o'clock comes. Perhaps if you asked her to she would. Try it and see. Little Agnes Mayhew is very fond of romping. She loves the out-door air, the sunshine, and delights in sliding down hill and snowballing with the boys. She is getting very rude indeed, so much so I am sure her brother, a year and a half older, felt very much ashamed of her the other day. She does not like to be called "tomboy," oh no, but if she would only learn to be a little less boisterous what a comfort she could be to all the rest of the family who really like to see her enjoy herself but wish she would be a little ladylike in doing it just as her brother Ed. is gentlemanly in his play. Do you know any little girls like her? And do you believe if they only stopped to think how rude they really were behaving they would play in that fashion any more?

In playing games Susie Marshall is not quite honest. How do you suppose she would feel if she were found out in her every little trick? And how would you feel if you were in her place? And isn't it better to be honest all through whether you are found out or not. If you are a poor player, why learn to play better, and make up by skill what you hope to gain by dishonesty. Other little girls do not practice their music as well when the teacher is not with them. They dawdle away their practice hour and forget that music lessons cost money, and unless they are conscientious in practicing they might as well not take lessons at all. Then some forget to do their little work well. They think they will learn it all by and by, and when by and by comes they haven't learnt it at all, and then there is something else more important to be done.

If every little girl could remember that what she does now is the most important thing in the world for her, she would make a great many less mistakes than she is apt to do. And a great many little faults would disappear just like snow under a warm sunshine.

It is to-day we learn the lesson; to-morrow will bring another. Not the same, but its value is reckoned by how well we knew the other.—Christian at Work.

The Natives of Samoa.

The natives are a frank, simple race of people, possessed of undoubted courage and "grit." They go to war in their long canoes, always with a song, the melody of which is not unlike some of our old plantation songs, and it serves to time their paddles, all of which seek the water with methodical precision. In complexion they are mostly of a light copper color, though some are shades darker and a few nearly white. Their features are expressive, and are illumined by dark lustrous eyes, that laugh and talk in a language of their own. Their diet is almost purely vegetarian, and fruits form the principal part. The women are usually handsome and well developed, and are possessed of a natural grace that would be the envy of the girls of our land. They are, as a class, virtuous and retiring. Of course the climate prohibits the use of superfluous clothing, and the Samoan belle is not usually clothed as extensively as she might be, but nevertheless the "lava-lava," or colored scarf, which most women wear is hastily drawn around the form when foreign eyes are near. They are generous and affectionate in disposition, and, it is said, make good wives and mothers. Many of them are married to white settlers, and are regular attendants at the pretty Catholic Church on Sunday.—Cor. Washington Star.

—Things One Would Rather Have Left Unsaid. (A winter health resort.) Enthusiastic Lady Visitor—What a delightful place this is, professor And the baths, how perfect! I could bathe all day, couldn't you? The Professor—Well, you see, I'm a resident, and that makes a difference. Lady Visitor.—Ah! to be sure. I suppose you never ever think of taking a bath!—London Punch.

—Jones, who is an inveterate diner-er-out, is also a bit of a philosopher. This is his latest "mot": "I hear a great deal about the slowness of the turtle, but notice that he generally arrives in time for the soup."—Judge.

—Customer—I don't know just exactly what's the matter with me. I think I need a tonic. Drug Clerk (late of Kansas)—Ah, certainly. How much do you want—pint, or quart?"—Terre Haute Express.

—A good man in Arizona, who had been chosen superintendent of the Sunday school, was pained to read in the local paper the lurid announcement that he had been "chosen to run a Sunday school."

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Jas. Woodfork, Sec.

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