



Aunt Dorothy's Letter

Dear Children: One evening a short time since I observed for some time a little girl intently watching something that was going on among the grasses and along the flagstones in her dooryard. At length she called out to me. "Oh, come here! I want to show you something." I went down to where she was and found the "something" to be a collection of ant hills.

I thought it would, and told her so, but first I said let us see what you have really found but these little fresh-made sand hills that may be destroyed by the foot-step of a passerby or the whisk of the housemaid's broom. If, however, you could carefully lift up the flagstones and bricks at the edges of which these sand hills are built you would find in the damp earth beneath the real reason for all this activity of the ants that you have been watching.

In every family of ants there are what are called minor, workers and soldiers. Each colony has one or more queens. All this is very much after the system of hives or colonies of bees. Perhaps, to tell you that the males are a kind of drones or do-nothings, that die soon after swarming. The workers are usually the smaller members of the colony, mostly females, and the soldiers are the larger and stronger ants selected from among the workers.

The queen devotes herself exclusively to the laying of eggs and goes about very lazily, just as you would expect a queen to do, attended by workers, who feed her and gather the eggs and store them away, much as an old-fashioned monarch would do with the various sacks and bags of grain as they came to his mill.

There is one very funny thing that the ants do, and that is they keep and milk cows. There is an insect called aphidae or plant lice, whose body contains a tiny particle of white, sweet substance. It is the duty of some of the workers to catch these plant lice and milk them of this sweet substance and carry it home to be stored with the other food. These plant lice, it is said, are often taken home to the nest and kept like cows, so that whenever they are ready to be milked again they are so treated.

Those who have watched the ants closely say that they offend most readily when the weather will allow them to, never stopping night or day for anything, for days at a time. There are days or times when they turn out for sport or pastime. One writer says he saw a number of them on their picnic occasions, when for a long while at intervals they danced and played about like lambs and kittens.

Some of their nests are built as high as the hills, partly above and partly below the ground. In southern climates it is said that some of these hills reach the height of fifteen feet or more. They build their roadways and tunnels with great precision and beauty. Their bridges are said to be models of architecture in some respects.

A writer has been found who says that in South America he has discovered them nesting in river beds. We can hardly ask you to believe this, however. It is hardly proven.

The soldier ants oftentimes meet hostile tribes and pursue them as in battle. When overtaken the pursuers mount upon the backs of their foes and saw their heads off with their ravenous jaws.

If you will carefully part the grasses in your dooryards you will generally find ant roads with the little insects hurrying over them to and fro, busy with their work. And if you have a magnifying glass to use rightfully and will employ it freely you will see among the grasses wonders that you never dreamed existed.

A Fourth of July Prize Offer.

Dear Children: You are no doubt having a glorious time today, as it is the day of all days for an American child to enjoy. Now, while we think of it, let us decide at once, for I know you are willing, to take the Fourth of July for the subject of our summer composition contest. Next September, when school opens, we will give two kinds of prizes, five of each—one of money or toys, as you may desire, and one of books, the money or toy to the child and the book for its library to the class in school to which the child belongs—for the best short story or descriptive letter received about this holiday and why we have it. Write on one side of the sheet only in ink. Send in with the paper your name, address and age written on a coupon taken from this page. Any child reader may compete. Send your papers to your teacher by September 15, asking him or her to send them, together with his or her address, to the children's prize editor of this paper.

A committee consisting of five teachers, editors and authors who are well known as being interested in children will decide upon the winners, and the best stories will be published. Illustrations by sketch or photograph will be permissible and used if good enough for reproduction. Now, set to work and get out your histories and reference books, so that you may base your stories on facts. Perhaps you may find some interesting historical anecdote also about this holiday to relate in your own way by questioning your friends or by looking up old library books on this subject. Do your best, so that your teacher may feel proud of your progress, and also that you may perhaps win a prize for your story.

Next week we hope to receive at least a hundred letters from you telling us what you did on this day to make it pass pleasantly. I know it passed quickly, it always does for busy children. I hope you will find some interesting subject to write about. Do your best, so that your teacher may feel proud of your progress, and also that you may perhaps win a prize for your story. The prizes awarded for June have been sent and will be announced next week.

Yours cordially,
THE CHILDREN'S PRIZE EDITOR.

Children's Sunshine League

MEMBERSHIP COUPON.
International President and Director, Mrs. Louise E. Hogan.
International Headquarters, 96 5th Avenue, New York, N. Y.
International Secretary, Miss Hortense McKee, Box 206, Washington, D. C.
National Weekly Organ, the Saturday Edition of The Washington Star.
I promise to try every day to add happiness to some one's life by being kind or passing on some kindness given me.
I promise to try to earn each month a penny, a postage stamp, a nickel or a dime for the Sunshine League fund.
I promise to write to my president once a month and tell her what I am doing to help others and what I can do to help her help others.
Please enclose my name and send my badge, some of our Children's League members have enclosed stamped and self-addressed envelopes.

LETTER BOX

Dear Aunt Dorothy: I went to the Zoo Tuesday. When I saw the monkeys they all made faces at me. I have never written to the Saturday Star and I will feel very happy to see my name in the paper if you like it.
ALICE B., Age 7.
(We are very glad to get your letter, Alice. We hope the monkeys made pleasant faces at you. Can't you write us a short letter telling us of the most interesting things that you saw at the Zoo?—Ed.)

Washington.
Dear Aunt Dorothy: I am so glad school is going to close. I am twelve years old and in the seventh grade, and I think that when girls get that

ON THE FOURTH.



old they should do more than play the summer holidays through. There are so many things they can do to help their mothers, especially if they are a large family, with several small children to be looked after, dressed and kept out of mischief and even husking corn and shelling peas. They can also help as well as the girls, by running on errands, sweeping the front pavement and even husking corn and shelling peas. If there is no work to do, or baby to amuse or take care of, they can make the home bright by being cheerful in all that they do.

I certainly have enjoyed reading the stories and letters that appear on the children's page, though I have never attempted to write anything before. I wish that a child's page would be in The Star every evening instead of just once a week. Thanking you and all the girls and boys who help to make the page what it is, and hoping that it will never cease to be in The Star, but grow brighter and better, I am your loving friend,
MARGOLD W., Age 12.

(We thank you very much for your good words and words of encouragement. Now, won't you try in a nice, true story to help brighten the children's page of The Star?—Ed.)

Zella M. of Garfield, D. C., writes a nice letter telling how much she likes the children's page of The Star. We wish that she would do her best to write a letter for it. She could not find any interesting subject of course you can join the Sunshine League. Send your coupon to Headquarters.

Dear Aunt Dorothy: Last week I forgot to thank you and tell you my great pleasure. I saw in the paper that you were receiving a prize. I was delighted. It is very kind of you to put my stories in the children's page, and I am glad to know that you are so interested in my work. I am very sorry that "Topsy on the Top Floor" is finished. Your friend,
ELEANOR F. F., Age 11.

We thank Albert B. S. for his Indian story and will print it very soon.



OUR STORY CLUB

The Story of a Frog.

How happy my little goldfish were to play in and out the cool moss in their globe. Little did they know that some queer little creatures would soon come forth to play hide and seek with them. Hidden in the moss were some tiny eggs, which looked like the heads of black pins covered with a soft, sticky substance. Soon were seen some little black things wriggling about in the water trying to catch the golden fish. Only a few of these little wrigglers were allowed to remain in the globe to be the companions of the goldfish. It was very interesting to watch the changes in their color.

Their color became a light brown, their bodies grew large and fat and their eyes, once so small, became big and bright. They almost popped out of their heads. Soon were seen a pair of hind legs and not long after their little front legs appeared. All this time the tail was getting shorter and shorter, until it finally disappeared. One morning the little frog jumped all over for their friends. They could not be found. Upon looking on top of the castle what do you think they saw?

Three little frogs. PIERCE H.—Age 7.

The Fireman's Dog "Teddy."

I live across from number 7 engine house. They have a dog that will run after anything. One day I asked my mother for a cent, which I went for a rubber ball. One evening I was playing with it when "Teddy," the dog, caught it and, without chewing it, he swallowed it whole. The firemen thought he would make him sick, but it did not. After this I was careful. FRIEDRICH G.—Age 9.

BRUNO.

BY DOROTHY NEWTON EARP.
"Veetch ee zay to ze peacka-neeka grounds"
Little Agnes Lee and her sister Eleanor were walking along a dusty country road when they heard this question.
Agnes was eight years old; sister Eleanor was twice as old plus four.
Agnes thought her sister's prettiest and sweetest sister in the whole world, and no wonder, for she was never cross or impatient and was always ready to take an interest in Agnes' plays, and such dolls' dresses as she could make!

The two sisters were spending the summer at a roomy old farm house in the Blue Ridge mountains, and would not go back to their city home until late in the autumn; then both loved the country, and the pure fresh air and sunshine were making the roses bloom in Agnes' pale little cheeks.
"Veetch ee zay to ze peacka-neeka grounds"
"What a strange-looking man it was who repeated this question, a little crossly, for they had not answered him at first."
He had on a shabby old brown velvet jacket with trousers to match; his face was brown, and so was his cap, and in his ears were large, floppy, gold-colored earrings. It had been a hot day, and the people to gather together each year for a day in the woods, and at the time of the picnic, the morning the farmer and his wife had invited Agnes and her sister to go with them. They had never been to a picnic in the country, and accepted gladly.

"The 'Glen woods,' where the picnic party was gathered, was not more than a half a mile away, and the sisters were almost there when they were overtaken by this strange-looking man. When he heard that the place was close at hand he said: "Thank you, my dear, then I'll certainly call to some one who seemed to be around the bend of the road—"Koom ahn, koom ahn! Zeech ee zay vay."
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