

Letters to Aunt Laurie From Nephews and Nieces

THE SKY WAS INVISIBLE
BECAUSE OF DENSE SHRUBBERY

FIRST PRIZE

Dear Aunt Laurie:
In Michigan are great forests of pine, maple, oak, evergreens, chestnut and oh, so many other kinds of trees. On one of my many rambles through the woods, with my brothers, I saw a section of the forest which I will never forget. As we wandered through the forest the trees became thicker, causing the sun less frequently to visit the flowers and the larger plants gave place to maidenhair ferns, trailing arbutus, grapevines and innumerable other plants and moss. The trees afforded the necessary shade for the ferns and soon even the little shy yellow and white violets would peek out, as it seemed, as we passed.

While we ate our lunch the orchestra was the song of the whippoorwill and our clowns the dear, almost tame red squirrels, which came to get the bread we gave them. Our porch was the shelter of the boughs of the largest and most beautiful beech tree I have ever seen.

After filling our lunch baskets with beechnuts and acorns we penetrated deeper into the forest until we came to a high ledge, which we climbed by means of the grapevines that clung so closely to the ledge. When we reached the top we could see Lake Michigan in the west, in the east we could see a few farm houses and to the north and south we could see acre upon acre—yes, even hundreds of acres—of woods so thick it looked as though we could walk across the tops.

Before starting home we ate a great many of the beechnuts and acorns and then filled our basket with grapes from the vines which had done us such a good service.

I hope that one and all of my cousins may visit Stony Creek, Michigan, some day.

HELEN G. MACE.
R. F. D. No. 1, box 305E, Long Beach, Cal. H. J. C. No. 2.

A COBWEB WAS THE PORTIERE
IN AN OLD HOLLOW TREE

HONORABLE MENTION

Dear Aunt Laurie:
One bright afternoon in May we planned a trip to the woods, and being only a short distance from our home we soon were there.

We first walked upon a long bridge which reached across the canyon and high above us was the dam, over which the water was pouring. Then we went down into the canyon. Looking up we saw high above us trees growing upon the steep and rocky sides of the canyon.

To get below the dam we had to walk across a shallow creek to the other side and climb over the granite rocks. One of the rocks had my initials cut on its side.

My brother, my sister and the dog climbed a high cliff and then came safely down.

After while my father and mother said that it was time to start home, so we again went upon the bridge, after passing among the trees. One tree I noticed was hollow. My brother, sister and I looking in, saw a cobweb like a portiere hanging to the wall.

We sat down to rest awhile and to listen to the birds' song and to watch the little squirrel play about the trees.

Then we started home, but soon missed our dog. My brothers went back for him and calling, "Sheppe! Sheppe! here Sheppe!" He came running and seemed real glad to see us.

Then we went home and had tea. I felt tired, but had a good time among the rocks and the trees.

ROSS HAMMER.
3602 Central avenue, East Vernon school, grade 5; age 1.

WANDERED OVER MOUNTAIN
IN SEARCH OF THE TRAIL

HONORABLE MENTION

Dear Aunt Laurie:
In the spring of 1909 we started out on a six months' camping trip up into the big redwoods. We went in a wagon, and drove from Los Angeles to a little town called Three Rivers, going through Bakersfield, Visalia and Lemon Cove. From Three Rivers we went on up to Paradise ranch, where we left our horse and wagon, and took the mountain trails up into the woods proper.

The first day we did not go very far, as we did not get into Paradise ranch till about noon, but the second day we walked all day. It was so beautiful up there, the snow glistening underfoot, and the blue sky overhead, with the trees towering hundreds of feet above us. Coming down we got lost, and wandered around for about an hour and a half, but finally, as good

High Prices



Special Prize Drawing by Helen Howell, 117 North Avenue 66, Los Angeles High School

"Thirty cents for a small mud pie! Don't you think that's rather high?" We asked of little Nan and Sue.

"Thirty cents should buy us two!" "We would like to sell them so," Answered Nan, "but don't you know,"

And she paused to fill a cup. "Water 'n' sand have both gone up!" Adelbert Caldwell in Youth's Companion.

luck would have it, we found the trail and got down safely.

We stayed up these some time, and when we got ready to come back to Los Angeles we drove to Portersville, sold our outfit and came back on the train.

HUGH G. HAMILTON.
3930 Marmion way.

OLD ROVER STARTLES YOUNG
HUNTERS FOR THE NIGHT

HONORABLE MENTION

Dear Aunt Laurie:
The three chums, as we are known throughout our home town, took a short vacation trip to the woods last summer.

"Is the lantern on? Where are the steel traps?"

"Oh, everything is on. All aboard, if you can't get a board get a rail."

This conversation was heard at about 3 a. m. one July morning as we were about to depart upon the trip. The party included Tom, a neighbor boy; Jack, my brother, and myself.

The morning was clear, and we were all in the best of spirits. Our wagon was drawn by a pair of iron gray ponies which made remarkably good time up the mountain road, and noon found us at our destination. Camp was pitched, and the afternoon passed in arranging things around the tent.

After supper we put out the fire, rolled up in our sleeping bags and were soon off to the land of Nod. I was awakened in the midst of my dreams by what I thought was a coyote jumping on my face. I reached for my gun, but was unable to find it, as is usually the case when you really need one. The lantern was lit, and glancing up on the ridge pole of the tent I was astonished to find that our dressed chicken which we had brought from home was missing, and consequently we had to go without chicken the next day.

As we lay there in the quiet of that July night talking and listening to the hoot of the owl and call of the night-hawk we were again surprised on hearing what seemed to us a large animal sniffing around outside. The sound came closer. We picked up the guns and sat all three peering out the door of our tent, with the guns raised ready to fire at the first sight of the beast. The next instant the creature, with a bound which seemed to hypnotize the hunters, who were so brave a few minutes ago, came into the tent and lay down on my lap. We were amazed to see old Rover, our pet St. Bernard, who on being left at home had broken his rope and followed our trail up the canyon road.

It was nearly morning, and all were

now ready to go across to watch the sun rise. This was a most beautiful sight as the sun threw its rays of light across the vast stretch of open country which lay before us, spread out in the form of a flat table, with the distant mountains forming an outer rim around the edge.

After breakfast the morning was passed hunting for the invertebrate which we were told lived here, but we did not even catch so much as a flying glimpse of the little animal, and we returned home that afternoon tired, but feeling much the better for our short outing.

ROBERT TABER.
Riverside high school, second year.
311 East Seventh street.

TROUT FISHING

Dear Aunt Laurie:
One Sunday as I was coming home I saw a girl coming to meet me.

On nearing her I saw it was my cousin Bessie, and I ran to meet her.

"Oh, Doris!" Bessie exclaimed, "what do you think; mother is at Aunt Alice's and Aunt Alice, mamma, you and I are going to start to the woods tomorrow at 5 o'clock in the morning."

"Oh, Bessie!" I exclaimed, "are we really going?"

And we both raced to the house, had our supper and were soon having pleasant dreams of woodland fairies.

It seemed to us as though we hadn't been asleep more than five minutes when our mothers called us. We jumped out of bed, dressed and went down stairs. Breakfast was ready, the horses were hitched and we climbed in and started.

When we reached the woods we ran about in the fresh air picking flowers. We soon found a brook in which there were many trout. We were delighted and ran to tell our mothers.

Our mothers gave us some pails and we brought some nice, clear, cool water. Then Bessie and I gathered up some sticks and mamma made a fire.

When we had finished our supper we took some fish lines and went to the brook to catch some fish for breakfast. Bessie caught five trout and I caught seven.

The next morning we got up early before our mothers and went to the brook to hunt pretty stones and leaves.

When we reached the camp our mothers were alarmed, so after that we never went away without telling them.

When we reached home we were ready for school and had many stories to tell our friends. Your loving niece,
DORIS K. ROBINSON.

Rivera postoffice, R. F. D., route No. 1; age 10; grade 5, Ranchito school.

THE SUN GLADDENS
THE HEARTS OF PICNICERS

SECOND PRIZE

Dear Aunt Laurie:
We spent a delightful day in the canyon near Santa Barbara several years ago, and so I have tried to write it to you.

We were all up at the first streak of dawn—eight of us—and a jolly eight it was.

As the gray slowly lifted the sun came out so brightly that its glory set all the dewdrops glistening like innumerable diamonds and the gauzy cobwebs that were spun from flower to flower looked like the work of a tiny fairy.

The day promised to be as fine as one could wish and with baskets of goodies such as only mothers know how to make, and high spirits, we started on our trip to the canyon.

We had a short distance to go by water and as we rode smoothly over the billowy deep out hearts kept time to each motion of the boat that brought us closer to our destination.

You may well imagine how excited some of us were, because we had just come from the middle west to California and were going to see a canyon for the first time.

We decided to have lunch immediately on reaching it, and after landing and pulling our boat up on shore we all started to find a suitable place to lunch.

The canyon ran almost down to the shore and it took but a short time to select a shady spot beside a tiny trickling brook that ran almost noiselessly along its brown bed to fall at intervals along its rocky way.

There was a large flat stone overhung by wild raspberry vines and ferns—an ideal spot for picnickers—and there we spread our cloth.

Never did bread and butter and such commonplace things taste so good.

After gathering up the remains of our feast we climbed the trail and played games until we were reminded by the sun, which was quickly dropping toward the western horizon, that we must return.

As we again slid into the water and sent the boat skimming toward home we watched with delight the foam that danced and eddied about us and sang for sheer joy.

The sun as it set lingered for a moment to have a last look across the sparkling, dimpled waves, bathed in the glory of his own light to where a lone boat floated on the azure bosom