Morning Star and Catholic Messenger.

NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, JUNE 28 1874.

JUVENILE COLUMN.

THE STORY OF THE WELL.

"Oh May," said Jennie Driscoll, skipping gaily into the room. "I've had such a lovely time with Aunt Lizzie, she has been telling me all manner of fairy tales, one was about a wishing cup.

"A wishing cup," said May, fixing her large tired eyes on her sister's beaming countenance; "how I wish those fairy tales were really true and that I too possessed a wishing cup."

"And what would poor sick May wish for?" said Jennie kissing her little twin sister softly on both cheeks.

"What would I wish for?" added the other dreamily, "perhaps for green fields and bright singing birds; I imagine I would grow stronger and brighter, Jennie, if I could sit in a large green field, under some old shady tree, and listen to the birds warbling in the sunshine."

"Your wish is granted, May darling!" cried Jennie looking through the window and clapping her hands merrily, "for here comes uncle Benny all the way from Oakdale. Dear, kind uncle Benny, we must coax him to take us with him to the farm. Lean forward, May, and wave your handkerchief," she added in a flutter of delight.

May leaned forward from her easy chair with a little flush of excitement, and feebly waved a blue scarf which she caught from her neck at Uncle Benny, who slowly reining in his horse and hitching him to the iron post at the door, bounded up the steps and the next moment had the little invalid's face between his great rough hands, telling her she must come with him to the country, until blooming roses would grow on her cheeks again.

Papa and mamma's consent to this plan was obtained, and after Uncle Benny spent a pleasant morning at the little girls' city home, he tucked them snugly in his carriage, placing soft cushions at May's back that she might rest more easily; and then when a pleasant 'by bye' had been exchanged with their parents who lingered lovingly at the gate, the carriage rolled away and May felt indeed that the long wished-for journey to the country had really and truly begun.

The sun was just rosily sinking behind the high hill of Oakdale when the little girls alighted at Uncle Benny's home.

It was a handsome, roomy farm house, with a glorious orchard attached to it, and tall old trees hedging it in.

Uncle Benny's wife gathered the little girls to her heart in a fond welcome, and then hand in hand led them to the house. The next day their kind uncle put up a swing for them among the shady trees and built them a charming little summer house that on very warm days they might enjoy the open air and still be protected from the beaming sun.

Many happy hours they passed thus in the peaceful shade of the old farm, and often during their stay if they wandered away in the woods, their arms twined around each other's waist listening to the birds and forgetting the dinner-bell, Uncle Benny would follow them with the steps of affection, and perhaps find them trembling with delight at sight of some newly discovered flower, or gathering the light transparent harebell, or plucking the rich festoons of the bindweed from the hedges, or its trails from the fresh sweet grass.

Then he would lay down two heavy baskets and spread a snow white cover over the daisies, and place before them a meal that would make their mouths water with delicious expectation.

"Dear Uncle Benny!" they would exclaim in the fullness of affection, and clasp their arms about his neck, and kiss his rough bearded cheeks, and think there was no one in the world half so kind or beautiful; but the time at length came when Jennie and May must return to their city home.

They were out in the wood, some pretty fritillaries had led them into a marsh, and they were busily plucking them, standing on stepping stones to keep their feet dry, when the sound of a cheerful voice caused them to peer excitedly through the bushes.

The next moment they were clasped in their dear papa's arms.

"Why, May, darling!" he exclaimed, kissing her over and over again, "how bright and healthy you look."

"And, oh papa, I am so happy here," she cried.

"But you must come home now, darling," he said smoothing her soft curls, "mamma is lonesome for her pets; by and bye I shall buy a nice little country cottage near Uncle Benny's and we shall all come here to live, won't that be nice; what pretty flowers my pets have been picking." The girls held up their bouquets and placed them in their father's hand.

"See the harebells, papa," said Jenny, aren't they really beautiful."

"Yes," said he, "they are so light and delicate, one can almost think he can see the atmosphere through them."

"Or that an angel dropped them," broke in May. "And papa, do look at the leaves on the trees, how beautifully they flutter in the sunshine."

"Yes," said their father walking on and holding each little daughter tenderly by the hand, "and in a short while autumn will change those same leaves into the richest hues, you shall come here again in the autumn and go into the wood and notice what a great painter God is, no artist can transfer to his work of art the delicacy of nature, the most beautiful leaves and flowers created by the genius of man, are but feeble imitations of God's work; it is well for my little darlings to often look around them and think what a beautiful place God has given us to dwell in during our stay, and what a much more beautiful place he has prepared for us beyond the bright blue sky."

The little girls grew thoughtful, for the words of their father filled their hearts.

At that moment Uncle Benny was seen coming toward them with his good natured smile.

"There are some friends at the house waiting to see you," he said to Mr. Driscoll and then added "it is time I should feed my lambs and if the little pets would like to come with me, I should like to have them." They had never seen Uncle Benny feed the lambs, and catching hold of his hands they gleefully chatted along at his side until suddenly they came upon the orchard well.

Slowly Uncle Benny unwound the rope from the windlass and let down the "old oaken bucket," then drew up the bright sparkling spring water and poured it into large wooden vessels for the snow white lambs that were waiting for a drink.

"How dark the well is," cried May timidly peeping down while another bucketful was being slowly raised from the spring.

"And how awful deep," said Jennie venturing nearer the brink and tightening her arm around little May's waist.

"Yes," said Uncle Benny "it is deep and dark enough, and there is a dark story of disobedience connected with it too."

"A story," cried the girls in a breath, "oh, dear uncle, do tell us the story of the well."

"Well," said he pausing, and resting his arm on the well-curb, "thirty years ago a boy about your age, girls, met with a lesson which he never forgot; he was a disobedient lad, alway causing his parents pain by his bad conduct; one night his little sisters were ill with scarlet fever, three of them, the youngest of the three he loved dearly and she seemed to be in greater danger then the others. The boy's mother charged him to hasten for a physician, and warned him to be faithful in delivering his errand, for, should be loiter by the way his little favorite might die. I have told you before, girls, the boy loved the child tenderly; every day he would twine her arms around his neck and raise her little rosy mouth to him for a kiss, and if she saw him weep after being punished for his waywardness, she would use her little apron to dry his tears and try to console him in her own gentle lisping way. She was a beautiful child, full of innocent love and tenderness; well the boy hastentened on his errand and met bad companions on the way. He must just join them, they said, for they were going to have a fine time setting fire to a certain haystack. At first he refused to join them, but gradually temptation prevailed, and the poor weak minded creature yielded."

"Yes, he yielded," continued Uncle Benny shaking his head slowly from side to side, "and when the mischief was done a reproachful sadness seized his heart at the thought of his little sister whom he had neglected, and fleeing from the wickedness he had shared in, determined to complete his errand though the hour was late. He was obliged in order to reach the doctor's by a shorter route to come through this same orchard. The night was dark and a sudden rain began to fall which made it still gloomier for the culprit; a new curb was building for this well at the time, the old one having been torn away by a hurricane, and boards were laid across the opening that no accidents might happen to passers-by. The boy, however, had committed a double wrong and God saw fit to punish him; he was hurrying along and his foot stumbled roughly on the loose boards and displaced them; in attempting to walk on he fell through the aperture he had made—fell, girls, down the dark well, flinging his arms wildly about him, striving in vain to catch at some support and shrieking out the most pitiful cries. At last his hand grasped a little projection once used for a stepping stone for those who descended at certain times to clean out the well. It was the only one left. There it is now, he added pointing down, there he hung, finding what little support he could for his feet against the rough sides of the well, uttering despairing cries for help; his body ached, his head was dizzy, his arms so weak that he felt each moment an age and each instant his last, his blood ran cold with horror as the fearful thought presented itself that his strength would give way before rescue would come and he would fall headlong into the cold dark waters below, and thus meet with the punishment he so richly deserved.

At last a cry for mercy arose from his lips to heaven, he wailed out that if he were saved from the terrible danger he would try in future to obey God's laws. God saw fit to hear him, he hung imploringly and trembling there, until the cold gray morning, when a passer-by hearing his feeble cries rescued him; he was carried to his home being too faint to walk, and there learned that his little favorite had died during the night while they were waiting in vain for him to return with the doctor, his mother being obliged to rely solely on him as a messenger. Girls, he added, he never disobeyed his parents again, *never*, and I think I may safely say, lived a strictly honorable life. That boy was your Uncle Bennie."

"You!" cried the children, gazing at him from head to foot in amazement, "is it possible, Uncle Benny, that you could ever in your life have done anything wicked," said Jennie.

"Ah, my pets," he said, "satan is strong and lies in wait for the young; you must always watch for his coming."

The girls could not for a while recover from their surprise. Uncle Benny in their eyes was perfection itself, and they could not bring themselves to realize that he was the wicked boy of the well. Then they felt a species of terror creeping over them at thoughts of one so dear to them ever having been in such danger.

Their father then appeared on the scene and May and Jennie were obliged to leave their kind uncle with a tender 'by bye,' and many loving words, and depart for their city home, when often they spoke to their companions about Oakdale and the story of the well.—*Young Crusader.*

The crop statistics attainable thus early in the season indicate that all sections of the country will be blessed with bountiful harvests. Of course such statistics are very far from being absolutely trustworthy, for the crops depend mainly on the future character of the season, and the season will be made by the weather, which is a byword for fickleness. But the fact that crop statistics are regularly collected tends to place the trade in the produce of the earth on a much securer basis than it occupied some years ago when the grain merchants of western Europe got nothing but temporary affluence and certain ultimate bankruptcy for their speculations on the weather, and the grain merchants of the Levant by a mysterious sort of weather wisdom got possession of the grain markets of London. The old dangers and uncertainties of grain speculations have not by any means been removed by the publication of such crop statistics as are now collected, and they are not likely to be effectually diminished until the international system of crop reports advocated by many eminent meteorologists shall be established. But, barring accidents, this will prove a prosperous year for American farmers. The wheat crop is in many sections as well assured as a wheat crop can be before harvesting. The West will have a good surplus of grain to export, and the South, with the promise of a good cotton crop, will also have an unusually large quantity of grain for home consumption.—*N. Y. World.*

HOW TO KEEP COOL.—Fenelon, the Quietist, may be studied with advantage in the dog-days "A patient, humble, tranquil spirit" is an excellent thing to cultivate during the heated term. This prime requisite being given, let people eat and drink moderately, as well as with an eye to judicious selection. Avoid habitual indulgence in alcoholic stimulants as if they were poison. Not because they raise the temperature of the body, for they do so only temporarily, their ultimate effect being a diminution of the amount of vital heat. But avoid them because they over-stimulate the system at the expense of succeeding languor; because they first overwork the heart and then depress it, leaving brain and muscle to pine for want of their due allowance of renovating blood. Malt liquors are directly heat-producing, and cannot be recommended to those who wish to keep cool; and butter, fat and sugar, in proportion as they enter into daily food, help to increase the bodily heat. Apply this rule freely to the exclusion of syrups from the seductive glass of soda, and let it, in addition to other reasons, beget moderate indulgence in ices. Copious draughts of hot tea will give more certain relief to to the parched and heated system than all the delusive iced drinks that have ever offered temporary alleviation of thirst and heat, at the expense of a debilitated stomach and an enfeebled system. Get as much air and as little light as possible, is a requisite for coolness unfortunately not much favored by our system of domestic architecture.

Chicago has just issued another one of those wonderful "directories" which show a great increase in the number of her people. Counting three and a half persons for each name in the new book the total population of the city is shown to be 532,000—an increase of 75,000 in the last year. We decline, however, to count three and a half persons for each name. Three and a half names for each person, if none of the names are parted in the middle, might be counted, but we do not think that strict accuracy would be arrived at by the other process. A little mild exaggeration, occasionally, may be of service to a rising American town, but when it asks us to swallow 75,000 new people every year we experience a choking sensation over which we have no control.—*Louisville Courier-Journal.*
