OUR GIRLS AND BOYS

"February makes a bridge — Conducted by Polly Evans — and March breaks it"

The Gardener's Little Helper

ONLY a few weeks ago you boys and girls learned how a little girl named Mary made the acquaintance of a neighboring gardener, a nice German gardener, by the name of Trommel, and how she started in soon after Christmas to be his little assistant.

First she learned the important lesson of how to pot a plant. Then she learned to do other things.

One day on her arrival at the greenhouses she found Herr Trommel exercising the garden hose on his plants.

"That is what makes the plants so lovely and green, isn't it, Mr. Trommel? You give them a bath so often."

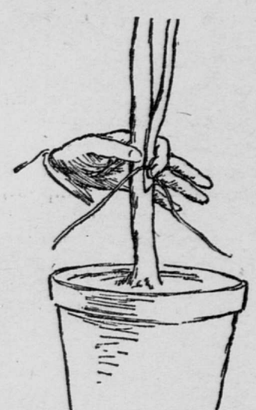
"That is right; they cannot breathe if they are not clean; they breathe all over their bodies, not like we do, through a mouth and nose. Were you ever away in the country where you could not have a bathtub, and instead had to be sponged all over for your bath?"

Mary nodded.

"Yes; well, that is the kind of bath the plants must sometimes have when they are in your house. If you cannot give them a real shower bath, you must take a basin and a little water—not too cold—and a little sponge and sponge the leaves carefully as if you were washing the baby, then they can breathe."

"What is that you are doing?" asked Mary.

For by this time Herr Trommel had finished the watering of his plants and was sitting by a low bench, and had in front of him a row of balls of earth almost as large as croquet balls, and protruding from each one was what looked like a dead brown stick. "What is that?" she asked again, as Mr. Trommel picked up one of these unmeaning-looking balls.



HOW GRAFTING IS DONE

"This is grafting," he answered. "This in my hand, this is the stock." He held it wedged between his knees while he selected a smooth, green, prosperous-looking young shoot from a few he had lain beside him. "And this; this is the scion—that is, the baby he must adopt."

He held the little twig between his lips.

"See, I take a little slice off the stock—that is, the papa—so." He laid it aside and took the young shoot again in his hand. "Then I take a little slice off the baby—so" (suiting the action to the word and making a clean, smooth cut with his knife). He took up the stock again, and the two cut surfaces fitted together beautifully. Holding them with thumb and finger, he pulled a strand of raffia from the bunch thrust through his apron-strings and began to wind it around the two as carefully as if he were bandaging a limb. "I tie them together—so."

"Now," said Mr. Trommel, and gave a little grunt as he fastened the raffia string, "the papa will have to provide for the little one. All that he gets to eat from the soil goes to make the baby fat. He can have no pretty clothes, no flowers on—the child has it all; he must just work, work, send out roots, and find something to eat. It is a hard life for the stock."

"Doesn't the little branch do anything?" asked Mary.

"No; the little one just lives off the papa, grows big, and looks pretty—that is all. Now, how about the garden you are going to have?"

WAIT UNTIL MARCH

"We-el," began the under-gardener again, "it's going to be in the back yard, and father says I can have all the ground I want at the back, but I mustn't go where Nora hangs the clothes, and I'm going to have a beautiful garden. Do you think I could make a greenhouse like yours?" she suggested.

"Oh, one does not want a greenhouse in the summer, when one can be outdoors. You should have a pretty little garden, and some garden-seats, yes? And perhaps a summer house for the lovely doll, yes? and pretty flowers all around that will not be much trouble—and little paths that are not for big folks among the flower-beds—"

The brown eyes widened with delight. "Oh, yes!"

"But first we must plant in boxes. It is too soon now, however. We must wait until March for that."

(From "Mary's Garden and How It Grew." Copyright, 1904, by The Century Co.)

The Little Mother

NOW, DOLLY DEAR, I'm going away,
I want you to be good all day.
Don't lose your shoes, nor soil your dress,
Nor get your hair all in a mess;
But sit quite still, and I will come
And kiss you soon as I get home.

I'd take you, dear, but then, you know,
It's Wilhelmina's turn to go.
She's sick, I'm 'fraid; her eyes don't work;
They open worse the more I jerk.
She used to be so straight and stout,
But now her sawdust's running out.
Her arm is out of order, dear—
My papa says she's "out of gear."
That's dreadful, isn't it? But then,
The air may make her well again.
So, Dolly, you'll be glad, I know,
To have poor Wilhelmina go.
Good-by, my precious; I must run—
To-morrow we'll have lots of fun.

—M. M. D., in "Baby Days."

"Arion and the Dolphins"

LAST week you heard how Arion left the court of Periander and went to Sicily, where he won fame and great treasures. Then he set sail for home, where he intended to pass the remainder of his life.

Arion thought the sea had never looked so blue, and that the breath of the wind had never been so mild and fair before.

His soul was filled with joy, and while he lay on the deck of the ship he sang and played on his lyre such music as had never been heard before. "O Periander," he called, "put all your fears away. Soon shall you forget your fears in my arms. With what joy will we show our gratitude to the gods. We will have a feast and make merry."

Thus many days passed on board the ship, and the wind and sea remained fair and warm; not a cloud could be seen in the heavens. Arion had never been so happy in all his life. He had forgotten all about those long days of trial when he was working hard for the prize.

One bright beautiful morning, however, as he was lying half asleep on the deck, he was awakened by hearing whispering voices near him. He lay very still and shut his eyes, as though still asleep, and by and by the voices came nearer. A group of sailors were whispering among themselves, and what do you think he heard? They were plotting to steal his treasures.

ASKED ONE FAVOR

He lay very still, trembling all over with fright, for what could he do all alone with these strong men? He said to himself: "The best thing I can do is to pretend I have heard nothing."

He had not long to wait, for in a short time they all came and surrounded him, and with loud voices, said: "Arion, we are going to kill you! If you wish to say anything, say it now." Then a big, red-faced man said: "No, boys, do not let us kill him. Make him jump into the sea himself and then none of us will feel bad about it. I do not like blood, and besides, he is too pretty a fellow to hurt."

At this poor Arion was frightened almost to death, but he had a brave heart, and that gave him courage to say: "Will nothing but my life satisfy you? Take all my wealth and let me live." They replied: "No, you would be too dangerous to us. How could we ever escape from Periander's wrath if you went back and told him we robbed you? No, you must die."

Arion then begged them to grant him one thing—that he might die as he had lived, as became a true musician and poet. He said: "When I sing my death song and my harp-strings can be heard no longer, then I will give you my body to do with as you will."

These wicked men would never have listened to him, for they were thinking only of the booty, but even the most wicked heart is made more gentle when it hears lovely music, and they remembered how beautiful Arion's music was, and said: "Yes, you may sing one last song and then you must jump into the sea."

"Let me put on my finest clothes before I go to my grave," said Arion.

"Well, hurry up about it," said the big, red-faced man.

DOLPHINS FOLLOWED

Arion dressed himself in all his finest things, and put his tunic about him in graceful folds. Over his neck and shoulders flowed his beautiful golden hair, and in his left hand he held his lyre and in his right hand a wand of ivory, with which he struck its chords.

Like one inspired, he seemed to drink in the beauties of the sea and air and the glittering sunbeams. Even the seamen gazed in wonder. He walked forward to the edge of the ship and sang. Then just as he finished the last note he stretched his arms toward heaven and jumped into the sea. The seamen ran to the side of the ship where Arion had jumped over and looked after him with horror in their faces, for even if their hearts were evil they did not enjoy seeing a noble youth go to his death.

But Arion's beautiful strains of music had attracted around the ship the inhabitants of the sea. Dolphins followed after the ship, as if some spell were upon them, and when Arion struggled with the cruel waves the biggest dolphin offered him his back and carried him safely off through miles of the deep sea until he came to land.

Arion was very tired but very glad when he found himself safe on land again. He felt so grateful to the dolphins that he would have liked to give them something to show his gratitude. Besides being grateful, he had become very fond of them. You see, he had traveled many hundred miles on the dolphin's back, and had plenty of time to make fast friends with them.

It must have been a very strange sight to see Arion sitting on a big dolphin's back with his beloved lyre in his hand singing aloud to his friends as they passed through the sea. The dolphin who carried Arion was accompanied by a whole school of dolphins, and they brought Arion food and fresh water to drink from deep down at the bottom of the sea.

ONE MORE SONG

Now when the time had come for them to part Arion felt sad and found it hard to say farewell, but he knew they must part, for he could not spend the rest of his life on the back of a fish, so he said, "Good-bye, oh, good and trusted friends! Would that I did not have to leave you. I shall never forget you, and if at any time you want me to do anything for you, call upon me and be sure I will come to your help. I shall pray that those of you who are ambitious may become Galatea's favorites, and that she may let you draw her chariot." (Galatea was the queen of the deep sea, and the greatest honor a dolphin can have is to draw Galatea's chariot.)

All the dolphins thanked him and asked him to sing one more song. Arion sang, and just as he sang the last word all the dolphins dived down in the water and disappeared. Thus Arion was spared the pain of saying farewell to them.

Arion lay down on the shore and rested for a while before starting out to find out where he was. After sleeping for some time he arose, and what should he see before him but the towers of Corinth!

How happy he was! He now journeyed on with his harp in his hand, singing as he went, full of happiness, forgetting all he had lost and only thinking of the joy of living and of his dear friend, the lyre. He at last came to the walls of his dear home, and shortly he was in the arms of the King Periander.

"O, great and truly loved King," he cried, "I have come back to you. The talents the gods have given me have pleased hundreds of people, but false knaves have stolen all my wealth." And then he told the King what had happened to him.

Periander heard all he said with amazement. He said he could hardly believe such wickedness could be.

"We will punish the villains. You must bide here, as they have not arrived yet. We can trap them when they come."

ACCUSED BY ARION

Not many hours passed before their ship came into the harbor, and the King sent at once for the captain and all on board to come to court, saying that he wanted to hear of his dear friend Arion.

They arrived at court looking gay and happy, little knowing what was in store for them.

Periander said, "Well, and how is Arion, and where is he?"

They replied: "We left him in Sicily in great wealth and glory."

Just as they said this Arion stepped before them, looking more beautiful than ever. He was clothed in gold and purple and ermine. His tunic had never fallen in such graceful folds before, jewels were on his arms, his head was crowned with gold, and all over his neck and shoulders flowed his golden hair. In his hand he held his beloved lyre and the ivory wand he always carried.

When the sailors saw him they fell on their faces in fear. Here was Arion whom they had thought drowned only a short time before.

"Was Arion become a god? Oh, that the earth might open and swallow us!" they cried.

Then Periander said: "You wicked and bad men, you see before you, indeed, Arion, master of music and song. Heaven alone took care of him, and he shall now decide what shall become of you villains."

Arion said: "I do not wish these bad men to die, but I would like them to be banished forever from their native land."

Then Periander called his servants and had the villains thrashed and put on a ship that was sailing away to lands unknown. The King then sent to the ship and got all of Arion's treasures and gave them back to him, with more besides, and Arion lived for many years after this, giving joy and comfort by his beautiful music and goodness.

To this day his poems give pleasure to many.

ELIZABETH K. RHEIN.

Why the Camelopard Has a Long Neck

UNCLE WASHINGTON had been to the circus, and was greatly excited over the many strange and wondrous things he had seen and heard. The Camel and the Elephant, the Lion and the "Royal Bengal Tiger," had all made a great impression on his mind; but the Giraffe, the "Cameleperd," as he called it, seemed more than anything else to carry him back to the home of his race, and it was therefore an easy task to extract from him the following tale:

"Way back yander," he began, "in dem ole days the cameleperd wasn't like he is to-day, with his long neck an' front legs. No, sub; he was just like one of dese here leperds—you saw one of them to-day—an' he'd a been dat away yet if it hadn't been for old Br'er Rabbit.

FOOD GAVE OUT

"One time there was a mighty long dry spell. The sun shine hot; the creeks an' the branches dry up, the grass withers an' the trees perish. Every day the critters move on toward the rivers, where the grass still grows. Each morning the sun shine hot, an' each evening all the grass done gone. Then the critters shove along till they come to another fresh place. The branches dry up, the rivers run dry. At last there isn't but one green spot left, an' the critters begin to get monstrous scarce. Each day some of the weakest critters die or get et up by the biggest. Br'er Rabbit an' Mr. Leperd had done took an' made 'em an agreement that come what may an' go what will, they stand by each other. They eat all they can get, an' ole Br'er Rabbit learn to eat nigh about all de different kind of meat there was; but still their vittles get scarcer an' scarcer.

"At last, there isn't anything left but the palm tree down by the big spring; all the critters done perished. The fruit so high there can't none of them reach it; the tree so big they can't none of them climb it. All the critters done perished. Br'er Rabbit an' Mr. Leperd they get empty in their insides. Mr. Leperd hug him stumick an' grunt an' groan; Br'er Rabbit he hug his stumick an' don't say nothing. Br'er Rabbit study an' study. At last he say:

"'Mr. Leperd, we uns can't perish.'

"'Don't talk to me, Br'er Rabbit; I'm sayin' my prayers.'

"'That don't do no good, Mr. Leperd; we uns got to save our ownselves.'

"'How we do that, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'Mr. Leperd, there ain't no other way; we got to stretch your neck.'

"'Ouch! O Lordy! Br'er Rabbit, it'll hurt my neck so!'

"'I know it, Mr. Leperd, but it's got to be did, or else we both perish. You don't want to perish, do you, Mr. Leperd?'

"'What do it going to do, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'Fix you so you can reach the fruits, Mr. Leperd.'

"'Well, I reckon it'll have to be did. How you gwine to stretch my neck?'

"'Dat's easy, Mr. Leperd. I'll just give you some of this here conjer powder. Dat'll make you anything you want to be. Make your neck an' legs as long as you want 'em.'

"'Where you get the conjer powder?'

"'Swiped it from the Hoo Doo Woman.'

"'How you know it work, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'Heard her say so before I took it.'

"'Why don't you take it yourself, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'How I look with a great, long neck on my tinchey body?'

"'How about me, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'You'll look fine, Mr. Leperd.'

"'That a fact, Br'er Rabbit?'

"'It sure is, Mr. Leperd.'

"'Then I'm gwine to take it, Br'er Rabbit.'

"'Now you're talkin' like a man, Mr. Leperd; now you're talkin' like a man. Now, then, you must be careful an' do just exactly like I say, kase, if you don't, there ain't no telling what might happen. So, then, you take this powder, an' you turn around three times, an' each time you turn around you must say:

"'Short front legs, go 'way;
Short neck, don't you stay.
I wanter be
Tall like that tree—
So I can eat an' live,
An' some of the fruit to the Rabbit give.
Coochie Poochie, do to-day
Just exactly what I say.'

"'An you mustn't leave out a single word; an', whatever else you do, don't you eat ne'er a bit of that there fruit till you give me some; kase if you do, it'll spoil the conjer, an' there ain't no tellin' what kind of trouble you might get we all into.'

"Mr. Leperd took an' took some of the powder, an' done like Br'er Rabbit told him, an' by the time he had turned around once he had grown a heap, an' by the third time he was the ornerfest-looking critter what you could come across in a day's walk. He most surely was!" And the old man laughed as heartily as though he had seen the transformation himself.

"Just as soon as the leperd could reach the fruit, he took an' give some of it to Br'er Rabbit, an' then he et some himself. After they eat awhile, Br'er Rabbit got to laughin' so that he nigh about choke himself to death.

CHASED OUT OF THERE

"Mr. Leperd slap him on the back an' ax him what the matter.

"Br'er Rabbit 'spond that Mr. Leperd was such a suvigous-lookin' varmint that he just natchully obliged to laugh. 'I 'spect, Mr. Leperd, that I've done got to give you another name,' says old Br'er Rabbit, says he, 'but I dunno what to call you. You done look like a leperd, an' you done look like a camel; I reckon I'll just have to call you old Mr. Cameleperd!' says old Br'er Rabbit, says he.

"'Why, you done fool me, Br'er Rabbit!' an' with that Mr. Cameleperd turn so mad that he make him a grab for old Br'er Rabbit, an' it's mighty lucky for old Br'er Rabbit that he seen him comin', kase, gentermans, old Mr. Cameleperd got blood in his eyes, sure 'nuff. Br'er Rabbit he leaped out from there, with old Mr. Cameleperd a-sailin' right after him, an' the Leperd an' the Rabbit ain't been good friends ever since."

"But what happened to the Rabbit and the Leopard when the fruit gave out, Uncle Washington?" I inquired.

"Go 'long, honey, ain't I done told you that? Why, the very first mouthful what Br'er Rabbit took, the lightnin' flashed, the thunder roared, an' the heavens just nachully dropped water, they did that!

"When Mr. Cameleperd took out after Br'er Rabbit he run him all dat day till they come to a town, where the critters lived what hadn't perished in the drought, kase the dry spell wasn't where they was, an' there Mr. Cameleperd done lose sight of Br'er Rabbit, an' he hasn't quit lookin' like he lookin' for some one to this day."

ELIOT KAYS STONE.

Not a Big Salary, But a Chance

YOUNG MIFFLIN, who is now at the head of the great publishing house, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., was the son of wealthy parents and a graduate of Harvard. He was determined to start in the publishing business, and he applied to Mr. Houghton, the publisher, time and again for a position of any kind at the Riverside Press; but Mr. Houghton told him that a young graduate of Harvard could not afford or would not wish to begin in such a position as the only one which he could offer him.

But young Mifflin was made of the stuff that wins. He was persistent and would not take "no" for an answer. Finally Mr. Houghton admired the young man's pluck and offered him a place as office boy at $4 a week. The offer was accepted eagerly, for young Mifflin would have been glad to have started in without any salary.

In a short time Mr. Houghton had occasion to go into Riverside Press Building one night after the office was closed. He found young Mifflin taking one of the presses apart and fixing it. He was much surprised, but watched the youth with much interest. In a short time he advanced the young man's salary. After this his promotion was rapid, and it was not long before he was admitted as Mr. Houghton's principal partner. On the death of Mr. Houghton, Mr. Mifflin became the head of one of the greatest publishing houses in the world.

Had this young Harvard graduate been looking for a salary, had he been hunting for the place which would have paid him most, he probably would not now be the head of this great firm.

There are scores of instances where office boys, errand boys and cash boys have accepted situations with small pay that they might get the opportunity to show what was in them. The salary was a mere incident. All they wanted was a chance to climb, to get a footing on even the bottom rung of the ladder.—Young Americans.

February Sunshine

FEBRUARY is the shortest month. It connects winter with spring, while

The February sunshine steeps your boughs,
And tints the buds and swells the leaves within.

Trees grow very much as boys and girls grow. They grow from something small and helpless into something large and strong—from small seeds or stones into great towers of wide-spreading green branches. Just as boys and girls need plenty of good, pure blood in order to grow big and strong, so the trees need it, too, only their blood is called sap.

Trees take a long nap in winter, but in the month of February they show signs of waking up. The sap stirs, and then something begins to grow. If you watch a tree carefully all through the year you will find what a beautiful barometer it is; how it will tell you, in tree language, that spring is coming.

The dead-looking trees of winter suddenly change color, little hard buds appear, and with every rain and sunbeam these buds swell and swell until finally with the blossoms spring begins.

THE PEARL

BIRTH STONE FOR FEBRUARY

(This Stone Means Purity.)

When February's children bear
The holy pearl to fend from harm;
No passion mad, nor wan-faced care,
Can e'er disturb their peaceful calm.

A Trick With Water

IF a drop of water is let fall on a piece of paper, it spreads in a large circle. If, however, the paper has been oiled, or covered with lamp-black or some similar substance, the drop of water will roll upon it as a ball slightly flattened. This fact may be made use of for the performance of a pretty trick.

Take a band of rather strong paper, about a foot wide and as long as possible—several sheets pasted together end to end will do admirably—pass it over a smoking lamp, or better, still, cover one side of it with graphite, commonly called black lead, or plumbago. Stand upright on the table several books decreasing regularly in size, and pin the band of paper on their backs, taking care that the waves in the paper are longer and more shallow as you approach the smallest book. At the lower end of the band place a dish. At the other end pour water drop by drop on the paper. The drops will roll rapidly down the first incline, and with the impetus thus gained will remount over the back of the second book, and so on over one book after another till they drop into the dish.

Frightful Capacity

My little sister Marion, when 4 years old, was feeding some greedy hens in the back yard one day at noon. She was called to dinner, and, on taking her chair at the table, exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, I'm as hungry as a chicken with a hundred tongues."

PUZZLES AND PROBLEMS

Mixed Fruits.

The words in capitals form the names of various fruits:

We heard HER CRY, "Don't GO NEAR," but we saw a CAR TURN and had a PLAIN PEEP, and Tom felt his COAT RIP.

Dropped Letters.

The first letter of the first missing word in each sentence must be dropped to make the second word:

1. See the monk —— as he puts on his ——.
2. I caught the —— of the neck of the ——.
3. Hear the wolf —— and the hoot of the ——.
4. It is time to wind up the ——, and —— the door.

Jumbled Letters.

Here is a puzzle that Polly Evans has been unable to solve—two jumbled words:

A B E N O T Y
A A B E L T R Y

Each of these combinations of letters forms an English word. The story goes that these were the only two words that actually puzzled Queen Victoria.

Can any of you solve the puzzle? If you can, please tell Polly Evans the answer.

A Peculiar Word.

chump

The word "CHUMP," as shown in the illustration, can be written so that it reads exactly the same if turned upside down. Polly Evans wonders if our clever boys and girls can find any other similar words.

If any are found, Polly Evans will be glad to publish them.

Riddles.

1. What crosses the water without making a shadow?
2. Why does a sailor know there's a man in the moon?
3. What part of a clock reminds one of Christmas time?
4. What is most like a cat looking out of a third-story window?

Answers to Last Week's Puzzles

Anagrams.

1. Mary Stuart.
2. Florence Nightingale.
3. Queen Victoria.
4. Charlotte Corday.
5. Joan of Arc.
6. Pocahontas.

Word Formations.

1. Mis-is-sip-pie—Mississippi.
2. Sin-sin-gnat-i—Cincinnati.

Words Within Words.

1. S—event—y. 2. C—love—r. 3. S—cull—ery. 4. Re—very. 5. L—i—ver. 6. C—lo—set. 7. Crow—d. 8. R—elation—s.

Cross Word Enigma.

Polly Evans.

What Pronouns?

1. Eye=I. 2. Sheep—ep=she. 3. Hit—h=it. 4. T-hem—them. 5. T-hose—those.

A Well-Known Proverb.

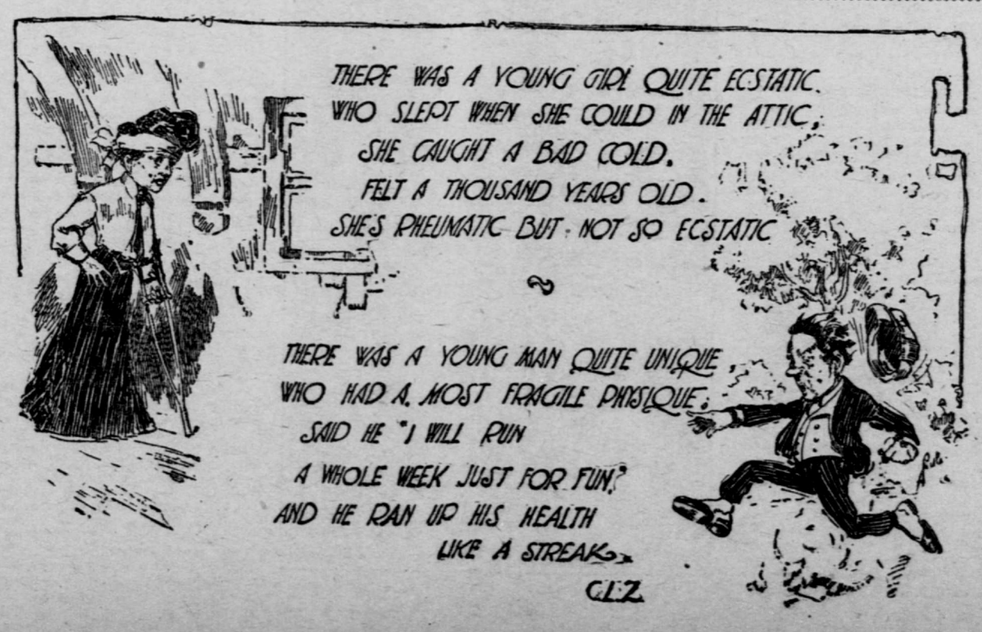
"The early bird catches the worm."

Omitted Vowels—Winter Verse.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods and meadows brown and sear;
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead,
They rustle to the eddying gust and to the rabbit's tread.

Printers' Puzzle.

The ☞ ☞ (hands) of our girls are small, tapering and beautifully shaped; their ||||| (eyes) are as brilliant as **** (stars); they are without ‖ (parallel) in this or any other § (section); their frowns are like †† (daggers), and their 123456 (figures), excite !!!! (exclamations) of pleasure. Read this closely; do not ? (question) its readability, and try to em⌒ (brace) the situation.



Wriggles—A Game

THE worse artist you are, the more fun this game is!

Give each player a pad and pencil, and have each draw a short, crooked line on the paper. Then let each exchange pads with his neighbor. The person who receives his neighbor's pad must then make a picture—bird, beast or whatever else he pleases—in which he incorporates his neighbor's "wriggle" and makes it heavier in outline, so as to distinguish it from the rest of the drawing.

Shouts of laughter will greet the drawings when they are hung up for exhibition.

A prize should be awarded to the cleverest, and also to the most ridiculous one, and the artist of each one should be compelled to rise and accept his prize and bow his acknowledgments to the audience.

She Would Do the Driving

Little Margaret shows signs of industry as well as of originality. One day, after some minutes of silence, she came running into her mother's room, a needle in one hand, a length of thread in the other, and exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, please hitch up the needle for me."—Little Chronicle.

A Queer Optical Illusion

SEE if there is the same optical illusion in your case as in Polly Evans' case, boys and girls:

XXXXXXXXX
SSSSSSSSSS

If you look at an "S" or an "X" right way up you will at once say that there is no difference in size between the upper and the lower halves, but just turn them upside down, and the disproportion is very noticeable. It is the same with the figures "3" and "8." The top half is apparently exactly similar to the bottom half reversed, but it is only necessary to turn this paper wrong way up to dispel the illusion. The eye seems to exaggerate the top half of these letters and figures in some most mysterious way, as may be easily proved. For if you make an "X" with the top half an exact counterpart of the lower half, the letter will appear top-heavy.

Be It Natural?

A LADY owning a handsome Angora cat with a remarkably large and beautiful tail recently hired a workman to do some odd jobs about her house.

She noticed that he seemed greatly impressed by the cat, and that his eyes were on it more than on his work. But she was not prepared for the question which he finally asked: "Please, mum, be that 'ere cat's tail natural?"