

Our Boys and Girls

LINDA'S WAY.

Grandma Bateman was certainly neither an attractive nor popular old lady. Perhaps her failing eyesight made it hard for her to see the dirt which caused her neighbors to turn in disgust from her little home and to make slighting remarks about her appearance.

But with the children the ground of criticism was different. Their grievance was connected with a large hickory nut tree which stood in Grandma Bateman's front yard and which nearly every year bore bushels of the biggest, sweetest nuts to be found in the vicinity. The boys made many plans for stripping that tree, but when fall came and the nuts were ripe, Grandma and Tippy, the small black dog who constituted the third member of her family, kept jealous guard and woe to the small person who ventured too near.

It was the hickory tree that first made trouble for Mabel Miller. She and Linda Graham were walking to school one morning, when on the sidewalk in front of Grandma Bateman's cottage, Mabel spied a fat hickory nut which a mischievous little gust of wind had just shaken from the bough where it grew. In a moment she pounced upon it and prepared to eat it on the spot. But before her heel could descend, a shrill yapping was heard and the girls looked up to see Grandma Bateman hobbling toward them, Tippy close on her heels.

"Here, you little gal," she quavered, "them's my hickory nuts. You bring that right to me." And indignant Mabel almost laughing, obeyed and handed over the one stray nut. All the way to school Mabel's anger waxed hotter.

"The idea of being so stingy!" she declared. And she kept mimicking Grandma Bateman with her half-closed eyes and drawn in upper lip as she said, "Them's my hickory nuts."

Next morning the old lady and Tippy were on the watch and she seemed to hold no resentment toward Mabel.

"Morning," she said cheerfully. Mabel still sulky vouchsafed no reply but Linda answered hastily:

"Good morning, Mrs. Bateman."

"What lovely pink blows them air," the old lady exclaimed, bending her dim gaze to a bunch of dahlias Linda was carrying to her teacher. "I do set a heap by blows, 'specially pink ones."

"Thank ye, little gal. That's real kind of you. Do you suppose they'd slip? I do like to have a few pots of posies in the winter. Last winter mine was froze one cold spell and I want to git a few more if I can. You know my old man's blind and I jes' can't see like I used to and we like the smell and feel of the blows in the kitchen."

Linda voiced her doubts concerning the slipping of the dahlias and the girls strolled on. Suddenly Mabel grasped Linda's arm.

"Oh, I've got an idea. I'll pay old lady Bateman for being so stingy. No, I won't tell you now but you'll see to-morrow morning."

The next day Linda called for Mabel as usual. Mabel came running out to meet her with her hands full of flowers.

"What in the world are these?" asked Linda touching a green leaf.

"It's for Grandma Bateman, the best joke you ever knew. See, it's that mean weed we call 'Creeping Charlie' that father hates to have in the lawn. I stuck some little blossoms

on it and as the roots are on it perhaps she'll plant it. Won't it be great?"

"Oh, Mabel," she remonstrated, "I've got a better plan. Let's get real slips off the geraniums and heliotrope and ivy and carry them to her to-morrow instead of the Creeping Charlie."

"When she was so mean to 'us about the hickory nuts?" questioned Mabel in surprise.

"Well," answered Linda philosophically, "maybe there's something about it we don't understand. Maybe she isn't really stingy. Sometimes when you understand all about a thing, it seems different."

"All right," Mabel responded good naturedly, throwing away the weeds. "I guess your way is better than mine, Linda. Perhaps mother will give us a fern when she re-pots hers." And the two girls made enthusiastic preparations for the gift of flowers.

Next morning as usual Tippy heralded the approach of the school children with his sharp, querulous bark. Tippy's life had not been the kind to instill confidence in his dog nature and he viewed all humanity with suspicion. Age had not softened his attitude and he growled warningly at Linda as she held out a friendly hand to him.

"Ye mustn't mind Tippy," commented Grandma apparently eager for her little morning chat. "Those bad boys throw stones at him, poor little dog, and he don't like much of anybody, but his old missie and his poor blind master. More blows this morning? Now what might them be called?"

It was Mabel this time who held up a basket of small potted plants.

"We've brought you some slips, Mrs. Bateman," she announced. "There's red and pink and ivy geranium and Linda's got a fern, too. They're in sand now, but after they're started you can replant them."

Grandma Bateman took the flowers in her clawlike fingers. They were trembling a little. Was it possible that school children were not her enemies after all? That two small girls felt sufficiently friendly toward "old lady Bateman," whom boys jeered at and at whom older people laughed, to bring her flowers on two different days?

"So ye thought enough of poor old Grandma to bring her some slips, did ye? Them blows will be pretty and it's always a long time to spring. Wait a minute," and the bent figure disappeared inside of her door.

When the old lady reappeared she held something in both hands. Her withered face beamed as she presented the girls with six hickory nuts apiece!

"Wish 'twas more," she said, "but you know they buy hickory nuts at the grocer's. Now Tippy, you jes' keep still. Them's friends."

Two small girls bore the little gift away silently. They understood that it had been a sacrifice to spare even six nuts from her little hoard.

"Oh, I'm so glad I didn't play a joke on her!" gasped Mabel. "How I should have felt if I had taken her that horrid weed and then she had given us the nuts. I never knew she sold those hickory nuts and that was why she had to have every single one. Let's tell the boys about it."

"Let's," exclaimed Linda. "I don't believe they understand either."

Grandma Bateman never did understand

why the boys and girls of the Whittier school gave her no trouble with her hickory nuts that year."—Girls' Companion.

RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL.

She pulled my hair right in school. I just hate her, and I'll pull hers, first chance I get!" and a very red-faced little girl sat down at mother's feet.

"Then she'll hate you," said mother, "and that will never do."

"I want her to," said Sara.

"Then she'll pull your hair again. That will be fun, to be sure. Pulling her hair back would be the very easiest thing to do, of course. There's something hard, very hard, that I am pretty sure you wouldn't dare do."

"I'd dare do anything," said Sara.

"All right, then," said mother. "Say to Bessie to-morrow, 'I was silly to get so mad, and here's an apple.'"

Sara couldn't think of anything to say, because she was so much surprised. By the time she had thought of something, mother was gone.—Selected.

THE LITTLE STUDY CLUB.

"Oh," sobbed Minnie, as she crawled under the bed after her slate-pencil, "the schoolbell is ringing and I haven't my sums ready! I just hate 'rithmetic, anyhow!" and the little girl dried her eyes with the towel and slipped into her clean apron.

On her way to school she met Maggie Hunt, who also wore a dejected look upon her face.

"We'll have to run, or we'll be late," said Maggie. "I had an awful time trying to get my spelling lesson this morning," she panted, as they flew down the sidewalk. "I just hate spelling. I don't mind arithmetic and reading, but—" The schoolbell was beginning to ring for the last time, and they both made another mad scramble over the steps and into the door to keep from getting an awful tardy mark.

As they passed in at the door, Minnie whispered, "Say, Maggie, I'll help you get your spelling lesson at recess if you will help me with my 'rithmetic," and Maggie nodded her head as she slipped into her seat in the school-room.

At recess the two busy little heads bobbed together in the sunshine behind the high fence that separated the girls' playground from that of the boys. "It is easy to get your sums when you have someone to show you how, isn't it?" asked Minnie.

"Yes," replied Maggie, "and it is easy to get your spelling when you have someone to help you pronounce the words."

"Do you know," said Minnie, "I think it would be nice if we could have a little study club, let all the girls in our class who live close to meet every evening for about an hour, or even a half-hour, and help each other with the hard part of our lessons."

And so the girls formed their little study club. Each evening they would meet at the home of one of the girls, and work out their sums, and get over the hard part of their lessons for the next day. Then they would go out in the yard and romp awhile as all healthy children should do. And such fun as they had! They enjoyed it so much that they called a special meeting Saturday afternoon. Maggie was the one who planned and called the Saturday afternoon meeting. When the girls arrived they asked her what had induced her to call a special meeting of the study club.

"Oh, to get our Sunday-school lessons, of course," laughed Maggie, and on the next Sunday morning sure enough, the girls knew their lessons almost perfectly.—Buds of Hope.