The Very Wisest Man in Pennyville

ONE day the Chief Secretary of Cow Bells of Pennyville died, and the Burgomaster and the Town Council announced that the honor would go to the man who could prove that he was the very wisest of all the wise ones.

This announcement caused great excitement, for there were so many cows in Pennyville that the position of Chief Secretary was desired eagerly by all the citizens.

That evening the wife of each citizen said to him: "You are the wisest man in Pennyville, and I shall be deeply annoyed if you do not make me Mrs. Chief Secretary of Cow Bells."

The next day the Town Council posted a proclamation, saying that for three days every competitor was to do something very wise, and on the fourth day they were all to meet in the town square of Pennyville and tell their deeds, so that the people could decide who had proved himself the very wisest.

On the appointed day the town square was so crowded that everybody wondered where all the other people came from. The Burgomaster and the Town Council sat on a platform, and the wise men who wanted to be Chief Secretary of Cow Bells appeared before them one by one and told what they had done.

There was a great array of them, for every man's wife felt so sure that he was the very wisest that all the citizens had done something to compete for the position.

In any other town it would have taken days and days to decide, because each of the competitors had done something that would have been considered remarkably clever anywhere else. One man had put an alarm-clock into his hencoop in order that the rooster should not oversleep himself some morning. Another, who was troubled with rheumatism every time an east wind blew, had fixed his weather-vane so that it could not point to that quarter of the compass at all. A third man, who was very much afraid of fire, had hit on the simple plan of keeping all his matches in a pail full of water.

But the Town Council did not waste much time with these persons, because, as they said with great justice, in such a wise town as Pennyville everybody was doing things as clever as that every day. So before long all the competitors but three had been dismissed.

One of these three was the shoemaker. He advanced and said:

"Without doubt I did the very wisest thing that ever was done. I set fire to all my hayricks last night."

ONE MAN PUT AN ALARM CLOCK IN HIS HENHOUSE.

"Why did you do that?" asked the Town Council.

"For a reason that is very simple," said the shoemaker, "although it would never occur to any one less intelligent than I am. You all know that the hottest weeks of the Summer are coming, when everything gets very dry. Then there will be thunder storms, and all of you will tremble every time when you see the lightning strike in the fields, because you will fear that it will strike your hay. But I will not tremble. I have put it beyond the power of the lightning to strike my ricks."

"Splendid!" cried all the people. "And to think how we have been worried every Summer!"

"Listen to me!" cried the Superintendent of the Town Pump. "I did something much wiser than that! You all know that wheat has been going up in price so fast that now the merchants from the surrounding country are offering a dollar a bushel for our standing crops. Well, I had a field full of wheat, and two days ago it was doing so finely that I saw at once it would be worth at least $500. And then it struck me that the land on which it stood was the cheapest land in the village. So I said to myself, 'What an extravagance, to waste an expensive crop like wheat on such cheap land!' And I immediately set men to work tearing out all the wheat, and now I have put potatoes in its place."

"You certainly win the honor of being Chief Secretary," cried everybody.

"How about me?" cried the Town Beadle, who was the third and last competitor. "You all know how wise I am, and yet this time I have outdone even myself. Two days ago I thought, 'What if burglars should enter Pennyville some day!' It is true that we have never had any, but if they should come in, nobody could stop them. I guess that no one knows this so well as I do, for I am the Beadle, and it would be my duty to arrest them, and I can tell you right now that I am far too timid about dangerous persons like burglars to do anything of the kind. So you can see for yourselves that Pennyville is at their mercy.

"I think that it was very clever in me to discover this fact, for it is more than the rest of you have done. But I did better than that. I reasoned that burglars would naturally attack my house first, because all wicked men know that the Beadle is the last man in the city to be afraid of. So I sold all my goods, even my bed; and now there is nothing in my house left to steal except the floors and the walls."

"Hurrah!" said all the people.

But the Burgomaster said: "I don't think that you were any cleverer than the shoemaker or the Superintendent of the Town Pump. You do not seem to have considered that the burglars could steal the money that you got for your goods, and that, therefore, you have actually made it easier for them."

"Is that so?" said the Beadle with a sneer. "I thought that you would say that. Well, no burglar will ever get my money. I sailed out into the ocean with it and dropped it overboard with my eyes shut, so that even I do not know the exact spot now. What do you think of that?"

"There is nothing left to say," replied the Burgomaster. "You are indeed the very wisest man in Pennyville, always excepting myself. I declare you elected, and then we will put it to a vote according to law."

So the Burgomaster said to the people: "People, it is for you to decide, and I leave it to you, providing you vote for the Beadle."

And that is how the Beadle became the Chief Secretary of Cow Bells of Pennyville.

Cudjoe and the Family of Duckenoos

IN the long-ago before time, a black man named Cudjoe lived with his family in a little shanty, away upon the side of the John Crow Mountains, in Jamaica.

It was the dry season and the times were very hard, for there was no rain to make the breadfruits and yams grow.

So one day Cudjoe told his wife that he would go out and try to find something to eat.

Now, Cudjoe had ten pickaninnies, and, counting himself and his wife, that made twelve. It was a big family to feed, but Cudjoe was a cunning man. He went straight to a tree where he knew a "duckenoo" lived with his wife and his ten girl pickaninnies.

A duckenoo is now a boiled cake made of cornmeal and molasses and tied up in a plantain leaf. But in those days, duckenoos were living things and dwelled in trees.

When Cudjoe got to the duckenoos' tree, he planned how he was going to get the creatures down. He liked them better than any other kind of food, but the tree was high and he could not climb it.

He could see the family away up in the branches, eating their breakfast. This made poor Cudjoe hungrier than ever, for they were having salt fish and ackees, and boiled yam and alligator pear—all of them things that he doted on.

Cudjoe sat down on a big flat stone under the branches and thought hard. He was a clever man, and he soon got an idea.

He went back to his home and fetched a basket, which he greased inside. When he got back to the tree, he called out: "Good morning, Mister Duckenoo, and how are you this blessed morning, sir?"

Old Mister Duckenoo didn't like Cudjoe at all, so he just looked at him over his spectacles and replied crossly:

"Quite well, thank you, Mister Cudjoe."

But Cudjoe pretended not to see that he was cross, and began to talk to his wife.

"Now, Mrs. Duckenoo," he said, "I have got some fine things to show you this morning. You know that times are hard, so I have to sell pretty things to grand ladies like you to make a living for my poor wife and children."

Oh, but Mrs. Duckenoo was a stupid woman! She and her ten girls all wanted to be thought fine ladies, like the white people, so she said in a high and mighty tone:

"Is that so, Mister Cudjoe? I'm so sorry for you that I will buy some of your pretty things, although I don't need them, just to help your poor family."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Cudjoe, humbly. "You will be doing a blessed act this day to poor Cudjoe."

In a little while the mother and her girls came down the tree, in spite of the protests of the old man, who guessed the trick and would not himself be tempted away from the safety of the branches.

The Duckenoos were all small people, and at that time they wore bright green dresses because they thought it was the fashion. As Cudjoe's basket was a very big one, these little people could not see over the top when it stood on the ground, so Cudjoe said:

"Get right up into the basket, Mrs. Duckenoo, and all your fine young ladies. There's a lot of room inside, and you can see all the pretty things well."

"Thank you, Mister Cudjoe," they said, and they tumbled into the basket as quickly as they could.

No sooner were they all inside than Cudjoe shut down the lid, put the basket on his head and walked off home.

When they found themselves trapped the Duckenoos began to scream and cry, but they couldn't climb out because the grease held them fast to the bottom of the basket.

Cudjoe found his wife and children waiting for him eagerly at the door of his house, and they all cried out to know whether he had got anything for them.

He put down the basket, took out the Duckenoos, and laid them on the table; but he was frightened to see that all their green dresses had been changed into plantain leaves, which were tied onto the Duckenoos by withes, just as you see them today.

"How's this?" cried Cudjoe. "What is this change for?"

He jumped back in alarm when he heard a little voice say plaintively:

"It's to make us sweet for you to eat, Mister Cudjoe. We have got to be eaten by men ever after this, because we were silly and vain enough to be caught by your trap."

"All the better for us, you fine ladies!" said Cudjoe, laughing. "Now, my poor wife and children," he said, turning to them, "I'm a hungry man, but because I only caught eleven Duckenoos and there are twelve of us, I'll give them all to you and keep none for myself. Go and boil them, and then have a good feast—and think of your poor father!"

They boiled the Duckenoos, but as they did so they were sad to think that pood Cudjoe would have nothing. Presently his wife came up to him with her dish steaming hot, and said:

"My poor husband, I can't let you go hungry. You must have half of my Duckenoo."

Cudjoe took it.

Then all his children came up one by one, as he had expected, and shared their Duckenoo with him, so that by pretending to be unselfish, the cunning old rascal got five and a half duckenoos, while his wife and family only got half a one each.

The West Indians tell this story to prove the truth of their proverb, "Cunning is better than strength."

The Mongolian Invasion of Oregon

THE hill slopes to the west. Groves of oak and fir crown its summit and young oaks sweep down its southern spur in an unbroken phalanx to the road which winds above the orchard, and the fields of grain.

In the coziest hollow of this sunny hillside is a little spring, which sends a rivulet trickling through the grass to feed the pond. The chicken-house is built near the pond, and the coops stand close to the water's edge.

The hillside is private property. "No shooting allowed." Because of this, and perhaps, on account of the proximity of wheat fields below the road, it is the favored haunt of the Chinese pheasant, or as a loyal Oregonian would say, the Denny pheasant.

The people who owned the hillside, and the chicken-house by the pond, and who lived in a little red cot under the oaks, seldom looked from their windows without seeing a gorgeous reminder of the Orient somewhere brightening their immediate landscape. All day long they heard the pheasant cocks crowing in the edge of the oak grove, or the shrill, birdlike cheeping of chicks just out of the shell.

The Chinese pheasant cock, despite his feathered magnificence, is a most exemplary husband and father. The conscientious manner with which he faces domestic responsibility is to be both emulated and admired. During the period of incubation he stands guard over the nest, only straying afield in search of food, and returning promptly to his brooding mate the moment hunger is appeased. When Mrs. Pheasant leaves the nest seeking exercise and refreshment, he takes her place upon the eggs. And when the baby pheasants are two or three days out of the shell he assumes entire charge of the whole brood, relieving the mother, who at once, with true Rooseveltian zeal, proceeds to lay another nestful of eggs. For the Chinese pheasant is nothing if not prolific. From two to three broods in one season, with an average of 18 chicks to the setting, makes life strenuous enough for the parent birds.

Just a Little Joke.

The dwellers in the little red cot, as I have already mentioned, owned the chicken-house by the pond. Incidentally they owned some chickens, thoroughbred Plymouth Rocks and half-a-dozen brown Leghorn hens. There was a young Plymouth Rock rooster, who began, about the time the Autumn leaves were falling, to show a promise of tall plumes and spurs.

It was about this time, too, that the people in the red house noticed a magnificent Mongolian, who, doubtless bereft of family ties by reckless sportsmen, appeared to have established himself in the good graces of the brown Leghorn hens. Now that the garden and flower beds were becoming of the past, the prisoners of the poultry yard were released on parole, and wandered about at will.

A dozen times a day the lordly Oriental was to be observed sunning himself in the strawberry bed, or maintaining a stately pose among the rustling ferns, on in the dry, close-cropped grass, invariably surrounded by a group of admiring hens.

Later, as the days visibly shortened and the darkening skies began to drizzle the soft, health-giving rains that Oregonians love and long for, it was remarked that the Plymouth Rock manifested symptoms of resentment. It was evident that he was beginning to envy the intruder. And well he might, for that Mongolian was a joy to behold. His head, iridescent as a rainbow, and his glowing breast of ruby-red seemed to strike a gleam of sunshine out of the dullest, cloud-hung day. His shapely, shining neck was encircled by a broad white collar clasped with a glossy black crescent, and the mottled brown of his back and wings swept away in a splendid tail fully two feet long. He was admitted by all who saw him to be the finest specimen of his magnificently plumaged kind that ever dazzled the eyes of the Occident.

Meantime the Plymouth's spurs were growing, and with his spurs his jealous indignation. The handsome intruder as yet treated him with lofty indifference, or ignored him altogether. He was big and strong, the Plymouth, a trifle slow, and somewhat awkward, perhaps, but in weight and bulk far out-matching his rival. The situation was daily becoming more unendurable.

It was between Christmas and New Year that the crisis came. The young rooster's arrogance assumed such aggressiveness that lordly indifference no longer availed. His manner plainly said: "Fight, or get out." There was but one thing to do; the Mongolian did it and the battle was on.

All through the short mid-Winter day they fought. The pheasant, outmatched in strength and size, was quick in action, and his spurs were long and sharp as a surgeon's lancet. Very likely his was the advantage of experience as well. It was the Plymouth's first fight. And it was early to be seen that he was getting the worst of it, being too slow to guard against the lightning-like thrusts of the enemy, whose agility avoided counter-thrusts.

But if he lacked in skill he was not deficient in courage, that young barnyard cock, not yet a twelvemonth old. He fought bravely, at first for honor, then for life. Again and again he rallied to the attack, only to be repulsed. Staggering as he stood, he still faced the foe when at sunset the clouds parted and a level ray shone out, lighting the scene of the fray as with a touch of gold. It was then that the pheasant, apparently considering the contest won, drew off, and, preening his feathers in the vanishing gleams of sunset, spread his wings and soared into the shadow of the grove from whence he sent out a hoarse, victorious crow.

The poor Plymouth Rock, defeated, scorned of the enemy, deserted by his friends and relations, half-blind and bleeding from innumerable wounds, staggered to a secluded spot behind the chicken-house. There, next morning, his lifeless body was discovered and given decent burial.

The pheasant cock, thus left in undisturbed possession of the field, grew bolder even than before, venturing at times to the very doorstep of the little red cot, showing no fear of the inhabitants thereof, who dubbed him "the Khan of Tartary," and spared him because of his wondrous beauty, and their interest in the nature problem presented by a game bird voluntarily becoming domesticated.

Among the brown Leghorns was a hen, who in some unrecorded accident had suffered the loss of a toe, and had thereby acquired a limp, and upon whom, in consequence, the cognomen of "Lamie" had been bestowed.

"Lamie," as the Spring days lengthened and the buds began to blow, the "Khan of Tartary" singled out and distinguished by his undivided attention. If this exhibition of a marked preference occasioned jealousy on the part of the other members of the flock it was not apparent to interested observers.

It is a fact very generally recognized by all who have to do with poultry in the feather that brown Leghorns are too frivolously inclined to patiently endure the three weeks of seclusion necessary to the hatching of a brood of chickens.

Though frequently starting in with the best intentions in the world, the Leghorn invariably deserts her nest before the expiration of the time limit. "Lamie" was no exception to the rule. She was faithful to the nestful of eggs hidden away in the grass and weeds above the spring, where the "Khan" stood guard and crowed encouragement, for exactly two weeks and two days. Then she got tired of the monotony and quit—went singing and cackling about as if she had never known the thrill of maternal aspirations.

Her conduct must have been something of a shock to her lord and master, something wholly outside of all previous experience. But he proved himself equal to the trying situation.

Those eggs had to be hatched. If his wife refused to attend to her home affairs, if she preferred social gayety, or the more serious diversion of her club, to husband and prospective children, he must do as, in rare instances, other bipeds of his sex have been known to do when confronted by a similar combination of circumstances, namely, assume her repudiated responsibilities.

Accordingly, he took her place upon the nest, devoted himself to the business before him, and when the three weeks were completed brought off a brood of 13 downy, brown-striped Leghorn-pheasants, or pheasant-Leghorns, which he led afield and fed and cared for as faithfully as father could.

They grew rapidly, and by the time the grain ripened in the field below the road were able to look out for themselves. Eleven shy, shapely brown shadows—for one died in infancy and one fell prey to a hawk—they were seen to flit from hillside to field and back again, and to rise, at times, on startled wing, seeking the shelter of the grove.

When the Autumn rains began to fall and there was no longer a plentiful supply of food in the stubble, they ventured, timidly enough at first, to join the chickens in the poultry-yard at feeding time, and finally became incorporated members of the flock.

LISCHEN M. MILLER.

Patsy's Clever Block House

A NEW entertainment had come. The street was filled with cedar blocks which were to be used in paving. They were the finest playthings—so smooth and interesting and sweet smelling!

In front of Patsy's house was a particularly large pile, and promptly in the afternoon of the day they were dumped there she and Laura and and Emilie set to work to build a fine house.

Up and down the street different groups of children were building residences until it seemed a whole village was springing up like mushrooms.

The girls resolved to have their house high and snug, and better than "any one else's." It was to have two rooms and a grand doorway, with sort of wings opening out toward Patsy's own front door.

At first they got along swimmingly. The foundations were laid, including the inside partition and the wings to the door, and the girls worked like beavers. Row after row went on and then Emilie's mother came and said Emilie would have to go home and do some errands.

No sooner had Emilie disappeared with many backward glances than Mrs. Martin called Laura. That nearly broke both of their hearts, but Laura soon found that she could return in half an hour or so after the dressmaker had fitted her new clothes.

Patsy struggled bravely on alone, but it wasn't much fun, and she could see that everyone, even the smallest boy, was ahead of her and getting the best blocks, and there was a big choice in blocks, for some were big and smooth and lots were small and full of knots.

However, Patsy worked on and got up as high as her own neck all the way around.

Then she sat down outside the door to read for a few minutes and saw John Moore coming up the street, knocking at all the houses and talking to the children as he came along.

Patsy didn't like him, and she was sorry somehow to see him come toward her. He was an overgrown, rude and rather stupid boy who lived around the corner.

"Hello, Patsy," he said, looking over the walls into her house. "Did you do this all yourself?"

"No," Patsy replied shortly. "Laura and Emilie belong with me."

"Where are they?" asked John. "Inside?" Then he laughed and learned hard against the wall pretending to be hunting for them within the little house.

"Oh, quit!" said Patsy. "You'll knock my wall over."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed John, "any house ought to be strong enough to hold me, if it was built decent."

With that remark he pressed right up against it and knocked the whole side in.

For a minute Patsy was speechless with rage, then she cried.

"You nasty, horrid, mean thing, I'll tell Jim and my father on you and you'll get it!"

John stood and giggled and jeered when he saw the tears standing in Patsy's eyes.

"Cry baby, cry baby," he yelled. "Crying about a silly old house that was built rill-ral, just like a girl, just like a girl."

Patsy made a dash for him, but John dodged. Just then Edgar Sheppard came up suddenly and grabbed him by the collar.

"What shall I do to the mean sneak?" he said to Patsy. Edgar Sheppard was Walter's older brother. He was in his freshman year at college and considered a very grand person by the children.

"I don't know," said Patsy, vaguely. "He's an awful coward to take a girl when she's all alone and littler 'n an he is."

"He certainly is,' said Edgar, giving John a vigorous shake to emphasize each word. "He ought to be thrashed."

John was trembling all over and looking about as brave as a drowned kitten.

"He's so scared now," said Patsy, growing brave and drying her eyes, "that I guess we might as well let him go."

With a final shake, Edgar sent John flying off down the street, and it was a very long time before he came around there again.

Edgar took off his beautiful light overcoat and set to work helping Patsy repair the damage. And I tell you his big strong hands and arms made things fly. By the time Laura got back, the house was 'way over their heads and the strongest and best anywhere around, so that all the children came to call and said it was "a perfect dandy."

Game of Emperor's Chain

DID you ever hear of the game of the Emperors' chain? It isn't very well known, but the writer saw children play it in a foreign settlement in Pennsylvania and it struck her as a good one.

The children took sides, an even number to each side. Then they elected emperors. Each emperor lined his side up so that it stood facing the other with about twenty-five feet of space between them. Then each emperor placed himself in the center of his own row, and the children of each side formed a chain by taking hold of hands.

When all were ready, one emperor suddenly said: "Attack!" and one of the children, whom he called by name, let go of his companions' hands and rushed at the opposite side, to break through the chain.

If he succeeded, the emperor of the broken chain had to give up one of his party, who then joined the other chain. If he failed, he became a prisoner of war, and had to remain.

The game goes on until one of the emperors is left all alone. Then he must try to rescue his "soldiers." When he fails and is caught himself, the game is ended.

Girls and small children played this game with just as much fun as did the stronger ones. It was not a bit rough, because the players are not allowed to rush at each other, but must only run at the "links" of the chain that are formed by the clasped hands.

Where Baby Lives.

He lives in the kingdom of Toddle,
Where the language is baby-land talk,
And nobody moves in a hurry,
For the folk are just learning to walk.

He lives in the country of Goo-Goo,
Where the people have very large eyes,
Because all the things that they notice
Just fill them all up with surprise.

He lives in the kingdom of Me-Me,
Where people do what they see fit,
Because in the kingdom of Me-Me
You mustn't tease babies a bit.

He lives in the country of Um-Tum,
Where everything tastes very good,
No matter whether it's pebbles
Or buttons or plain baby food.

The Vanity of Minna and Her White Dress

LITTLE MINNA WHEELER sat contemplating with a very rueful countenance the white dress her aunt had so carefully ironed and laid across her bed. The fact that the good aunt had said cheerfully, "Perhaps later, Minna, we can afford a new white dress this summer," had not served to make her heart any lighter.

There were to be Easter exercises at the Sunday school and Minna had practiced to take part in a pretty cantata, but since the last rehearsal when almost every little girl there had had something to say about a new dress for the occasion Minna had lost interest and felt depressed and rebellious.

She said to herself not without tears, when alone in her room, "It seems to me that I never had a good time in my life. I always have something to worry over and spoil it all. I wish I could be really and truly happy for just once."

That this unfortunate state of things could be the condition of her own little selfish heart did not enter into Minna's imaginings. She was too absorbed in selfpity to count the great blessings that were hers; for Minna was really a very fortunate girl.

Her parents were both dead and her maiden aunt had years before taken the helpless orphan to her heart and home, although her care had been a heavy burden for one so poor as Miss Morton. Now that she was such a big girl the aid she lent her aunt in many ways made it some better; still, there was the constant expense of keeping her clothed and in school with all the new books and other supplies such as every schoolgirl must have.

Her aunt made her livelihood by cleaning and mending fine laces and curtains, and had taught Minna to darn beautifully. When not studying there was generally such a task to be performed, and strange to say, Minna did not dislike the work, but would much prefer to handle the pretty laces than to wash dishes or to sweep, which were distasteful enough to the fastidious little girl. Once in a while when she had done some work especially well, her aunt would say it was done almost as nicely as Minna's mother, who had been a fine needle-woman, would have done it. And this was the sweetest praise that Minna ever wished to merit—that she might in some way be like the mother whose graces and virtues her aunt loved to recall.

Minna settled herself in the low rocker and took from the work-basket what seemed a mass of chiffon and lace, but which, when held up, resolved itself into a beautiful dress. She involuntarily exclaimed at the lovely thing and sat for a long time lost in admiration.

"Oh, to be able to have a dress like that!" she said, holding it up before her as she stood at the glass. And then a sudden fancy took possession of her, and slipping out of her dark woolen gown she put the flimsy little party frock on carefully and turned around and around before the mirror. She was in a tremor lest her aunt appear, but felt as if she could never satisfy herself with the sight of it. She saw a little workaday Cinderella transformed into a pretty princess. The dress fitted her perfectly, and the full lace sleeves and bertha made her sigh anew over the skimpy proportions of her own poor cotton frock that she had outgrown a year before.

"If only I might wear it in the morning!" she whispered breathlessly, putting on the coarse woolen once more. She was quite ignorant as to the inappropriateness of such a dress for the occasion, and as to the risk she would take in placing her aunt's honesty at stake. Temptation took a strong hold and she thought only of how she should compass such an end without her aunt's knowledge.

Miss Morton entered and smilingly said, "Isn't it pretty? Mrs. Mayhew is putting her daughter's wardrobe and room in order, although she will not be home until June, after school. I have the curtains to do, also."

Minna did not reply, but set to work to darn the tiny rents in the garment.

Miss Morton insisted upon superintending the dressing of Minna the next morning before she started for church, for fear everything should not be done just as she wished. She smoothed the glossy hair and tied it with fresh ribbons and patted the rather faded sash into place, and then pinched the pink cheeks playfully. Minna felt a bit conscience-stricken over the kindness of her aunt, but she had decided upon her plans and would not retreat.

No sooner was Miss Morton's back turned than she pulled off, almost roughly, the faithful white dress and slipped into the beautiful dream gown, and then after fluffing up the smooth hair a little had nothing to do for an hour but to gaze upon her graceful reflection.

So absorbed did she become in this enchanting pastime that she was unconscious as to the flight of time, until, happening to glance at the clock, she found it was almost time to be there.

She contented herself with saying she would cut across the park and so not be so very late after all, and in her hurry forgot her rubbers. A little pool of muddy water in the park reminded her of the fact, but thinking to jump across she gave a little skip and—splash! Alas, for vanity and the beautiful dress. Her feet had landed directly in the middle of the puddle and she was mud-bespattered from top to toe. She could think of no alternative but to run back and pop into the despised cotton gown, although it made her a half-hour late. However, she was in time to take her place in the pretty little cantata. And how her cheeks burned as she saw Miss Morton before her in the audience. She had come over from her own church to hear Minna sing and was sitting up close to the front.

Minna was thankful she had been spared the mortification that might have been hers, but could scarcely wait until the service was over and they were on their way home to confess to the whole deception and to voice a resolution that had welled up in her heart as she was singing the beautiful Easter songs, and saw the honest pride and affection in her aunt's eyes.

"I am going to be a comfort to you, Aunty, after this; indeed and indeed I am. I will never grumble again. I am glad you think the dress can be cleaned, but if it cannot I will go myself to Mrs. Mayhew and tell her everything and I know she will not blame you."

Miss Morton was a woman of few words, but as she stooped to kiss the flushed face she whispered:

"Now you are like your mother, dear, and I loved her better than anybody on earth."

The Eternal Fitness.

"What need in the world," said the gay Conger Eel,
"Of skates that are fashioned from leather and steel?"
This pair that I wear are the finest and best;
I've only to steer them, and they do the rest."

Story of Molly and the Dream Man

MOLLY HOLLYHOCK went into the garden to plant some seeds. She had two pumpkin seeds, and she was sure she would have a "buful darden" after a while. She made a hole in the ground with her thumb, and then another one beside it with her forefinger, and then she put the seeds in and crowded just a speck of dirt on top of each one, and leaned back against a little tree to think about it.

Then a very curious thing happened. The two pumpkin seeds poked right up into the air. First came the pointed tops, and then the white sides.

"Why, my punk'n seeds are comin' right up now!" exclaimed Molly. Then the ground cracked all around the place and the seeds were lifted up higher, and they were not seeds at all, but the big ears of the Dream Man.

On his head was a peaked green cap. His clothes were black, and his face very dark, and all over his coat were little red stars. Under his arm was a green mantle. He bowed and smiled, and said to Molly Hollyhock: "Very nice day. How do you like my ears?"

Molly looked, and they had grown larger and spread out, and she fairly laughed with surprise. "Why-ee! Your ears are pretty 'ollyock blossoms like those in 'e book!"

"Now, give me something to help me up," said he. "Hold your hoe handle before me on the ground."

Molly put the hoe in front of her, and he began to climb up the handle. But though he kept getting nearer the top, his feet did not leave the ground. He got longer and longer and smaller and smaller round the body, while his green mantle clung closer and closer to him. At last he let go the handle and stood alone, and Molly saw before her a hollyhock with two white blossoms, one each side the stalk, and a bee came buzzing around to see if there was any honey in those flowers.

Just then mamma's loving arms were put around her little girl, and mamma's voice said: "Why, Molly Hollyhock Harrison, her you are asleep on the ground! You come right in and take your nap, you dear little thing!"

"He was such a 'ice little dream man," murmured Molly; but her mother gave her three kisses just then, so she forgot to look to see if the flowers were still there.