

cloth from the officers' table while the girl in charge was in the corridor sounding the gong. The soup had already been served. You can imagine the mess! Mrs. Lippett half killed the child on that occasion, but the killing did nothing to lessen the temper, which was handed on to me intact.

His father was Italian and his mother Irish; he has red hair and freckles from County Cork and the most beautiful brown eyes that ever came out of Naples. After the father was stabbed in a fight and the mother had died of alcoholism, the poor little chap by some chance or other got to us; I suspect that he belongs in the Catholic Protectory. As for his manners — oh dear! oh dear! They are what you would expect. He kicks and bites and swears. I have dubbed him Punch.

Yesterday he was brought squirming and howling to my office, charged with having knocked down a little girl and robbed her of her doll. Miss Snaith plumped him into a chair behind me, and left him to grow quiet, while I went on with my writing. I was suddenly startled by an awful crash. He had pushed that big green jardinière off the window-sill and broken it into five hundred pieces. I jumped with a suddenness that swept the ink-bottle to the floor, and when Punch saw that second catastrophe, he stopped roaring with rage and threw back his head and roared with laughter. The child is *diabolical*.

I have determined to try a new method of discipline

that I don't believe in the whole of his forlorn little life he has ever experienced. I am going to see what praise and encouragement and love will do. So, instead of scolding him about the jardinière, I assumed that it was an accident. I kissed him and told him not to feel bad; that I did n't mind in the least. It shocked him into being quiet; he simply held his breath and stared while I wiped away his tears and sopped up the ink.

The child just now is the biggest problem that the J. G. H. affords. He needs the most patient, loving, individual care — a proper mother and father, likewise some brothers and sisters and a grandmother. But I can't place him in a respectable family until I make over his language and his propensity to break things. I separated him from the other children, and kept him in my room all the morning, Jane having removed to safe heights all destructible *objets d'art*. Fortunately, he loves to draw, and he sat on a rug for two hours, and occupied himself with colored pencils. He was so surprised when I showed an interest in a red-and-green ferry-boat, with a yellow flag floating from the mast, that he became quite profanely affable. Until then I could n't get a word out of him.

In the afternoon Dr. MacRae dropped in and admired the ferry-boat, while Punch swelled with the pride of creation. Then, as a reward for being such a good little boy, the doctor took him out in his automobile on a visit to a country patient.

Punch was restored to the fold at five o'clock by a sadder and wiser doctor. At a sedate country estate he had stoned the chickens, smashed a cold frame, and swung the pet Angora cat by its tail. Then when the sweet old lady tried to make him be kind to poor pussy, he told her to go to hell.

Our little Punch
goes
visiting



I can't bear to consider what some of these children have seen and experienced. It will take years of sunshine and happiness and love to eradicate the dreadful memories that they have stored up in the far-

back corners of their little brains. And there are so many children and so few of us that we can't hug them enough; we simply have n't arms or laps to go around.

Mais parlons d'autres choses! Those awful questions of heredity and environment that the doctor broods over so constantly are getting into my blood, too; and it's a vicious habit. If a person is to be of any use in a place like this, she must see nothing but good in the world. Optimism is the only wear for a social worker.

"'T is the middle of night by the castle clock"—do you know where that beautiful line of poetry comes from? "Cristabel," of English K. Mercy! how I hated that course! You, being an English shark, liked it; but I never understood a word that was said from the time I entered the class-room till I left it. However, the remark with which I opened this paragraph is true. It is the middle of night by the mantel-piece clock, so I'll wish you pleasant dreams.

Addio!

SALLIE.

Tuesday.

Dear Enemy:

You doctored the whole house, then stalked past my library with your nose in the air, while I was waiting tea with a plate of Scotch scones sitting on the trivet, ordered expressly for you as a peace-offering.

If you really hurt, I will read the Kallikak book; but I must tell you that you are working me to death. It takes almost all of my energy to be an effective superintendent, and this university-extension course that you are conducting I find wearing. You remember how indignant you were one day last week because I confessed to having stayed up until one o'clock the night before? Well, my dear man, if I were to accomplish all the vicarious reading you require, I should sit up until morning every night.

However, bring it in. I usually manage half an hour of recreation after dinner, and though I had wanted to glance at Wells's latest novel, I will amuse myself instead with your feeble-minded family.

Life of late is unco steep.

Obligingly yours,

S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

April 17.

Dear Gordon:

Thank you for the tulips, likewise the lilies of the valley. They are most becoming to my blue Persian bowls.

Have you ever heard of the Kallikaks? Get the book and read them up. They are a two-branch family in New Jersey, I think, though their real name and origin is artfully concealed. But, anyway,—and this is true,—six generations ago a young gentleman, called for convenience Martin Kallikak, got drunk one night and temporarily eloped with a feeble-minded barmaid, thus founding a long line of feeble-minded Kallikaks,—drunkards, gamblers, prostitutes, horse thieves,—a scourge to New Jersey and surrounding States.

Martin later straightened up, married a normal woman, and founded a second line of proper Kallikaks,—judges, doctors, farmers, professors, politicians,—a credit to their country. And there the two branches still are, flourishing side by side. You can see what a blessing it would have been to New Jersey if something drastic had happened to that feeble-minded barmaid in her infancy.

It seems that feeble-mindedness is a very hereditary quality, and science isn't able to overcome it. No operation has been discovered for introducing brains into the head of a child who did n't start with them. And the child grows up with, say, a nine-year brain in a thirty-year body, and becomes an easy tool for any criminal he meets. Our prisons are one-third full of feeble-minded convicts. Society ought to segregate them on feeble-minded farms, where they can earn their livings in peaceful menial pursuits, and not have children. Then in a generation or so we might be able to wipe them out.

Did you know all that? It's very necessary information for a politician to have. Get the book and read it, please; I'd send my copy only that it's borrowed.

It's also very necessary information for me to have. There are eleven of these chicks that I suspect a bit, and I am *sure* of Loretta Higgins. I have been trying for a month to introduce one or two basic ideas into that child's brain, and now I know what the trouble is: her head is filled with a sort of soft cheesy substance instead of brain.

I came up here to make over this asylum in such little details as fresh air and food and clothes and sunshine, but, heavens! you can see what problems I am facing. I've got to make over society first, so that it won't send me sub-normal children to work with. Excuse all this excited conversation; but I've just met

up with the subject of feeble-mindedness, and it's appalling—and interesting. It is your business as a legislator to make laws that will remove it from the world. Please attend to this immediately,

And oblige,

S. McBRIDE,

Sup't John Grier Home.

Friday.

Dear Man of Science:

You did n't come to-day. Please don't skip us tomorrow. I have finished the Kallikak family and I am bursting with talk. Don't you think we ought to have a psychologist examine these children? We owe it to adopting parents not to saddle them with feeble-minded offspring.

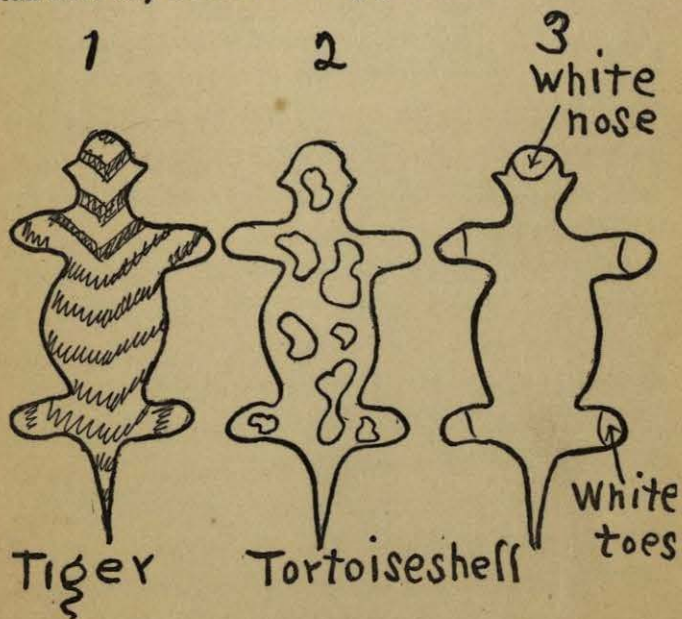
You know, I'm tempted to ask you to prescribe arsenic for Loretta's cold. I've diagnosed her case; she's a Kallikak. Is it right to let her grow up and found a line of 378 feeble-minded people for society to care for? Oh dear! I do hate to poison the child, but what can I do?

S. McB.

Dear Gordon:

You are n't interested in feeble-minded people, and you are shocked because I am? Well, I am equally shocked because you are not. If you are n't interested, in everything of the sort that there unfortunately is in this world, how can you make wise laws? You can't.

However, at your request, I will converse upon a less morbid subject. I've just bought fifty yards of blue and rose and green and corn-colored hair-ribbon as an Easter present for my fifty little daughters. I am also thinking of sending you an Easter present. How would a nice fluffy little kitten please you? I can offer any of the following patterns:—



Number 3 comes in any color, gray, black, or yellow. If you will let me know which you would rather have, I will express it at once.

I would write a respectable letter, but it's tea-time, and I see that a guest approaches.

Addio!

SALLIE.

p.s. Don't you know some one who would like to adopt a desirable baby boy with seventeen nice new teeth?

April 20.

My dear Judy:

One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns! We've had a Good Friday present of ten dozen, given by Mrs. De Peyster Lambert, a high-church, stained-glass-window soul whom I met at a tea a few days ago. (Who says now that teas are a silly waste of time?) She asked me about my "precious little waifs," and said I was doing a noble work and would be rewarded. I saw buns in her eye, and sat down and talked to her for half an hour.

Now I shall go and thank her in person, and tell her with a great deal of affecting detail how much those buns were appreciated by my precious little waifs — omitting the account of how precious little Punch threw his bun at Miss Snaith and plastered her neatly in the eye. I think, with encouragement, Mrs. De Peyster Lambert can be developed into a cheerful giver.

Oh, I'm growing into the most shocking beggar! My family don't dare to visit me, because I demand *bakshish* in such a brazen manner. I threatened to remove father from my calling-list unless he shipped immediately sixty-five pairs of overalls for my prospective gardeners. A notice from the freight office

DEAR ENEMY

III

this morning asks me to remove two packing-cases consigned to them by the J. L. McBride Co. of Worcester; so I take it that father desires to continue my acquaintance. Jimmie has n't sent us anything yet, and he's getting a huge salary. I write him frequently a pathetic list of our needs.

But Gordon Hallock has learned the way to a mother's heart. I was so pleasant about the peanuts and menagerie that now he sends a present of some sort every few days, and I spend my entire time composing thank-you letters that aren't exact copies of the ones I've sent before. Last week we received a dozen big scarlet balls. The nursery is *full* of them; you kick them before you as you walk. And yesterday there arrived a half-bushel of frogs and ducks and fishes to float in the bath-tubs.

Send, O best of trustees, the tubs in which to float them!

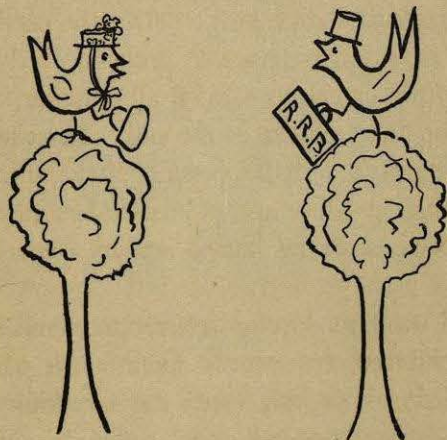
I am, as usual,

S. McBRIDE.

Tuesday.

My dear Judy:

Spring must be lurking about somewhere; the birds are arriving from the South. Is n't it time you followed their example?



Society note from the *Bird o' Passage News*:
"Mr. and Mrs. First Robin have returned from a trip to Florida. It is hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Jervis Pendleton will arrive shortly."

Even up here in our dilatory Dutchess County the breeze smells green; it makes you want to be out and away, roaming the hills, or else down on your knees

grubbing in the dirt. Is n't it funny what farming instincts the budding spring awakens in even the most urban souls?

I have spent the morning making plans for little private gardens for every child over nine. The big potato-field is doomed. That is the only feasible spot for sixty-two private gardens. It is near enough to be watched from the north windows, and yet far enough away, so that their messing will not injure our highly prized landscape lawn. Also the earth is rich, and they have some chance of success. I don't want the poor little chicks to scratch all summer, and then not turn up any treasure in the end. In order to furnish an incentive, I shall announce that the institution will buy their produce and pay in real money, though I foresee we shall be buried under a mountain of radishes.

I do so want to develop self-reliance and initiative in these children, two sturdy qualities in which they are conspicuously lacking (with the exception of Sadie Kate and a few other bad ones). Children who have spirit enough to be bad I consider very hopeful; it's those who are good just from inertia that are discouraging.

The last few days have been spent mainly in charming the devil out of Punch, an interesting task if I could devote my whole time to it; but with one hundred and seven other little devils to charm away, my attention is sorely deflected.

The awful thing about this life is that whatever I am doing, the other things that I am not doing, but ought to be, keep tugging at my skirts. There is no doubt but Punch's personal devil needs the whole attention of a whole person,—preferably two persons,—so that they could spell each other and get some rest.

Sadie Kate has just flown in from the nursery with news of a scarlet gold-fish (Gordon's gift) swallowed by one of our babies. Mercy! the number of calamities that can occur in an orphan-asylum!

9 P. M

My children are in bed, and I've just had a thought. Would n't it be heavenly if the hibernating system prevailed among the human young? There would be some pleasure in running an asylum if one could just tuck the little darlings into bed the first of October and keep them there until the twenty-second of April.

I'm yours, as ever,

SALLIE.

April 24.

Dear Jervis Pendleton, Esq.:

This is to supplement a night telegram which I sent you ten minutes ago. Fifty words not being enough to convey any idea of my emotions, I herewith add a thousand.

As you will know by the time you receive this, I have discharged the farmer, and he has refused to be discharged. Being twice the size of me, I can't lug him to the gate and chuck him out. He wants a notification from the president of the board of trustees written in vigorous language on official paper in type-writing. So, dear president of the board of trustees, kindly supply all of this at your earliest convenience.

Here follows the history of the case:

The winter season still being with us when I arrived and farming activities at a low ebb, I have heretofore paid little attention to Robert Sterry except to note on two occasions that his pig-pens needed cleaning; but to-day I sent for him to come and consult with me in regard to spring planting.

Sterry came, as requested, and seated himself at ease in my office with his hat upon his head. I suggested as tactfully as might be that he remove it, an

entirely necessary request, as little orphan boys were in and out on errands, and "hats off in the house" is our first rule in masculine deportment.

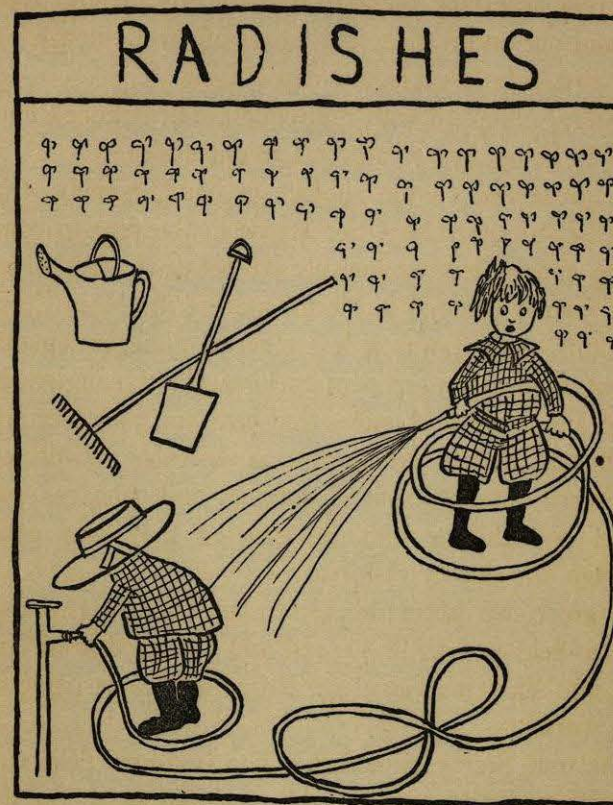
Sterry complied with my request, and stiffened himself to be against whatever I might desire.

I proceeded to the subject in hand, namely, that the diet of the John Grier Home in the year to come is to consist less exclusively of potatoes. At which our farmer grunted in the manner of the Hon. Cyrus Wykoff, only it was a less ethereal and gentlemanly grunt than a trustee permits himself. I enumerated corn and beans and onions and peas and tomatoes and beets and carrots and turnips as desirable substitutes.

Sterry observed that if potatoes and cabbages was good enough for him, he guessed they was good enough for charity children.

I proceeded imperturbably to say that the two-acre potato-field was to be plowed and fertilized, and laid out into sixty individual gardens, the boys assisting in the work.

At that Sterry exploded. The two-acre field was the most fertile and valuable piece of earth on the whole place. He guessed if I was to break that up into play-gardens for the children to mess about in, I'd be hearing about it pretty danged quick from the board of trustees. That field was fitted for potatoes, it had always raised potatoes, and it was going to continue to raise them just as long as he had anything to say about it.



"You have nothing whatever to say about it," I amiably replied. "I have decided that the two-acre field is the best plot to use for the children's gardens, and you and the potatoes will have to give way."

Whereupon he rose in a storm of bucolic wrath, and said he'd be gol darned if he'd have a lot of these danged city brats interfering with his work.

I explained — very calmly for a red-haired person with Irish forebears — that this place was run for the exclusive benefit of these children; that the children were not here to be exploited for the benefit of the place, a philosophy which he did not grasp, though my fancy city language had a slightly dampening effect. I added that what I required in a farmer was the ability and patience to instruct the boys in gardening and simple outdoor work; that I wished a man of large sympathies whose example would be an inspiring influence to these children of the city streets.

Sterry, pacing about like a caged woodchuck, launched into a tirade about silly Sunday-school notions, and, by a transition which I did not grasp, passed to a review of the general subject of woman's suffrage. I gathered that he is not in favor of the movement. I let him argue himself quiet, then I handed him a check for his wages, and told him to vacate the tenant house by twelve o'clock next Wednesday.

Sterry says he'll be danged if he will. (Excuse so many *dangeds*. It is the creature's only adjective.) He was engaged to work for this institution by the president of the board of trustees, and he will not move from that house until the president of the board of trustees tells him to go. I don't think poor Sterry realizes that since his arrival a new president has come to the throne.

Alors you have the story. I make no threats, but Sterry or McBride — take your choice, dear sir.

I am also about to write to the head of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, at Amherst, asking him to recommend a good, practical man with a nice, efficient, cheerful wife, who will take the entire care of our modest domain of seventeen acres, and who will be a man with the right personality to place over our boys.

If we get the farming end of this institution into running shape, it ought to furnish not only beans and onions for the table, but education for our hands and brains.

I remain, sir,

Yours most truly,

S. McBRIDE,

Superintendent of the

John Grier Home.

P.S. I think that Sterry will probably come back some night and throw rocks through the windows. Shall I have them insured?

My dear Enemy:

You disappeared so quickly this afternoon that I had no chance to thank you, but the echoes of that discharge penetrated as far as my library. Also, I have viewed the debris. What on earth did you do to poor Sterry? Watching the purposeful set of your shoulders as you strode toward the carriage-house, I was filled with sudden compunction. I did not want the man murdered, merely reasoned with. I am afraid you were a little harsh.

However, your technic seems to have been effective. Report says that he has telephoned for a moving-wagon and that Mrs. Sterry is even now on her hands and knees ripping up the parlor carpet.

For this relief much thanks.

SALLIE McBRIDE.

April 26.

Dear Jervis:

Your vigorous telegram was, after all, not needed. Dr. Robin MacRae, who is a grand *pawky* mon when it comes to a fight, accomplished the business with beautiful directness. I was so bubbling with rage that immediately after writing to you I called up the doctor on the telephone, and rehearsed the whole business over again. Now, our Sandy, whatever his failings (and he has them), does have an uncommon supply of common sense. He knows how useful those gardens are going to be, and how worse than useless Sterry was. Also says he, "The superintendent's authority must be upheld." (That, incidentally, is beautiful, coming from him.) But anyway, those were his words. And he hung up the receiver, cranked up his car, and flew up here at lawless speed. He marched straight to Sterry, impelled by a fine Scotch rage, and he discharged the man with such vigor and precision, that the carriage-house window was shattered to fragments.

Since this morning at eleven, when Sterry's wagon-load of furniture rumbled out of the gates, a sweet peace has reigned over the J. G. H. A man from the

DEAR ENEMY

village is helping us out while we hopefully await the farmer of our dreams.

I am sorry to have troubled you with our troubles. Tell Judy that she owes me a letter, and won't hear from me until she has paid it.

Your ob'd't servant,

S. McBRIDE.

Dear Judy:

In my letter of yesterday to Jervis I forgotted (Punch's word) to convey to you our thanks for three tin bath-tubs. The sky-blue tub with poppies on the side adds a particularly bright note to the nursery. I do love presents for the babies that are too big to be swallowed.

You will be pleased to hear that our manual training is well under way. The carpenter-benches are being installed in the old primary room, and until our school-house gets its new addition, our primary class is meeting on the front porch, in accordance with Miss Matthew's able suggestion.

The girls' sewing-classes are also in progress. A circle of benches under the copper beech-tree accommodates the hand sewers, while the big girls take turns at our three machines. Just as soon as they gain some proficiency we will begin the glorious work of redressing the institution. I know you think I'm slow, but it's really a task to accomplish one hundred and eighty new frocks. And the girls will appreciate them so much more if they do the work themselves.

I may also report that our hygiene system has risen to a high level. Dr. MacRae has introduced morning and evening exercises, and a glass of milk and a game