

of tag in the middle of school hours. He has instituted a physiology class, and has separated the children into small groups, so that they may come to his house, where he has a manikin that comes apart and shows all its messy insides. They can now rattle off scientific truths about their little digestions as fluently as Mother-Goose rhymes. We are really becoming too intelligent for recognition. You would never guess that we were orphans to hear us talk; we are quite like Boston children.

2 P.M.

O Judy, such a calamity! Do you remember several weeks ago I told you about placing out a nice little girl in a nice family home where I hoped she would be adopted? It was a kind Christian family living in a pleasant country village, the foster-father a deacon in the church. Hattie was a sweet, obedient, housewifely little body, and it looked as though we had exactly fitted them to each other. My dear, she was returned this morning for *stealing*. Scandal piled on scandal: *she had stolen a communion-cup from church!*

Between her sobs and their accusations it took me half an hour to gather the truth. It seems that the church they attend is very modern and hygienic, like our doctor, and has introduced individual communion-cups. Poor little Hattie had never heard of com-

munion in her life; in fact, she was n't very used to church, Sunday-school having always sufficed for her simple religious needs. But in her new home she attended both, and one day, to her pleased surprise, they served refreshments. But they skipped her. She made no comment, however; she is used to being skipped. But as they were starting home she saw that the little silver cup had been casually left in the seat, and supposing that it was a souvenir that you could take if you wished, she put it into her pocket.

It came to light two days later as the most treasured ornament of her doll's-house. It seems that Hattie long ago saw a set of doll's-dishes in a toy-shop window, and has ever since dreamed of possessing a set of her own. The communion-cup was not quite the same, but it answered. Now, if our family had only had a little less religion and a little more sense, they would have returned the cup, perfectly unharmed, and have marched Hattie to the nearest toy-shop and bought her some dishes. But instead, they bundled the child and her belongings into the first train they could catch, and shoved her in at our front door, proclaiming loudly that she was a thief.

I am pleased to say that I gave that indignant deacon and his wife such a thorough scolding as I am sure they have never listened to from the pulpit; I borrowed some vigorous bits from Sandy's vocabulary, and sent them home quite humbled. As for poor little Hattie, here she is back again, after going out with



such high hopes. It has an awfully bad moral effect on a child to be returned to the asylum in disgrace, especially when she was n't aware of committing a crime. It gives her a feeling that the world is full of unknown pitfalls, and makes her afraid to take a step. I must bend all my energies now toward finding another set of parents for her, and ones that have n't grown so old and settled and good that they have entirely forgotten their own childhood.

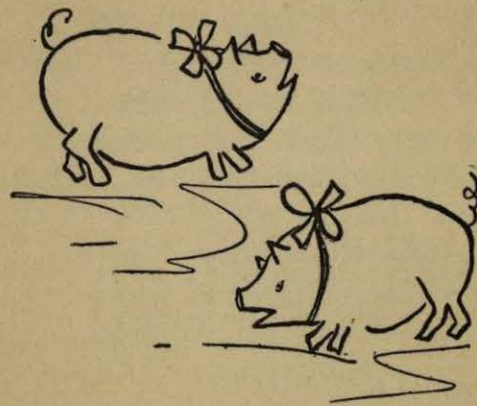
Sunday.

I forgot to tell you that our new farmer is here, Turnfelt by name; and his wife is a love, yellow hair and dimples. If she were an orphan, I could place her in a minute. We can't let her go to waste. I have a beautiful plan of building an addition to the farmer's cottage, and establishing under her comfortable care a sort of brooding-house where we can place our new little chicks, to make sure they have n't anything contagious and to eliminate as much profanity as possible before turning them loose among our other perfect chicks.

How does that strike you? It is very necessary in an institution as full of noise and movement and stir as this to have some isolated spot where we can put cases needing individual attention. Some of our children have inherited nerves, and a period of quiet contemplation is indicated. Is n't my vocabulary profes-

sional and scientific? Daily intercourse with Dr. Robin MacRae is extremely educational.

Since Turnfelt came, you should see our pigs. They are so clean and pink and unnatural that they don't recognize one another any more as they pass.



Our potato-field is also unrecognizable. It has been divided with string and pegs into as many squares as a checker-board, and every child has staked out a claim. Seed catalogues form our only reading matter.

Noah has just returned from a trip to the village for the Sunday papers to amuse his leisure. Noah is a very cultivated person; he not only reads perfectly, but he wears tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles while he does it. He also brought from the post-office a letter from you, written Friday night. I am pained to note that you do not care for "Gösta Berling" and that Jervis does n't. The only comment I can make is,



"What a shocking lack of literary taste in the Pendleton family!"

Dr. MacRae has another doctor visiting him, a very melancholy gentleman who is at the head of a private psychopathic institution, and thinks there's no good in life. But I suppose this pessimistic view is natural if you eat three meals a day with a tableful of melancholics. He goes up and down the world looking for signs of degeneracy, and finds them everywhere. I expected, after half an hour's conversation, that he would ask to look down my throat to see if I had a cleft palate. Sandy's taste in friends seems to resemble his taste in literature.

Gracious! this is a letter!

Good-by.

SALLIE.

Thursday, May 2.

*Dear Judy:*

Such a bewildering whirl of events! The J. G. H. is breathless. Incidentally, I am on the way toward solving my problem of what to do with the children while the carpenters and plumbers and masons are here. Or, rather, my precious brother has solved it for me.

This afternoon I went over my linen supply, and made the shocking discovery that we have only sheets enough to change the children's beds every two weeks, which, it appears, is our shiftless custom. While I was still in the midst of my household gear, with a bunch of keys at my girdle, looking like the chatelaine of a medieval château, who should be ushered in but Jimmie?

Being extremely occupied, I dropped a slanting kiss on his nose, and sent him off to look over the place in charge of my two oldest urchins. They collected six friends and organized a base-ball game. Jimmie came back blown, but enthusiastic, and consented to prolong his visit over the week-end, though after the dinner I gave him he has decided to take his future meals at the hotel. As we sat with our coffee before the fire, I confided to him my anxiety as to what should



be done with the chicks while their new brooder is building. You know Jimmie. In one half a minute his plan was formulated.

"Build an Adirondack camp on that little plateau up by the wood-lot. You can make three open shacks, each holding eight bunks, and move the twenty-four oldest boys out there for the summer. It won't cost two cents."

"Yes," I objected, "but it will cost more than two cents to engage a man to look after them."

"Perfectly easy," said Jimmie, grandly. "I'll find you a college fellow who'll be glad to come during the vacation for his board and a mere pittance, only you'll have to set up more filling board than you gave me to-night."

Dr. MacRae dropped in about nine o'clock, after visiting the hospital ward. We've got three cases of whooping-cough, but all isolated, and no more coming. How those three got in is a mystery. It seems there is a little bird that brings whooping-cough to orphan-asylums.

Jimmie fell upon him for backing in his camp scheme, and the doctor gave it enthusiastically. They seized pencil and paper and drew up plans; and before the evening was over, the last nail was hammered. Nothing would satisfy those two men but to go to the telephone at ten o'clock and rouse a poor carpenter from his sleep. He and some lumber are ordered for eight in the morning.

I finally got rid of them at ten-thirty, still talking uprights and joists and drainage and roof slants.

The excitement of Jimmie and coffee and all these building operations induced me to sit down immediately and write a letter to you; but I think, by your leave, I'll postpone further details to another time.

Yours ever,

SALLIE.

Saturday.

*Dear Enemy:*

Will you be after dining with us at seven to-night? It's a real dinner-party; we're going to have ice-cream.

My brother has discovered a promising young man to take charge of the boys,— maybe you know him,— Mr. Witherspoon, at the bank. I wish to introduce him to asylum circles by easy steps, so *please* don't mention insanity or epilepsy or alcoholism, or any of your other favorite topics.

He is a gay young society leader, used to very fancy things to eat. Do you suppose we can ever make him happy at the John Grier Home?

Yours in evident haste,

SALLIE McBRIDE.



Sunday.

*Dear Judy:*

Jimmie was back at eight Friday morning, and the doctor at a quarter past. They and the carpenter and our new farmer and Noah and our two horses and our eight biggest boys have been working ever since. Never were building operations set going in faster time. I wish I had a dozen Jimmies on the place, though I will say that my brother works faster if you catch him before the first edge of his enthusiasm wears away. He would not be much good at chiseling out a medieval cathedral.

He came back Saturday morning aglow with a new idea. He had met at the hotel the night before a friend who belongs to his hunting-club in Canada, and who is cashier of our First (and only) National Bank.

"He's a bully good sport," said Jimmie, "and exactly the man you want to camp out with those kids and lick 'em into shape. He'll be willing to come for his board and forty dollars a month, because he's engaged to a girl in Detroit and wants to save. I told him the food was rotten, but if he kicked enough, you'd probably get a new cook."

"What's his name?" said I, with guarded interest.

"He's got a peach of a name. It's Percy de Forest Witherspoon."

I nearly had hysterics. Imagine a Percy de Forest Witherspoon in charge of those twenty-four wild little savages!

But you know Jimmie when he has an idea. He had already invited Mr. Witherspoon to dine with me on Saturday evening, and had ordered oysters and squabs and ice-cream from the village caterer to help out my veal. It ended by my giving a very formal dinner-party, with Miss Matthews and Betsy and the doctor included.

I almost asked the Hon. Cy and Miss Snaith. Ever since I have known those two, I have felt that there ought to be a romance between them. Never have I known two people who matched so perfectly. He's a widower with five children. Don't you suppose it might be arranged? If he had a wife to take up his attention, it might deflect him a little from us. I'd be getting rid of them both at one stroke. It's to be considered among our future improvements.

Anyway, we had our dinner. And during the course of the evening my anxiety grew, not as to whether Percy would do for us, but as to whether we should do for Percy. If I searched the world over, I never could find a young man more calculated to win the affection of those boys. You know, just by looking at him, that he does everything well, at least everything vigorous. His literary and artistic accomplish-



ments I suspect a bit, but he rides and shoots and plays golf and foot-ball and sails a boat. He likes to sleep out of doors and he likes boys. He has always wanted to know some orphans; often read about 'em in books, he says, but never met any face to face. Percy does seem too good to be true.

Before they left, Jimmie and the doctor hunted up a lantern, and in their evening clothes conducted Mr. Witherspoon across a plowed field to inspect his future dwelling.

And such a Sunday as we passed! I had absolutely to forbid their carpentering. Those men would have put in a full day, quite irrespective of the damage done to one hundred and four little moral natures. As it is, they have just stood and looked at those shacks and handled their hammers, and thought about where they would drive the first nail to-morrow morning. The more I study men, the more I realize that they are nothing in the world but boys grown too big to be spankable.

I am awfully worried as to how to feed Mr. Witherspoon. He looks as though he had a frightfully healthy appetite, and he looks as though he could n't swallow his dinner unless he had on evening clothes. I've made Betsy send home for a trunkful of evening gowns in order to keep up our social standing. One thing is fortunate: he takes his luncheon at the hotel, and I hear their luncheons are very filling.

Tell Jervis I am sorry he is not with us to drive

a nail for the camp. Here comes the Hon. Cy up the path. Heaven save us!

Ever your unfortunate,

S. McB.



THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

May 8.

*Dear Judy:*

Our camp is finished, our energetic brother has gone, and our twenty-four boys have passed two healthful nights in the open. The three bark-covered shacks add a pleasant rustic touch to the grounds. They are like those we used to have in the Adirondacks, closed on three sides and open in the front, and one larger than the rest to allow a private pavilion for Mr. Percy Witherspoon. An adjacent hut, less exposed to the weather, affords extremely adequate bathing facilities, consisting of a faucet in the wall and three watering-cans. Each camp has a bath-master who stands on a stool and sprinkles each little shiverer as he trots under. Since our trustees *won't* give us enough bath-tubs, we have to use our wits.

The three camps have organized into three tribes of Indians, each with a chief of its own to answer for its conduct, Mr. Witherspoon high chief of all, and Dr. MacRae the medicine man. They dedicated their lodges Tuesday evening with appropriate tribal ceremonies; and though they politely invited me to attend, I decided that it was a purely masculine affair, so I declined to go, but sent refreshments, a very popular

move. Betsy and I walked as far as the base-ball-field in the course of the evening, and caught a glimpse of the orgies. The braves were squatting in a circle about a big fire, each decorated with a blanket from his bed and a rakish band of feathers. (Our chickens seem very scant as to tail, but I have asked no unpleasant questions.) The doctor, with a Navajo blanket about his shoulders, was executing a war-dance, while Jimmie and Mr. Witherspoon beat on war-drums — two of our copper kettles, now permanently dented. Fancy Sandy! It's the first youthful glimmer I have ever caught in the man.

After ten o'clock, when the braves were safely stowed for the night, the three men came in and limply dropped into comfortable chairs in my library, with the air of having made martyrs of themselves in the great cause of charity. But they did not deceive me. They originated all that tomfoolery for their own individual delectation.

So far Mr. Percy Witherspoon appears fairly happy. He is presiding at one end of the officers' table under the special protection of Betsy, and I am told that he instils considerable life into that sedate assemblage. I have endeavored to run up their menu a trifle, and he accepts what is put before him with a perfectly good appetite, irrespective of the absence of such accustomed trifles as oysters and quail and soft-shell crabs.

There was no sign of a private sitting-room that I could put at this young man's disposal, but he himself



has solved the difficulty by proposing to occupy our new laboratory. So he spends his evenings with a book and a pipe, comfortably stretched in the dentist's chair. There are not many society men who would be willing to spend their evenings so harmlessly. That girl in Detroit is a lucky young thing.

Mercy! An automobile full of people has just arrived to look over the institution, and Betsy, who usually does the honors, not here. I fly.

*Addio!*

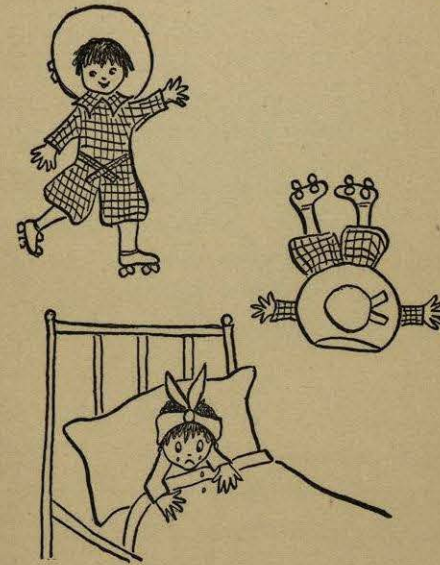
SALLIE.

*My dear Gordon:*

This is not a letter,—I don't owe you one,—it's a receipt for sixty-five pairs of roller-skates.

Many thanks.

S. McB.





Friday.

*Dear Enemy:*

I hear that I missed a call to-day, but Jane delivered your message, together with the "Genetic Philosophy of Education." She says that you will call in a few days for my opinion of the book. Is it to be a written or an oral examination?

And does n't it ever occur to you that this education business is rather one-sided? It often strikes me that Dr. Robin MacRae's mental attitude would also be the better for some slight refurbishing. I will promise to read your book, provided you read one of mine. I am sending herewith the "Dolly Dialogues," and shall ask for an opinion in a day or so.

It's uphill work making a Scotch Presbyterian frivolous, but persistency accomplishes wonders.

S. McB.

May 13.

*My dear, dear Judy:*

Talk about floods in Ohio! Right here in Dutchess County we are the consistency of a wet sponge. Rain for five days, and everything wrong with this institution.

The babies have had croup, and we have been up o' nights with them. Cook has given notice, and there's a dead rat in the walls. Our three camps leaked, and in the early dawn, after the first cloud-burst, twenty-four bedraggled little Indians, wrapped in damp bedding, came shivering to the door and begged for admission. Since then every clothes-line, every stair-railing has been covered with wet and smelly blankets that steam, but won't dry. Mr. Percy de Forest Witherspoon has returned to the hotel to wait until the sun comes out.

After being cooped up for four days with no exercise to speak of, the children's badness is breaking out in red spots, like the measles. Betsy and I have thought of every form of active and innocent occupation that could be carried on in such a congested quarter as this: blind-man's-buff and pillow fights and hide-and-go-seek, gymnastics in the dining-room, and bean-bags in the school-room. (We broke two windows.)



The boys played leap-frog up and down the hall, and jarred all the plaster in the building. We have cleaned energetically and furiously. All the woodwork has been washed, and all of the floors polished; but despite everything, we have a great deal of energy left, and we are getting to that point of nerves where we want to punch one another.

Sadie Kate has been acting like a little devil — do they have feminine devils? If not, Sadie Kate has originated the species. And this afternoon Loretta Higgins had — well, I don't know whether it was a sort of fit or just a temper. She lay down on the floor and howled for a solid hour, and when any one tried to approach her, she thrashed about like a little wind-mill and bit and kicked.

By the time the doctor came she had pretty well worn herself out. He picked her up, limp and drooping, and carried her to a cot in the hospital-room; and after she was asleep he came down to my library and asked to look at the archives.

Loretta is thirteen; in the three years she has been here she has had five of these outbreaks, and has been punished good and hard for them. The child's ancestral record is simple: "Mother died of alcoholic dementia, Bloomingdale Asylum. Father unknown."

He studied the page long and frowningly and shook his head.

"With a heredity like that, is it right to punish the child for having a shattered nervous system?"

"It is not," said I, firmly. "We will mend her shattered nervous system."

"If we can."

"We'll feed her up on cod-liver oil and sunshine, and find a nice kind foster-mother who will take pity on the poor little—"

But then my voice trailed off into nothing as I pictured Loretta's face, with her hollow eyes and big nose and open mouth and no chin and stringy hair and sticking-out ears. No foster-mother in the world would love a child who looked like that.

"Why, oh, why," I wailed, "does n't the good Lord send orphan children with blue eyes and curly hair and loving dispositions? I could place a million of that sort in kind homes, but no one wants Loretta."

"I'm afraid the good Lord does n't have anything to do with bringing our Loretas into the world. It is the devil who attends to them."

Poor Sandy! He gets awfully pessimistic about the future of the universe; but I don't wonder, with such a cheerless life as he leads. He looked to-day as though his own nervous system was shattered. He had been splashing about in the rain since five this morning, when he was called to a sick-baby case. I made him sit down and have some tea, and we had a nice, cheerful talk on drunkenness and idiocy and epilepsy and insanity. He dislikes alcoholic parents, but he ties himself into a knot over insane parents.

Privately, I don't believe there's one thing in hered-



ity, provided you snatch the babies away before their eyes are opened. We've got the sunniest youngster here you ever saw; his mother and Aunt Ruth and Uncle Silas all died insane, but he is as placid and unexcitable as a cow.

Good-by, my dear. I am sorry this is not a more cheerful letter, though at this moment nothing unpleasant seems to be happening. It's eleven o'clock, and I have just stuck my head into the corridor, and all is quiet except for two banging shutters and leaking eaves. I promised Jane I would go to bed at ten.

Good night, and joy be wi' ye baith!

SALLIE.

P.S. There is one thing in the midst of all my troubles that I have to be grateful for: the Hon. Cy has been stricken with a lingering attack of grippe. In a burst of thankfulness I sent him a bunch of violets.

P.S. 2. We are having an epidemic of pink-eye.

May 16.

*Good morning, my dear Judy!*

Three days of sunshine, and the J. G. H. is smiling. I am getting my immediate troubles nicely settled. Those beastly blankets have dried at last, and our camps have been made livable again. They are floored with wooden slats and roofed with tar-paper. (Mr. Witherspoon calls them chicken-coops.) We are digging a stone-lined ditch to convey any further cloud-bursts from the plateau on which they stand to the corn-field below. The Indians have resumed savage life, and their chief is back at his post.

The doctor and I have been giving Loretta Higgins's nerves our most careful consideration. We think that this barrack life, with its constant movement and stir, is too exciting, and we have decided that the best plan will be to board her out in a private family, where she will receive a great deal of individual attention.

The doctor, with his usual resourcefulness, has produced the family. They live next door to him and are very nice people; I have just returned from calling. The husband is foreman of the casting-room at the iron works, and the wife is a comfortable soul who shakes all over when she laughs. They live mostly in their kitchen in order to keep the parlor neat; but it



is such a cheerful kitchen that I should like to live in it myself. She has potted begonias in the window and a nice purry tiger cat asleep on a braided rug in front of the stove. She bakes on Saturday — cookies and gingerbread and doughnuts. I am planning to pay my weekly call upon Loretta every Saturday morning at eleven o'clock. Apparently I made as favorable an impression on Mrs. Wilson as she made on me. After I had gone, she confided to the doctor that she liked me because I was just as common as she was.

Loretta is to learn housework and have a little garden of her own, and particularly play out of doors in the sunshine. She is to go to bed early and be fed up on nice nourishing food, and they are to pet her and make her happy. All this for three dollars a week!

Why not find a hundred such families, and board out all the children? Then this building could be turned into an idiot-asylum, and I, not knowing anything about idiots, could conscientiously resign and go back home and live happily ever after.

Really, Judy, I am growing frightened. This asylum will get me if I stay long enough. I am becoming so interested in it that I can't think or talk or dream of anything else. You and Jervis have blasted all my prospects in life.

Suppose I should retire and marry and have a family; as families go nowadays, I could n't hope for more than five or six children at the most, and all with the

same heredity. But, mercy! such a family appears perfectly insignificant and monotonous. You have institutionalized me.

Reproachfully yours,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

p.s. We have a child here whose father was lynched. Is n't that a piquant detail to have in one's history?