

Tuesday.

Dearest Judy:

What shall we do? Mamie Prout does not like prunes. This antipathy to a cheap and healthful food-stuff is nothing but imagination, and ought not to be countenanced among the inmates of a well-managed institution. Mamie must be made to like prunes. So says our grammar teacher, who spends the noonday hour with us and overlooks the morals of our charges. About one o'clock to-day she marched Mamie to my office charged with the offense of refusing, *absolutely* refusing, to open her mouth and put in a prune. The child was plumped down on a stool to await punishment from me.

Now, as you know, I do not like bananas, and I should hate awfully to be forced to swallow them; so, by the same token, why should I force Mamie Prout to swallow prunes?

While I was pondering a course that would seem to uphold Miss Keller's authority, but would at the same time leave a loophole for Mamie, I was called to the telephone.

"Sit there until I come back," I said, and went out and closed the door.

The message was from a kind lady wishing to motor me to a committee meeting. I did n't tell you that I am organizing local interest in our behalf. The idle

rich who possess estates in this neighborhood are beginning to drift out from town, and I am laying my plans to catch them before they are deflected by too many garden parties and tennis tournaments. They have never been of the slightest use to this asylum, and I think it's about time they woke up to a realization of our presence.

Returning at tea-time, I was waylaid in the hall by Dr. MacRae, who demanded some statistics from my office. I opened the door, and there sat Mamie Prout exactly where she had been left four hours before.

"Mamie darling!" I cried in horror. "You have n't been here all this time?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Mamie; "you told me to wait until you came back."

That poor patient little thing was fairly swaying with weariness, but she never uttered a whimper.

I will say for Sandy that he was *sweet*. He gathered her up in his arms and carried her to my library, and petted her and caressed her back to smiles. Jane brought the sewing-table and spread it before the fire, and while the doctor and I had tea, Mamie had her supper. I suppose, according to the theory of some educators, now, when she was thoroughly worn out and hungry, would have been the psychological moment to ply her with prunes. But you will be pleased to hear that I did nothing of the sort, and that the doctor for once upheld my unscientific principles. Mamie had the most wonderful supper of her life, em-

bellished with strawberry jam from my private jar and peppermints from Sandy's pocket. We returned her to her mates happy and comforted, but still possessing that regrettable distaste for prunes.

Portrait of an



Obedient Child

Did you ever know anything more appalling than this soul-crushing unreasoning obedience which Mrs. Lippett so insistently fostered? It's the orphan-asylum attitude toward life, and somehow I must crush it out. Initiative, responsibility, curiosity, inventiveness, fight — oh dear! I wish the doctor had a serum for injecting all these useful virtues into an orphan's circulation.

LATER.

I wish you'd come back to New York. I've appointed you press-agent for this institution, and we

need some of your floweriest writing immediately. There are seven tots here crying to be adopted, and it's your business to advertise them.

Little Gertrude is cross-eyed, but dear and affectionate and generous. Can't you write her up so persuasively that some loving family will be willing to take her even if she isn't beautiful? Her eyes can be operated on when she's older; but if it were a cross disposition she had, no surgeon in the world could remove that. The child knows there is something missing, though she has never seen a live parent in her life. She holds up her arms persuasively to every person who passes. Put in all the pathos you are capable of, and see if you can't fetch her a mother and father.

Maybe you can get one of the New York papers to run a Sunday-feature article about a lot of different children. I'll send some photographs. You remember what a lot of responses that "Smiling Joe" picture brought for the Sea Breeze people? I can furnish equally taking portraits of Laughing Lou and Gurgling Gertrude and Kicking Karl if you will just add the literary touch.

And do find me some sports who are not afraid of heredity. This wanting every child to come from one of the first families of Virginia is getting tiresome.

Yours, as usual,

SALLIE.

Friday.

My dear, dear Judy:

Such an upheaval! I've discharged the cook and the housekeeper, and in delicate language conveyed the impression to our grammar teacher that she need n't come back next year. But, oh, if I could only discharge the Honorable Cy!

I must tell you what happened this morning. Our trustee, who has had a dangerous illness, is now dangerously well again, and dropped in to pay a neighborly call. Punch was occupying a rug on my library floor, virtuously engaged with building-blocks. I am separating him from the other kindergarten children, and trying the Montessori method of a private rug and no nervous distraction. I was flattering myself that it was working well; his vocabulary of late has become almost prudish.

After half an hour's desultory visit, the Hon. Cy rose to go. As the door closed behind him (I am at least thankful the child waited for that), Punch raised his appealing brown eyes to mine and murmured, with a confiding smile:

"Gee! ain't he got de hell of a mug?"

If you know a kind Christian family where I can

DEAR ENEMY

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place out a sweet little five-year boy, please communicate at once with

S. McBRIDE,

Sup't John Grier Home.

Dear Pendletons:

I've never known anything like you two snails. You've only just reached Washington, and I have had my suit-case packed for days, ready to spend a rejuvenating week-end *chez vous*. Please hurry! I've languished in this asylum atmosphere as long as is humanely possible. I shall gasp and die if I don't get a change.

Yours,

on the point of suffocation,

S. McB.

P.S. Drop a card to Gordon Hallock, telling him you are there. He will be charmed to put himself and the Capitol at your disposal. I know that Jervis does n't like him, but Jervis ought to get over his baseless prejudices against politicians. Who knows? I may be entering politics myself some day.

My dear Judy:

We do receive the most amazing presents from our friends and benefactors. Listen to this. Last week Mr. Wilton J. Leverett (I quote from his card) ran over a broken bottle outside our gate, and came in to visit the institution while his chauffeur was mending the tire. Betsy showed him about. He took an intelligent interest in everything he saw, particularly our new camps. That is an exhibit which appeals to men. He ended by removing his coat, and playing base-ball with two tribes of Indians. After an hour and a half he suddenly looked at his watch, begged for a glass of water, and bowed himself off.

We had entirely forgotten the episode until this afternoon, when the expressman drove up to the door with a present for the John Grier Home from the chemical laboratories of Wilton J. Leverett. It was a barrel — well, anyway, a good sized keg — full of liquid green soap!

Did I tell you that the seeds for our garden came from Washington? A polite present from Gordon Hallock and the U. S. Government. As an example of what the past régime did not accomplish, Martin Schladerwitz, who has spent three years on this pseudo-farm, knew no more than to dig a grave two feet deep and bury his lettuce seeds!

Oh, you can't imagine the number of fields in which we need making over; but of course you, of all people, can imagine. Little by little I am getting my eyes wide open, and things that just looked funny to me at first, now — oh dear! It's very disillusionizing. Every funny thing that comes up seems to have a little tragedy wrapped inside it.

Just at present we are paying anxious attention to our manners — not orphan-asylum manners, but danc-

Dancing School Manners



ing-school manners. There is to be nothing Uriah Heepish about our attitude toward the world. The little girls make courtesies when they shake hands, and

the boys remove caps and rise when a lady stands, and push in chairs at the table. (Tommy Woolsey shot Sadie Kate into her soup yesterday, to the glee of all observers except Sadie, who is an independent young damsel and does n't care for these useless masculine attentions.) At first the boys were inclined to jeer, but after observing the politeness of their hero, Percy de Forest Witherspoon, they have come up to the mark like little gentlemen.

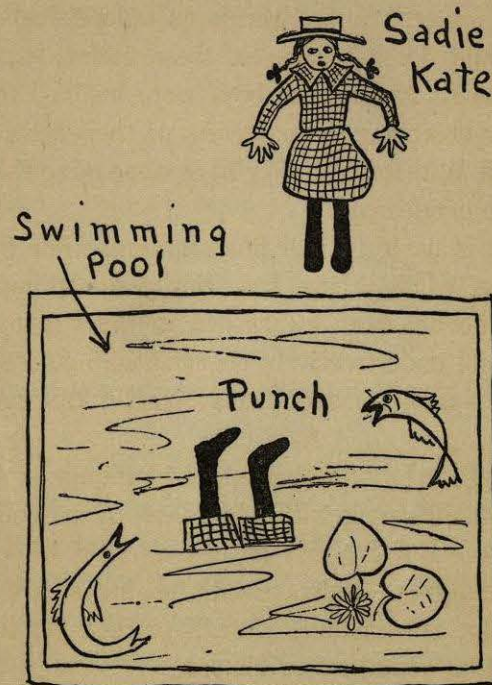
Punch is paying a call this morning. For the last half-hour, while I have been busily scratching away to you, he has been established in the window-seat, quietly and undestructively engaged with colored pencils. Betsy, *en passant*, just dropped a kiss upon his nose.

"Aw, gwan!" said Punch, blushing quite pink, and wiping off the caress with a fine show of masculine indifference. But I notice he has resumed work upon his red-and-green landscape with heightened ardor and an attempt at whistling. We'll succeed yet in conquering that young man's temper.

Tuesday.

The doctor is in a very grumbly mood to-day. He called just as the children were marching in to dinner, whereupon he marched, too, and sampled their food, and, oh, my dear! the potatoes were scorched! And such a clishmaclaver as that man made! It is the first

time the potatoes ever have been scorched, and you know that scorching sometimes happens in the best of families. But you would think from Sandy's language



that the cook had scorched them on purpose, in accordance with my orders.

As I have told you before, I could do very nicely without Sandy.

Wednesday.

Yesterday being a wonderful sunny day, Betsy and I turned our backs upon duty and motored to the very

fancy home of some friends of hers, where we had tea in an Italian garden. Punch and Sadie Kate had been *such* good children all day that at the last moment we telephoned for permission to include them, too.

"Yes, indeed, do bring the little dears," was the enthusiastic response.

But the choice of Punch and Sadie Kate was a mistake. We ought to have taken Mamie Prout, who has demonstrated her ability to sit. I shall spare you the details of our visit; the climax was reached when Punch went gold-fishing in the bottom of the swimming-pool. Our host pulled him out by an agitated leg, and the child returned to the asylum swathed in that gentleman's rose-colored bath-robe.

What do you think? Dr. Robin MacRae, in a contrite mood for having been so intensely disagreeable yesterday, has just invited Betsy and me to take supper in his olive-green house next Sunday evening at seven o'clock in order to look at some microscopic slides. The entertainment, I believe, is to consist of a scarlet-fever culture, some alcoholic tissue, and a tubercular gland. These social attentions bore him excessively; but he realizes that if he is to have free scope in applying his theories to the institution he must be a little polite to its superintendent.

I have just read this letter over, and I must admit that it skips lightly from topic to topic. But though it may not contain news of any great moment, I trust you

will realize that its writing has consumed every vacant minute during the last three days.

I am,

Most fully occupied,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

P.S. A blessed woman came this morning and said she would take a child for the summer — one of the sickest, weakest, neediest babies I could give her. She had just lost her husband, and wanted something *hard* to do. Is n't that really very touching?

Saturday afternoon.

Dear Judy and Jervis:

Brother Jimmie (we are very alliterative!), spurred on by sundry begging letters from me, has at last sent us a present; but he picked it out himself.

We have a monkey! His name is Java.

The children no longer hear the school-bell ring. On the day the creature came, this entire institution formed in line and filed past and shook his paw. Poor Sing's nose is out of joint. I have to *pay* to have him washed.

Sadie Kate is developing into my private secretary. I have her answer the thank-you letters for the institution, and her literary style is making a hit among our benefactors. She invariably calls out a second gift. I had hitherto believed that the Kilcoyne family sprang from the wild west of Ireland, but I begin to suspect that their source was nearer Blarney Castle. You can see from the inclosed copy of the letter she sent to Jimmie what a persuasive pen the young person has. I trust that, in this case at least, it will not bear the fruit that she suggests.

Dear Mr. Jimmie

We thank you very much for the lovely monkey you give. We name him Java because that's a warm island across the ocean where he was born up in a nest like a bird only big the doctor told us.

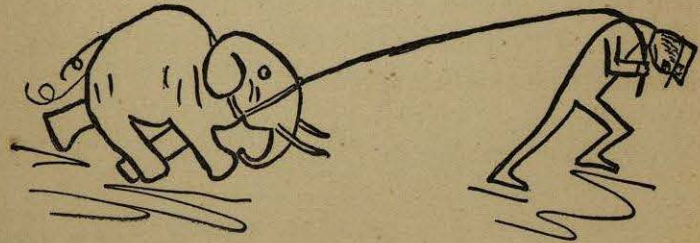
The first day he come every boy and girl shook his hand and said good morning Java his hand feels funny he holds so tight. I was afraid to touch him but now I let him sit on my shoulder and put his arms around my neck if he wants to. He makes a funny noise that sounds like swearing and gets mad when his tale is pulled.

We love him dearly and we love you two.

The next time you have to give a present, please send an elephant. Well I guess I'll stop.

Yours truly

SADIE KATE KILCOYNE.



Percy de Forest Witherspoon is still faithful to his little followers, though I am so afraid he will get tired that I urge him to take frequent vacations. He has not only been faithful himself, but has brought in recruits. He has large social connections in the neighborhood, and last Saturday evening he introduced two friends, nice men who sat around the camp-fire and swapped hunting-stories.

One of them was just back from around the world, and told hair-raising anecdotes of the head-hunters of Sarawak, a narrow pink country on the top of Borneo. My little braves pant to grow up and get to Sarawak, and go out on the war-path after head-hunters. Every encyclopedia in this institution has been consulted, and there is n't a boy here who cannot tell you the history, manners, climate, flora, and fungi of Borneo. I only wish Mr. Witherspoon would introduce friends who had been head-hunting in England, France, and Germany, countries not quite so *chic* as Sarawak, but more useful for general culture.

We have a new cook, the fourth since my reign began. I have n't bothered you with my cooking troubles, but institutions don't escape any more than families. The last is a negro woman, a big, fat, smiling, chocolate-colored creature from Souf Ca'lina. And ever since she came on honey dew we've fed! Her name is — what do you guess? *Sallie*, if you please. I suggested that she change it.

“Sho, Miss, I's had dat name Sallie longer 'n you,

an' I could n't get used nohow to answerin' up pert-like when you sings out 'Mollie!' Seems like Sallie jest b'longs to me.”

So “Sallie” she remains; but at least there is no danger of our getting our letters mixed, for her last name is nothing so plebeian as McBride. It's Johnston-Washington, with a hyphen.

Sunday.

Our favorite game of late is finding pet names for Sandy. His austere presence lends itself to caricature. We have just originated a new batch. The “Laird o' Cockpen” is Percy's choice.

The Laird o' Cockpen he's proud and he's great;
His mind is ta'en up wi' the things of the state.

Miss Snaith disgustedly calls him “that man,” and Betsy refers to him (in his absence) as “Dr. Cod-Liver.” My present favorite is “Macphairson Clon Glocketty Angus McClan.” But for real poetic feeling, Sadie Kate beats us all. She calls him “Mister Someday Soon.” I don't believe that the doctor ever dropped into verse but once in his life, but every child in this institution knows that one poem by heart.

Someday soon something nice is going to happen;
Be a good little girl and take this hint:
Swallow with a smile your cod-liver ile,
And the first thing you know you will have a peppermint.

It's this evening that Betsy and I attend his supper-party, and I confess that we are looking forward to seeing the interior of his gloomy mansion with gleeful eagerness. He never talks about himself or his past or anybody connected with himself. He appears to be an isolated figure standing on a pedestal labeled SCIENCE, without a glimmer of any ordinary affections or emotions or human frailties except temper. Betsy and I are simply eaten up with curiosity to know what sort of past he came out of; but just let us get inside his house, and to our detective senses it will tell its own story. So long as the portal was guarded by a fierce McGurk, we had despaired of ever effecting an entrance; but now, behold! The door has opened of its own accord.

To be continued.

S. McB.

Monday.

Dear Judy:

We attended the doctor's supper-party last night, Betsy and Mr. Witherspoon and I. It turned out a passably cheerful occasion, though I will say that it began under heavy auspices.

His house on the inside is all that the outside promises; never in my life have I seen such an interior as that man's dining-room. The walls and carpets and lambrequins are a heavy dark green. A black-marble mantelpiece shelters a few smoking black coals. The furniture is as nearly black as furniture comes. The decorations are two steel engravings in shiny black frames—the "Monarch of the Glen," and the "Stag at Bay."

We tried hard to be light and sparkling, but it was like eating supper in the family vault. Mrs. McGurk, in black alpaca with a black silk apron, clumped around the table, passing cold, heavy things to eat, with a step so firm that she rattled the silver in the sideboard drawers. Her nose was up, and her mouth was down. She clearly does not approve of the master's entertaining, and she wishes to discourage all guests from ever accepting again.

Sandy sort of dimly knows that there is something the matter with his house, and in order to brighten it up a bit in honor of his guests, he had purchased

flowers,—dozens of them,—the most exquisite pink Killarney roses and red and yellow tulips. The McGurk had wedged them all together as tight as they would fit into a peacock-blue jardinière, and plumped it down in the center of the table. The thing was as big as a bushel-basket. Betsy and I nearly forgot our manners when we saw that centerpiece; but the doctor seemed so innocently pleased at having obtained a bright note in his dining-room that we suppressed our amusement and complimented him warmly upon his happy color scheme.

The moment supper was over, we hastened with relief to his own part of the house, where the McGurk's influence does not penetrate. No one in a cleaning capacity ever enters either his library or office or laboratory except Llewelyn, a short, wiry, bow-legged Welshman, who combines to a unique degree the qualities of chambermaid and chauffeur.

The library, though not the most cheerful room I have ever seen, still, for a man's house, is not so bad—books all around from floor to ceiling, with the overflow in piles on floor and table and mantelpiece; half a dozen abysmal leather chairs and a rug or so, with another black marble mantelpiece, but this time containing a crackling wood fire. By way of bric-à-brac, he has a stuffed pelican and a crane with a frog in its mouth, also a racoon sitting on a log, and a varnished tarpon. A faint suggestion of iodoform floats in the air.

The doctor made the coffee himself in a French machine, and we dismissed his housekeeper from our spirits. He really did do his best to be a thoughtful host and I have to report that the word "insanity" was not once mentioned. It seems that Sandy, in his moments of relaxation, is a fisherman; he and Percy began swapping stories of salmon and trout, and he finally got out his case of fishing-flies, and gallantly presented Betsy and me with a "silver doctor" and a "Jack Scott" out of which to make hat-pins. Then the conversation wandered to sport on the Scotch moors, and he told about one time when he was lost, and spent the night out in the heather. There is no doubt about it, Sandy's heart is in the highlands.

I am afraid that Betsy and I have wronged him. Though it is hard to relinquish the interesting idea, he may not, after all, have committed a crime. We are now leaning to the belief that he was crossed in love.

It's really horrid of me to make fun of poor Sandy, for, despite his stern bleakness of disposition, he's a pathetic figure of a man. Think of coming home after an anxious day's round to eat a solitary dinner in that grim dining-room!

Do you suppose it would cheer him up a little if I should send my company of artists to paint a frieze of rabbits around the wall?

With love, as usual,

SALLIE.

Dear Judy:

Are n't you ever coming back to New York? Please hurry! I need a new hat, and am desirous of shopping for it on Fifth Avenue, not on Water Street. Mrs. Gruby, our best milliner, does not believe in slavishly following Paris fashions; she originates her own styles. But three years ago, as a great concession to convention, she did make a tour of the New York shops, and is still creating models on the uplift of that visit.

Also, besides my own hat, I must buy 113 hats for my children, to say nothing of shoes and knickerbockers and shirts and hair-ribbons and stockings and garters. It's quite a task to keep a little family like mine decently clothed.

Did you get that bit letter I wrote you last week? You never had the grace to mention it in yours of Thursday, and it was seventeen pages long, and took me *days* to write.

Yours truly,

S. McBRIDE.

p.s. Why don't you tell me some news about Gordon? Have you seen him, and did he mention me? Is he running after any of those pretty Southern girls that Washington is so full of? You know that I want to hear. Why must you be so beastly uncommunicative?

Tuesday, 4 :27 P.M.

Dear Judy:

Your telegram came two minutes ago by telephone.

Yes, thank you, I shall be delighted to arrive at 5:49 on Thursday afternoon. And don't make any engagements for that evening, please, as I intend to sit up until midnight talking John Grier gossip with you and the president.

Friday and Saturday and Monday I shall have to devote to shopping. Oh, yes, you're right; I already possess more clothes than any jail-bird needs, but when spring comes, I *must* have new plumage. As it is, I wear an evening gown every night just to wear them out — no, not entirely that; to make myself believe that I'm still an ordinary girl despite this extraordinary life that you have pushed me into.

The Hon. Cy found me yesterday arrayed in a Nile-green crape (Jane's creation, though it looked Parisian). He was quite puzzled when he found I was n't going to a ball. I invited him to stay and dine with me, and he accepted! We got on very affably. He expands over his dinner. Food appears to agree with him. If there's any Bernard Shaw in New York just now, I believe that I might spare a couple of hours Saturday afternoon for a *matinée*. G. B. S.'s dialogue would afford such a life-giving contrast to the Hon. Cy's.

There's no use writing any more; I'll wait and talk.

Addio.

SALLIE.

P.S. Oh dear! just as I had begun to catch glimmerings of niceness in Sandy, he broke out again and was *abominable*. We unfortunately have five cases of measles in this institution, and the man's manner suggests that Miss Snaith and I gave the measles to the children on purpose to make him trouble. There are many days when I should be willing to accept our doctor's resignation.

Wednesday.

Dear Enemy:

Your brief and dignified note of yesterday is at hand. I have never known anybody whose literary style resembled so exactly his spoken word.

And you will be greatly obliged if I will drop my absurd fashion of calling you "Enemy"? I will drop my absurd fashion of calling you Enemy just as soon as you drop your absurd fashion of getting angry and abusive and insulting the moment any little thing goes wrong.

I am leaving to-morrow afternoon to spend four days in New York.

Yours truly,

S. McBRIDE.

Chez THE PENDLETONS, New York.

My dear Enemy:

I trust that this note will find you in a more affable frame of mind than when I saw you last. I emphatically repeat that it was not due to the carelessness of the superintendent of our institution that those two new cases of measles crept in, but rather to the unfortunate anatomy of our old-fashioned building, which does not permit of the proper isolation of contagious cases.

As you did not deign to visit us yesterday morning before I left, I could not offer any parting suggestions. I therefore write to ask that you cast your critical eye upon Mamie Prout. She is covered all over with little red spots which may be measles, though I am hoping not. Mamie spots very easily.

I return to prison life next Monday at six o'clock.

Yours truly,

S. McBRIDE.

P.S. I trust you will pardon my mentioning it, but you are not the kind of doctor that I admire. I like them chubby and round and smiling.