

Children's Column.

"OH, DEAR!"

Once three little girls named Betty, Molly and Tiny were sitting under a bush talking about adventures.

"I wish a nice adventure would happen to us as mother and father are out," said Molly. "A real adventure with a dragon and fairies in it. Don't you think that Tim looks rather like a magician? If he could wave his wand—his stick, I mean, and turn us into fairies."

But just then they noticed that Tim the shepherd boy was crying.

"What is the matter, Tim?" they asked. "My mummy's very ill," sobbed Tim. "And I've had to leave her all alone to come and look after the sheep."

"How far is it to your home?" asked Betty.

"Two miles away, just over the ford," said Tim, crying more than ever. Betty and Molly looked at each other.

"I think we ought to go, don't you?" said Molly.

"Why, of course," said Betty, "and it will be ever such an adventure."

They slipped into the house and filled two little baskets and a bag, and then Tim showed them the way to the ford. They were rather frightened when they saw it, the river was so wide and the stepping-stones so big and wobbly. But Betty picked up her skirts bravely.

"Never mind," she said, "We must expect dangers on an adventure."

The others followed, and they had all nearly got across when, plop! a big frog jumped up on the top of the very last stone. Betty's heart went pit-a-pat very fast indeed, for she was always frightened of frogs.

"Oh, dear!" she cried, "we shall never get past this; we shall have to go back home."

Molly was ready to cry. "Oh, please Mr Froggy, do go away," she begged. "I don't like standing on this stone, and I'm sure I can't turn round. I don't like adventures."

Then Betty began to laugh. "Why, don't you remember? Molly was wishing for an adventure with a dragon. Well, here is the dragon!" Then she waved her bag at the frog, and shouted, "be off, you old monster!" but her bag was going pit-a-pat all the time.

The frog had never learnt how to play at being a dragon, so he just said "croak" and hopped into the water.

"Hurrah!" said the children, nearly tumbling off the stones with joy. They soon found Tim's cottage, but his mother was so ill that she did not hear them come in.

"I wish we hadn't got these nice frocks on," said Betty, looking sadly around. It was such a poor home, with no fire and hardly any food.

"I know," said Molly, "Let's take off our frocks, and work in our petticoats."

And they bustled around and swept the floor and lit the fire, and warmed some broth they had brought, so that when Tim's mother at last looked round, she thought three little white fairies had come to wait on her. They gave her the broth, and wrapped her up in a shawl, and she felt better at once. When they got back home and told their mother all the adventure, she soon sent a doctor who made Tim's mother quite well. But to this very day the poor woman believes that three fairies saved her life when she was so ill. So you see, they did turn into a kind of fairies after all!

THE SCHOOL.

"Now, girls. I have often told you that I am going to send you to a boarding-school where you will have to behave." These were the words Mrs E— usually said to her two girls, Hazel and Ada, whenever they started any of their mischievous pranks.

The funny thing was that the two girls were longing to go to a boarding school, so they were not in the least troubled by this threat.

Mrs E— became so exasperated with their mischief that at last the longed for day came and they were packed off to Woodford House. When they arrived at the school, they did not feel very shy, and jumping out of the school carry-all, they followed the house-mistress up the broad staircase into their rooms.

As Hazel was ten and Ada thirteen they were not in the same dormitory. They were soon fast friends with their bed-mates, who both sympathised with their tricks. After a few mischievous pranks they decided to have a joke on a very quiet girl who hardly ever mixed with the other scholars. One night, Ada, wrapped in a sheet, proceeded up the long dormitory to the victim's bed. She shook the inmate by the shoulder, and commanded her to rise and be a follower of the "Ghostie Gang." Out of the shadows came a row of sheeted ghosts headed by

Hazel. The victim screamed and fainted. When the headmistress reached the dormitory door, she saw a sight which was enough to make any mistress angry. In different directions about the floor lay the discarded gowns of the ghosts, and a group of confused girls were gathered round a bed at the end of the dormitory. The mistress soon had the girls back in their beds, and the victim of the joke was brought to her senses.

Next morning, Hazel and Ada, and all the ghosts of last night, emerged from the mistress' room with shamed faces, and you may be sure they received a fitting punishment for their misdeeds. After this, they always thought before they started their pranks.

When they went home for their Christmas holidays, their mother remarked to her husband that she was glad she had sent them to school.

IN THE LAVENDER BUSH.

Two little fairies once lived in the centre of a big pink and white poppy. Next to the poppy grew a lavender bush, and in this lavender bush dwelt two elves. Of course, elves and fairies are not often very friendly, but these four were the best of chums. The two fairies were named Poppy-leaf and Violet-eye, and they spent their time making little dew-drops to throw on the lawn. The two elves were named Tease and Quick-ear.

One morning Quick-ear heard the two fairies crying.

"What is the matter?" he called from the lavender bush.

"Last night," Poppy-leaf sobbed, "some goblins came across the lawn and they threw thorns at us."

"Threw thorns at you?" Tease cried. "Why did you not wake us up, then we could have thrown thorns at them?"

"We will wake you to-night if the goblins come again," Violet-eye said, drying her tears. "You are such brave elves."

Tease and Quick-ear spent the afternoon gathering handfuls of little thorns, so that if the goblins came that evening they would be ready for them.

When night came and all was dark and still the elves sat quiet and listened. Suddenly a gasp came from the centre of the pink and white poppy.

"They are throwing thorns at us again," Poppy-leaf called.

Up from the lavender bush popped the two elves, brave and eager for battle, but, alas! they found that the goblins were hidden behind the long grass blades on the lawn, and although they threw away all their stock of thorns they could not see if they were throwing them on the goblins or not. But the goblins knew just where to aim their thorns, for the poppy and lavender bush stood out clearly in the darkness.

When morning came the two fairies were sobbing from fear and thorn-pricks, and the elves (elves never cry) were sitting in the lavender bush saying furious things about the goblins.

And their troubles were not yet over.

Suddenly, on to the lawn came an awful animal that snorted and rattled in a terrifying manner, and behind this animal walked a man. It came quickly across the grass, making a loud, hungry noise, and in a great fear the fairies jumped out of the poppy and ran into the shelter of the lavender bush, and there the four huddled together, trembling with fear.

Up and down the lawn snorted the animal, and when at last it went away the little quartette in the lavender bush were almost frightened to move.

Long after the last faint echo of the rattling bones had gone, Tease pushed a white, terrified face from the bush. And then he gave such a big shout that the other three jumped.

"Look! Look!" he cried. "Violet-eye, look! All of you, see what marvellous thing has happened."

Slowly the others pushed their heads from the lavender bush. Smooth and green before their eyes lay the lawn, with all the long thick blades of grass, behind which the goblins hid, mown right away by the big mower which had just been on.

"Hoorah! Hoorah!" cried Quick-ear. "That big animal has eaten all the long grass. Now the goblins will come no more, for we should be able to see and kill them all!"

THE FAIRY SCHOOL.

(By "Winifred.")

"This is getting too much to be borne!" cried Dame Elsa, as a cake with a pink frilling to it was suddenly switched off her plate as she sat at the head of the table at the school tea. "That mischievous little Golightly is at her tricks again." Dame Elsa took another cake. There was a shriek of laughter. The cake was lifted off the plate and carried into mid-air. Nobody saw the hand that did it. Dame Elsa shook her head angrily and took a slice of bread and butter. The slice had

the same fate as the cake. In a flash, there it was poised just above the dame's head, with no visible means of support. It was too much. From somewhere came a peal of soft laughter. Then Golightly started robbing the other plates.

"Do you hear me, Golightly?" cried Dame Elsa angrily. "Make yourself visible at once, and put the cakes back on the plates, or—I shall expel you from the Fairy School. Do you hear me!"

"Yes, please, mistress, I hear you," said Golightly, the voice sounding very meek, though there was laughter in it. "But I daren't show myself while you are so angry." Dame Elsa knew well that the invisible Golightly was simply making fun of the whole school and its mistress. The other fairies were on the titter. Making yourself invisible was strictly forbidden in the establishment, as it gave the "invisibles" an unfair advantage. One of the greediest fairies had adopted this means of getting more than her share of food. She had eaten her cake, then glided down the table taking all the other cakes, and the thing had proved too much to be borne. Golightly did not obey. She was somewhere close at hand, Dame Elsa knew very well. She drew out a sheet of paper and picked up her pen. "I am going to write to your aunt to fetch you away from the Fairy School, Golightly," said the mistress. She started writing but her pen waggled. Golightly was guiding it. Dame Elsa swept her hand round, but she did not hit Golightly. If you are invisible you can't be hit. The pen would not work. Dame Elsa found blots on the note-paper. It was all Golightly's doing. There was no managing such an unruly fairy, and yet Dame Elsa felt sorry for the disobedient pupil. "Golightly is such a dear little fairy," she said to herself as she started writing again, after destroying several sheets of paper. "If only she would cure herself of this silly trick of being invisible I should be quite proud of her." This remark pleased Golightly very much. She was sitting on Dame Elsa's shoulder at the time, though nobody could see her. It was her one delight to plague the mistress, just through sheer sportiveness. The tea was over. The fairies went off to their prep., though some had a romp. In the dormitory that night, there was Golightly, perfectly visible, perched up on the rail of her cot looking as wise as possible.

"Well, you take it cool!" cried Babs. "I wonder you dare show yourself at all!" "Oh, I'm not afraid of her, so far as that goes!" murmured Golightly, as she nibbled a cake. "She can't catch me, and it is such fun being invisible."

Then she gasped as she saw Dame Elsa coming into her room holding a pink candle above her head, and followed by Golightly's aunt, the fairy Take-'em-to-task. "She is here somewhere!" said Dame Elsa. "I cannot have her in the school any more!" Take-'em-to-task was saddened by this, and she ordered Golightly to show herself, which Golightly had to do. All the fairies sat up in bed looking eagerly at the scene. Golightly would be expelled for certain. Nothing of the sort. They did not know Dame Elsa yet. "Will you promise not to be invisible any more, Golightly, dear?" asked Take-'em-to-task, "then perhaps, you may be forgiven."

"Of course she will, if she promises!" said Dame Elsa, as she looked at the naughty little fairy, who was plain enough now.

Well, the long and short of it was, Golightly promised, but whether she will always remember to keep her promise remains to be seen. It is to be hoped she will be good, for there is nothing more irritating than to have your cake stolen away by an invisible fairy.

The Home.

TO PROTECT STEEL FITTINGS.

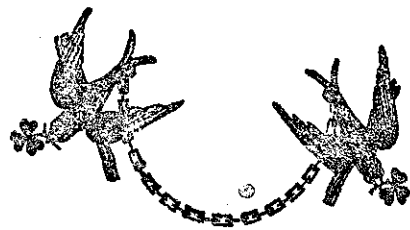
A thin coating of caoutchouc is an excellent preservative for steel articles. The caoutchouc is to be melted in a closed vessel, that it may not take fire. It will require nearly the temperature of fusing lead, and must be stirred to prevent burning. Mix some oil with the caoutchouc, then apply with a brush. When dry, it will be firm varnish impervious to moisture. This, when required, may easily be removed by a soft brush dipped in warm oil of turpentine.

CLEANING GLASS GLOBES.

To clean soiled glass bottles use strong soda water (warm). If furied, as water bottles become when in constant use, a small drop of spirits of salts (muriatic acid), will soon render them bright. If stained, as with port or elder wine, a teaspoonful of oxalic acid in a quarter of a gill of water instantly cleanses them. French chambermaids adopt a very simple and effective method. Before emptying the bottles put in some pieces of soft paper, shake these in the bottles, empty

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and rinse with fresh water; the bottles will then keep as bright as possible. Broken egg shells are also excellent.

GOLDEN PUDDING.

Line a basin with a thin layer of apricot jam or marmalade (if to be got). See that it is equally spread over the interior, then soak about two ounces of bread—if for a large basin—in enough milk to cover. When soft, beat up with a tablespoonful of sugar, two tablespoonfuls of minced mutton suet, one drop of essence of lemon or the grated rind of the lemon, the strained juice, and a beaten egg. Pour the mixture into the prepared basin, tie down, and boil for an hour and a quarter. See that the water boils fast when the pudding is put in, and kept boiling all the time.

GINGERBREAD PUDDING.

Required, six tablespoonfuls of bread crumbs, three tablespoonfuls of flour, four of chopped suet, a small teaspoonful of ground ginger, one teaspoonful of baking powder, and half a teaspoonful of treacle dissolved in a cupful of milk. Mix thoroughly. Put the preparation into a buttered mould, and steam the pudding for three hours.

A GOOD COUGH REMEDY.

Take six lemons, put them in the oven till hot, then strain all the juice from them. Add a quarter of a pint of glycerine, and half a pound of honey; pour into a large bottle with about a pint and a half of water. Shake the bottle well before taking, and sip frequently whilst coughing.

TO CLEAN COOKING TINS.

Every month or six weeks have your copper filled and the fire lighted and put into the water a pound of common washing soda and the same of soft soap. When the water boils, put in all the baking-tins, gridirons, saucepans-lids, and every description of tin or ironware that looks black but ought to be bright, or is encrusted with the deposit of grease, etc., from cooking. Put the lid on the copper and let the contents stew for two or three hours. At the end of that time have them all taken out and plunged into clean water, well dried, and put before the fire for a short time, and finished off with a final rub with dry whiting and a leather. If this plan is carried out, it will be impossible for the dirtiest girl to get your tins in a very bad state, especially if you look after her a little. The copper should be emptied at once, before the water gets cold, and it will be found that the same effect has been produced upon that, and if it is well rubbed it will be very clean.

TO TREAT POLISHED FURNITURE.

Cleanse all polished furniture with vinegar freely diluted with water; then, when all dirt has been removed, apply the following polish with a rag, and rub briskly till you see your hand reflected as in a

looking glass. One gill of sweet oil, one gill of vinegar, half gill methylated spirits. This extremely simple operation performed once a week, will gradually produce a polish that is unrivalled. Boiling water even may be poured over it with impunity. It is not readily scratched, and the wood, having the pores filled with the application, becomes very hard.

WAR TROPHIES.

In addition to asking the loyal co-operation of all soldiers for transport publications for the public library, we are anxious to receive on behalf of the Southland War Museum a collection of trophies. It is very important that nothing be lost that will be in any way a war trophy. Southland soldiers have played an important part in the war and we must preserve, for the benefit of those who follow, some thing of a tangible character.

Every part of the Dominion is seeing a collection of trophies and we must not be behind. Numbers of articles which have been brought from the battle front are being lost sight of, and we would be glad to receive anything at all. Name and address must be sent, also full particulars of article, where found, stant, etc. Articles can also be displayed in the museum and remain the property of the sender, but can we, as representing Southland soldiers, make a direct gift to the people. Trophies can be sent to "The Digger" office direct, box 310, Invercargill; or to Mr Crosby Smith, Athenaeum Buildings, Dee street, Invercargill.

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