

The Little People's Page

Conducted by Anne

My own dear Little People,—

A Happy Easter to you all, a glad Easter Day and a few days of pleasant holiday to follow. When you get this it will be Holy Week, and you all know why we call that one week in the year "Holy". Because, of course, every day of it has some special memory, including Good Friday, the day on which Our Dear Lord suffered so much for us. Did you notice on Holy Thursday how the bells rang out at the "Gloria in Excelsis," then you heard them no more all day or that evening although there was church. Even on Good Friday, you didn't hear them at all, because they didn't ring again till the "Gloria" on Holy Saturday morning. Well, I'll tell you a story about these same bells, did you know that people say the bells went to Rome? When my mother was a tiny girl in a far off land, the grown-ups used to tell the children that if they looked hard enough and high enough into the sky, they might see the bells. They used to say that only children can see them, because only children have the eyes of imagination. So the children would stand around in groups looking, looking up into the sky shading their eyes with their hands, watching for the bells and saying three Hail Mary's that they would arrive safely to Rome. Somehow, no one ever saw them, no one was quick enough to catch them, because bells travel as quickly as anything you can be sure, and you know how easy it is to stop looking just for a second, or to cover your eyes from the sun for a moment. But, every Holy Saturday morning, the bells would ring out again, and the children would clap their hands and jump round in joy, for the bells were back safely again, and they would say three more Hail Mary's in thanksgiving. Of course in that beautiful country right across the seas, it is early Spring at Easter time, and, after a cold and snowy winter, the trees and plants look very beautiful as they burst into leaf and flower again. Listen while I tell you what they do for the children on Easter morning. First of all, for some days before Easter, dear nice people like mothers and grannies gather up all the fresh eggs the good hens lay, and they color them into all sorts of pretty colors. Very, very early on Easter morning, ever so long before the children are awake and you can just think how early that can be, the mothers and grannies creeping quietly, just as Father Christmas does when he is doing his busy work, make nests under the shrubs, among the flowers and in many queer hidey-holes, and into these they put the pretty eggs. Then everyone gets ready for church and hurries off to Mass. After Mass they start off for home, almost everybody bringing along a little party of town children to join in with their own, so, you can imagine something of the joyful chatter as they hurry along the lovely country roads. Home again, all the children are let loose on the garden and there is a glorious hunt for nests. The grown-ups look on for a while, but presently they slip away to see about the breakfast, and very soon the children begin to run up to the house, arriving almost breathless with excitement and full of wonderful tales of how they found the nests; how, just when they thought they had a fine egg someone else grabbed it; how so-and-so found a nest with three blue eggs in it and rushed off with the nest and all, and—well, you know just what we would do ourselves. Some of the children arrive with several eggs, some with only a few and even some with none, but, they must all share up alike at the finish, and even, some must be put aside to be taken home to sick children or little ones really too tiny to walk the long distance. Breakfast is a merry meal, some of the little ones eat their Easter egg right away, but, a good many like to keep theirs for a day or two so that they can look at them often before they finish them up. Don't you think that is a jolly way to do on Easter Day? That is how they do in the country, and the townspeople who live near the shops but who have no fowls, perhaps even, no gardens, buy or make sugar eggs. They too, color them, tie them up with bright ribbons, and put them under the children's pillows, or beside their plates. Tell me now which way do you like best? Oh

dear! I wish we could get the loan of a big ship and a good Captain so that Anne and her Little People could go round this beautiful world so full of wonderful countries and nice people. Does anyone know of someone with a ship and a captain we can borrow?

Now Dears, I've got a big mail again and must answer some of my letters. I shall not be able to put in everyone's competition letter, but will try to mention everyone who took part in it and will put a bit from each letter. Will start with—

Mary Isabel Donaghy, Dipton, who had a fine time at the Dipton Sports; went in for races and won three getting a whole shilling for a prize. She skipped too, up to 180 (which is more than I could do without tripping), and they had six cases of fruit and two tins of lollies.

(I'm sure, my Mary Isabel, that you had a thoroughly good day at the sports, and your holidays sound cheerful all through.—Anne.)

Esther Hinsley, Winton, wants to join the L.P.L.C., and would you believe she went to the same sports as Mary Isabel above? I wonder do they know one another. I want you all to give Esther a special thought because of one paragraph she writes. This is what she says: "My mother died on the fourteenth of July, 1923, and I wish you to tell all your little folk to pray for her soul because I miss her very much. My birthday is on the 13th January and I am eleven now. My last birthday I had my dear mother but this time I had my birthday without her."

(Yes, Esther, we will all pray for you both, and we want you to write to us again. Will anyone write to Esther?—Anne.)

Ileen O'Callaghan, Dipton, writes a long letter. She wants to join the L.P.L.C. Also she tells me about a terrible thunder storm they had lately, which killed three horses at Winton. Ileen has two little pigs. (Glad to hear from you Ileen, mind you write to someone soon.—Anne.)

Margaret Hyland, Tawai, Glenavy.—Margaret's is a short letter in which she says she spent her holidays chiefly at home, although she went for a picnic one day.

(Margaret dear, if you had told me what you did at home, you might even have won a prize. I'm sure you must have helped round quite a lot and done quite a heap of work.—Anne.)

Zoe Howarth, Palmerston North.—Zoe spent most of her holidays in the country with her grandmother, and got a lot of fun out of watching her Uncle milking the cows. He has a milking machine and Zoe tells me these machines save a lot of work. One day they were looking at a fine fat pig and Zoe's little brother said, "what a good bit of steak we could get off him."

(Do you know Zoe that I spent some holidays at Foxton beach once. Isn't it good fun bathing in the river when the tide comes up?—Anne.)

Dorrie and Ellen Knowler, Te Wae Wae, spent a lovely day on the lake in a boat, and they had a dip too. They have two riddles for us. "Why is the letter S like dinner?" and "Why is a dog like a tree?"

(Well, I'm sure there were many days this summer that I would have liked to spend on a lake instead of in my office. You lucky little girl! No, I don't know the riddles, perhaps someone else does.—Anne.)

Edmund P. Lynch, Woodside, West Taieri.—Did you write your letter all by yourself Edmund, if you did it is very good indeed for a little boy of eight years. Edmund spent his holidays in Queenstown and saw the flood there. They went on a raft, Edmund and his cousins Gerard and Tom. Also they helped to re-float a yacht which had got stranded.

(Mind you tell me if you wrote your letter yourself. I specially want to know, and I'm very sorry I didn't have your birthday down. It is made right now.—Anne.)

Monica Mannix, Hastings, spent her holidays at Petone, near Wellington, and she went into the city very often. Monica thinks Wellington far too noisy. They spent a day going round the churches. Monica says that St. Mary of the Angels' is just a wee bit of Heaven, and St. Gerard's, away up on a high hill has a life-size statue of Our Lord in Our Lady's Arms. The rest of the time she spent in the water at Petone beach and in Napier.

(I think yours was a lovely holiday, Monica. You should see the beach at St. Kilda.—Anne.)

Frances Scott, Pomohaka, is a little nine year old and she tells me that they camped out at Croydon Bush with their father. She saw lots of birds—Tom-tits, Mocking birds, Wax-eyes, a Tui and a Cuckoo and Black Fantails.

(What a lovely place to camp Frances. Did you know that Fantails eat up all the flies they can find? I know a place where a dear little Fantail comes into the house every day, and makes short work of all the flies in the dining-room. Isn't that clever of him.—Anne.)

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