

CHILDISH ASPIRATIONS.

"O, mama dear, I want to be
That little robin that we see
On the topmost branch of the topmost
tree."

Years past, the child had older grown;
Her thoughts still soared to heights
unknown
Where she desired the best alone.

Then once the wondrous glorious swell
Of music that the brass bands tell,
From heights beyond the robins fell.

Entranced before the music stand
She said, "Of all that's in the land,
I'd rather be a whole brass band."

—Annie L. Miller.

THE FLOWER'S MESSAGE.

It was spring. The soft, caressing air
coaxed the early blossoms to peep shyly
forth from their protecting covers of
green, upon the expectant world. Hid-
den beneath a cluster of trees grew a
large bed of lilies-of-the-valley. Grim
firs hid it from the roadside, and no
other lilies were as early as these. Soon
the thick canopy of leaves overhead
would shed twilight shadows upon the
flowers, and the little plants must, per-
force, rest in dreamy greenery through-
out the long summer, until buried gen-
tly for the winter's sleep beneath a light
fitting cover of golden and red. Now
the bright sunlight called the delicate,
waxen sprays to open quickly, e'er the
leave unfolded and the gloomy shadows
fell. One by one they peeped forth at
the sun's tender kiss, but were discover-
ed and plucked by two girls.

An impatient young fellow was rest-
lessly moving about the room. "You
are the meanest girls I ever saw," he
said, "to refuse me a few sprays of lily-
of-the-valley. Where is that flower bed
anyway?" "But Tom," said his cousin,
"I don't wish you to pick them. The
bed belongs to Miss Brown and she is
saving the flowers for me to wear at
Mabel's party on Friday. I am sure no
one else will be able to get them this
early." "All right," he answered, "but
you will be sorry for this." With the
swinging stride of youth and the un-
wonted energy begotten of indignation,
he strode away. A fancied affront to Tom
usually brought a speedy and sure pun-
ishment; but Lucy had never before in-
curred his wrath. She laughed and
said, "He wanted to give our blossoms
to Miss Jones—that is his latest flirta-
tion. But suppose she saved them for
the party. We surely don't wish to
wear the same flower."

Tom returned to supper friendly and
cheerful (the latter an ominous sign) and
with no lingering traces of anger. All
through the evening he chatted gayly
and naturally. When parting for the
night he went half way up the stairway
whistling, then slowly retraced his steps
in the sitting room where Lucy sat alone
by the table reading. Hesitating a lit-
tle, he asked, "Lucy, do lilies-of-the-val-
ley keep fresh for long?" Without
glancing from her book she said, "Yes."
"How long?" "O, a week or so." "I
found that flower bed and gave some to
Miss Jones." Still she did not look up,
but said, "I supposed so." He contin-
ued, more hesitatingly, "If she saves
them to wear Friday, shall you be wil-
ling to use them too?" This time she
looked calmly at him, "No, I shall not
wear them," she said, and returned once
more to her book. Slowly he walked
away, but paused at the door. "Lucy!"
"Yes?" "Miss Jones said she would
wear them to the party."

The week passed. Tom brought
floral gifts to his cousin, which she put
in water. Privately she provided her-
self with rare roses from a neighboring
town.

When Tom assisted her into the car-
riage he noticed that her flowers were
not his gift, and she, without looking,

felt the gleam of a single spray of the
lilies caught in his scarfpin. Sometimes
flowers speak in riddles, or with the mys-
tic accents of Oriental tongues, but the
silent speech of these roses and lilies
was simple and plain. Conversation
was left to the flowers. The roses said,
"I am offended," but the lilies murmur-
ed unresponsively, "She awaits me."
And she did. Seated in the corner of
the drawing room, with the delicate
white sprays pinned to her bodice, sat
Miss Jones, charmingly pretty and with
the girlish eagerness of conquest in her
eyes, expecting the knight who had
promised to wear her flower.

The evening passed and he came not
near her. Once, in passing, he shook
hands—that was all. Her vexation and
disappointment were hard to conceal.
She could have trampled her flowers
under foot, but instead—she smiled.

At midnight the carriages circled
slowly about the oval grassplot, and one
by one passed through the iron gates
out upon the highway.

As Lucy and her cousin drove away
in their turn, a small object was thrown
from the carriage in front. Only the
lights from the windows and the
gleaming rays from the great lamps over
the doorway illuminated the darkness.

One stray ray touched the little for-
lorn object on the drive. It was a clus-
ter of lilies-of-the-valley.

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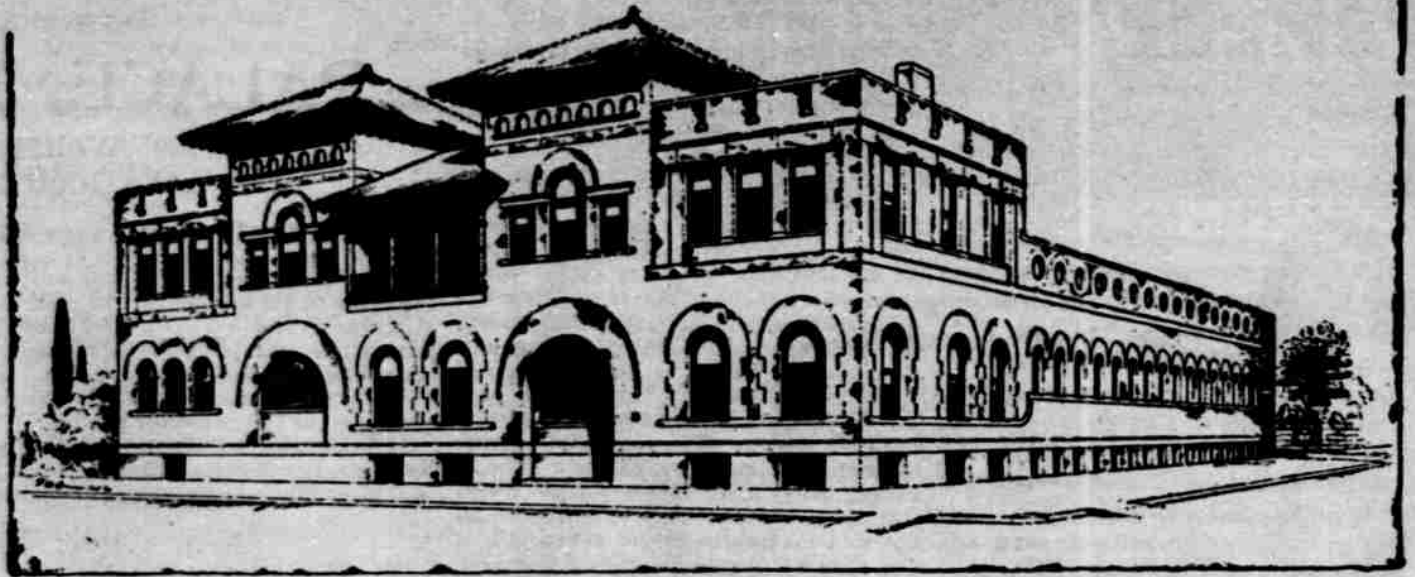
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Gold and pearls for a dowry,
She will have wealth galore;
Pearls and gold in abundance,
What could I wish for more?

Gold and pearls for a dowry,
This little maid I'll wed;
For the pearls peep through her rosy lips,
And the gold is on her head!

"Leave the house," cried little Binks,
making a brave bluff of strength at the
burglar.

"I intend to, my small friend," replied
the burglar, courteously. "I'm merely
after the contents. When I take houses
I do it through the regular real estate
channels."—Harper's Bazar.



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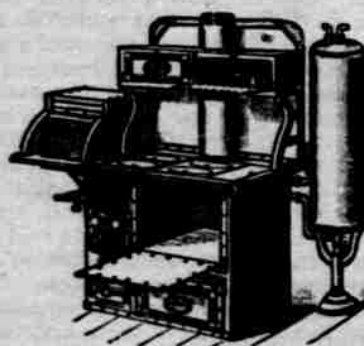
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