

I could know who you are and where you will be when you get this letter. I am a boy ten years old, and I made this comfort bag for you all myself, and put in it what I hope will be of some use to you, and a real comfort, especially the Gospel and text. I have wanted to be a sailor all my life, and I was sure I should be one when I was big enough, until six months ago.

'I got knocked down by a horse then, and ever since I have had to stay in bed all the time. The doctor says I can never walk any more, except with a crutch, so I know I will never be a sailor now. That is worse than the pain, I am so disappointed. Now that I cannot be a sailor myself I want to do all that I can for sailors. When I was first hurt my doctor gave me a text like this to help me to be patient. If I remember all the time that God cares for me I am more willing to stand the pain and not mind my disappointment too much.

'I hope you love God, too, and that you know he is your friend and cares for you. I wish you would write to me. Every night I shall pray for you that you may be kept safe in all the storms, and that you will be a good man. I do not know who you are, but God knows, and he can take care of you. I wish you would pray for me, too, that I may be very patient and brave. Good-bye, dear sailor. From your friend,

SPENCER HAWLEY.'

'Poor little chap,' said Jack softly to himself as he read the last page of the long, carefully written letter. 'And so he's praying for me. I never had any one to pray for me before since mother died, when I was a little shaver not his size.' He thinks that God cares about an old hulk like me, does he? Well, maybe it's true. It would be mighty comfortable to think I was going to drop anchor in a safe harbor some day. I suppose this little book would be a good chart to steer by. Well, I'll see, I'll see.'

Spencer did not get the letter for which he had hoped for Jack was a poor penman, and there are some things that are easier to say than to write, but one day Spencer was surprised by a visit from his unknown sailor friend, who came to tell him how he had learned to steer by the Gospel chart, and hoped some day to make a safe harbor in heaven.

The little text with its assurance that God cared for him, and the knowledge that he had an earthly friend, who, without ever having seen him, cared enough for his comfort to send him the bag with its useful contents and the loving letter, and who would pray for him, had been the means of bringing him to Christ.

Who knows how much good each one of us can do for the brave men who spend their lives upon the ocean, exposed to all its perils and dangers. Shall we not try?—Friendly Greetings.'

### The Useful Reading Circle.

By degrees the young ladies dropped into the fashion of bringing their pretty bits of work with them to the reading circle, thereby making the gentlemen envious of their good fortune in having something to do with their hands while they listened. It was perhaps this innovation that first set Kissie to thinking in a line that developed an entirely new set of occupations. She one day fell in with a leaflet written by an earnest worker among the lumbermen's camps of Northern Michigan. It was a well-written appeal for such simple and practical aid as commended itself at once to Kissie Gordon's taste. Her delight in her discovery was exhibited at the breakfast table one morning.

'Comfort-bags! Mamma, they are the

very things to help me solve a problem that has been on my heart for the last three days.'

'Comfort-bags!' repeated Mrs. Gordon, looking up from her letter with an air of interest. 'The words have a very comfortable sound, daughter, but I confess that they do not convey any idea to my mind.'

'Why, mamma, this article is written by one of those missionaries among the lumbermen. Don't you remember how interested papa was in their work. This is an appeal for ever so many "comfort-bags;" and it describes how to make them. Little bags six inches or so square, made out of strong material, cretonne or something of that sort, and filled with all manner of little things, which it never before occurred to me could be called "comforts," but I suppose they are. At least, one can conceive that their absence might create a good deal of discomfort. Shirt-buttons, suspender-buttons, mamma, and needles fitted to sewing them on; threaded needles, with cunning little pockets for each separate thread to be tucked in. Wouldn't it be fun to make them? There are other things in the same line, and careful directions given; the idea is to fit those men who are away from home and family, with little conveniences for doing bits of sewing for themselves. There is a suggestion about putting a little letter in each bag, with a word of comfort and sympathy in it. Isn't that a beautiful idea? You shall do that part, mamma. Don't you believe we could take up such work as that in our circle? My first thought in connection with it was that it would afford some legitimate employment for the idle and mischievous hands of our young men, who now occupy themselves with taking the scissors away from some girl who needs them every few minutes, and snipping bits of cord, and sometimes more valuable articles—lace and ribbon—scattering them about the floor. What is to hinder their sorting out buttons of various sizes and colors, and putting them into the bags? and, for that matter, threading the needles? I could never understand why a young man should consider it an accomplishment to be utterly useless in regard to such work. I mean to suggest it to them. Some of them may be lumbermen in camp themselves some day.'

'It is a lovely idea,' said the mother, 'so simple and commonplace that the wonder is that it was not thought of long ago. I suppose there are innumerable little things like that which could be done for the comfort of others, if somebody would only think of them. The very name "comfort-bags" is suggestive. Why couldn't there be comfort-bags made for other classes of persons, sick children, for instance, in hospitals and orphans' homes? A little bit of a doll not much longer than my thumb might be put in, with dainty dresses for it made out of nothings. A tiny picture-book, only a couple of inches long; a pretty card or two; some bits of bright flannels and kid to make needle-books of, with directions for making them; all children delight in making things. Some of those poor little creatures, who sit day after day in their wheel-chairs, might be helped in ways like these to pass many an otherwise weary hour. All these, and a dozen other trifles, could be put into little bags, which could be made to shirr, and so could be hung on the little arms of the individual owners.'

'O mamma,' said Kissie, 'what a beautiful thought! And so large a one! It reaches in ever so many ways, even at first sight. We shall do that, too. I know that some of the girls would have done things for others long ago, if they had only thought of it. I wonder if they cannot be made happy over

the thought of doing something besides eternally entertaining themselves?'

As the winter passed, the circle flourished; so did the comfort-bags; so, also, did the conversation sociables that grew out of the comfort-bags. On no account would the leaders thereof have called these sociables missionary meetings. In truth, there never had been since the world began missionary meetings quite like unto them. Missionary intelligence was acquired without the acquirers' being aware that they were having aught to do with missionaries. Nevertheless, the circle became exceedingly interested, not only in certain lumbermen of the northern camps, but in the mountain girls of North Carolina and kindred States. A few of those that knew what they were trying to accomplish occupied no small amount of time, and did no little special corresponding, with a view to culling from all possible resources facts as curious and pathetic as possible concerning these brothers and sisters of our land, about which these other brothers and sisters had known absolutely nothing. The little leaflets issued by the various mission boards, giving vivid pen-pictures of the lives of some of the mountain girls and their pitiful struggles and sacrifices in order to learn to read, were so surprising a revelation that for the time being even the all-important matter of amusement slipped into the background, and the young people gave their thoughts to the needs of others.—Pansy, in 'Golden Rule.'

### Half an Hour.

('Everybody's Magazine.')

Time should be devoted by every young man and young woman entering life, were it only half an hour a day, to the development of their mind, to the gaining of useful information, to the culture of some ennobling taste. A taste for reading is worth more than any sum we can name. A rich man without this, or some similar taste, does not know how to enjoy his money. His only resource is to keep on making and hoarding money, unless he prefers to spend it; and a mind that is not well developed does not know how to spend wisely.

A well-known millionaire used to say that he would gladly give all his money if he could only have himself received the education which his lazy, stupid boy refused to acquire.

Be advised: Make it a rule, never to be broken, to devote at least half an hour a day to the reading of some useful and instructive book. Every man needs a knowledge of history, the elements of science, and other useful subjects; and if only half an hour a day is given to reading, he will find the advantage of it.

Be hungry and thirsty after knowledge of all kinds, and you will be none the worse, but all the better, as business men and women. Beware of light and frivolous reading, such matter is ensnaring and pernicious.

### Moral Inoculation.

In the lately published letters of Maria Edgeworth we find she is constantly writing, 'How good people are!' and 'How kind people are!' She seems to have been able to inoculate everyone with her own geniality. It is always so. The world and its inhabitants are to us very much what we are to them. We must forgive if we would be forgiven. A little girl being asked why everyone loved her, replied very simply, 'I do not know, except it be that I love everyone.'—'The Quiver.'