

"Could you do that, Billy?" asked Mrs Jeffers

"Yes, ma'am, I think so. I play sometimes at scrubbing floor for our Nora."

"Well, Billy, I will give you fifty cents to scrub the kitchen floor; and mind you make a good job of it," laughed Mrs Jeffers

"Yes'm," answered Billy, "and I thank you, Mrs Jeffers"

A moment later the telephone in Billy's home rang, and Mrs Jeffers called over the wire

"O Mrs Barlow, come over right away I've got somebody in my kitchen doing something, to show you"

And in a little while the astonished Mrs Barlow was peeping through the door of Mrs Jeffers' kitchen

"Now come into the parlour while I tell you about it," whispered Mrs Jeffers. "Do you know," she continued, when they were comfortably seated side by side, "that never have I had such a missionary sermon preached to me as the one I just received from little Billy. I had thought that we were doing nobly by that cause, but now I feel ashamed of myself."

A half-hour later, while the ladies were still talking, the little floor-washer again entered the parlour.

Mrs. Barlow, advancing to meet him, received the blushing, faltering lad with open arms. Pressing him close to her heart and kissing him, she whispered

"My precious little missionary boy! Your first work, and the first money you have ever earned for the Master. God bless you, Billy!"

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 4, 1900.

A WATER-MUSEUM.

A water-museum consists of glass vessels containing fish, mollusks, larvae, and such other creatures as will live in the small quantity of water these vessels hold. The great advantage that the water-museum has over an aquarium is, that while the latter is bulky and has many dark corners in which you can see only with difficulty, if at all, the jars of the museum can be easily carried about and held to the light, so that you can readily observe the smallest movements of your specimens. Besides, in an aquarium you can have but one kind of water at a time either salt or fresh, and you can keep only those specimens that will live together peaceably; but in a water-museum one may have both sorts of water (in different vessels), and both marine and fresh-water specimens. This museum, or water-cabinet, too, costs very little, while an aquarium is not only expensive but troublesome.

We must first make sure of a sunny window, where the museum will be out of the way, and where there is room for a small table. Then we must forage for the vessels in the glassware shops, or at the dealers in chemical apparatus. I have often been able to pick up confectionery jars which I got cheaply because their tops were broken, which, of course, made no difference to me. I consider these the best for our purpose, in size from four inches in diameter by six in height to seven inches in diameter and nine in height. The jars must be placed on the table in the sunny window,

so that they will all get plenty of light, as this is necessary to most forms of life. One or two of the larger jars had best be used for fish and to make their attractive their bottoms should be covered with clean river sand and pebbles, or fragments of rock in the shape of grottoes, as the fish like to rest on these and to eat the almost invisible weeds that grow upon them. Of course, all the vessels must be filled with water and sprigs of aquatic plants, such as watercress, Vallisneria, or duck-weed, placed in them to keep the water pure. Many kinds of water insects are carnivorous, or prey upon the weaker species. Of course, it won't do to keep these in the same jar with their victims. To find out which kinds agree, we can mix them in the clear shallow bell-glass, where we can easily observe the peculiarities of each.—St. Nicholas.

WHOM JACK'S FATHER VOTED FOR.

BY JOHN F. COWAN.

There was to be an election the next day on the saloon question. For a long time there had been no liquor sold openly in the town, and it was the hope of many of the good people living there that they would always be able to keep it free from the curse of an open saloon. They wanted to bring up their children without having the example of drunken men reeling down their streets before their eyes.

But some men who were so greedy for money that they were willing to come and rob the women and children of the town of it by taking the wages of the husbands and fathers for that which would make them fools and brutes, were trying to get a vote which would permit them to set up a saloon in Rushton.

They had sent their agents around to talk with the voters, telling them how much revenue the town would derive from the saloons, how much business the whiskey traffic would bring in, and how much more wide-awake and up-to-date it would be with a saloon; and the arguments of reduced taxes, and of sidewalks, street-lamps, and other improvements which they would be able to make out of the revenue from the saloons, was beginning to tell on some of the men, among them Jack's father.

"Pshaw!" he said, carelessly, as he flung down his dinner-bucket on returning home that evening, "it's a pity that a town like this should be run by a lot of women and preachers! I say, let the men run it, and let the men have the liberty to drink or not drink as they please, and let's have the revenue from the saloons that the other towns have, and be somebody."

"Does that mean that you're going to vote for license to-morrow?" asked his wife.

"It means that I'm going to do as I please. I'm a man, and I'm not going to be dominated over by a lot of things in petticoats," he exclaimed, ill-naturedly.

Mrs. Camden belonged to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which was one of the most active agents in making the fight against the admission of the saloon.

Next morning when the polls were open and the voting began, the brave women of the town met in the church and submitted the matter to God, resolved to do everything they could in their homes and at the polls to influence their husbands and brothers to vote aright.

All day long they kept their prayer-meeting going, and received their reports from the polling places. Toward the middle of the afternoon, some of them began to lose faith and become discouraged. The reports were that the election was going against them; that when the workmen came out of the shops at half-past five, as they were to be permitted to do to vote, the majority would vote for license and thus settle the question.

The women were in despair, until at last Miss Fenton, the superintendent of the Loyal Temperance Legion, said, "I have a scheme that I am going to try. Will you all help me?"

They gladly consented, and she quickly handed around among them a number of squares of cardboard to be lettered like the ones she held in her hand:

"Vote for Me."

When they were done and strings attached to them, it was time for school to close, and the Legion was to meet in the church immediately after.

When the boys and girls came in, they saw something unusual in their leader's eye. Her face was tear-stained, but her look was bright and hopeful. She quickly explained the situation to them and asked for volunteers to wear about their necks to the polling places the placards which the other ladies had prepared.

There was a moment of hesitation. The children were timid about doing such a thing, but in an instant Jack Camden came up and said, "I'll wear one, Miss Fenton, and I'll go right down to the place where papa votes."

Gladly she tied the placard around his neck, and, the example having been set, the other children followed like sheep.

When Jack Camden's father came from the workshop that evening to the voting place, he was fully persuaded "to be a man," as he said, and "protect his liberty," and vote for the licensing of the liquor traffic. He did not mean to drink himself. He intended to be a sober man, but he wanted other men to have a chance to do as they pleased.

The first thing that struck his eye as he walked up toward the ballot distributors was a line of boys, marching down toward him, each one wearing around his neck a placard. Presently the line stopped, and presented front face. Mr. Camden looked, and there was his own boy, a manly little fellow, in the lead.

"What's that you have on?" he said.

"Read it, please, papa," answered Jack.

And the man read:

"Vote for Me."

In an instant a picture seemed to rise before him of his dear little boy grown to manhood. He saw him walking down the street with a proud, manly step. He saw him passing one of the places which he was about to vote to license. Other young men gathered around him and enticed him to go within. It was late at night when he came out again. His clothing was disordered, his collar was burst open in front, his hat was missing, his hair was dishevelled, his face was flushed, and his step so unsteady that he had to be supported upon either side by his comrades. "They're going to take him home to his mother," he thought to himself, "in that beastly condition. It will send a death-bolt to her heart." He covered his face with his hands to shut out the picture. He opened his eyes and looked again. His boy stood there in all his boyish beauty, pleading with him to do as the placard asked.

"Yes, Jack," he said, dashing a tear from his eye, "that's just what I'm going to do. They may argue and coax all they please, I'm going to vote for you, and that's what every man in the crowd who is a man and a father will do, too."

And the placard turned the day, and Rushton was saved from the saloon, because the fathers who voted, voted for their boys, realizing, perhaps for the first time in their lives, their whole duty to them.

ENGLAND IN THE TRANSVAAL.

The relations of the English with the Dutch in South Africa are touched upon in an article in the June St. Nicholas, by Klyda R. Steege. The Cape settlement remained in the possession of the Dutch until 1795, when, the French Revolutionists occupying Holland, the colonists hoisted a flag of independence, and appealed to Great Britain for protection. The British accordingly took possession in the name of the Prince of Orange, who was at that time a refugee in London. You must refresh your memory of European history of that period, in case you have forgotten it, to understand how matters stood between the different countries. Then you will see how it was that when peace was restored after the Napoleonic wars, and Holland had been annexed by France, the latter country ceded to England the "Batavian Republic," which included, among other territory, the Cape Colony.

Under English rule matters improved for the colonists, and the administration was, on the whole, satisfactory, until the Government ordered the slaves to be freed. The Boers, indignant at the loss of "property," for which they did not consider themselves sufficiently recompensed, resolved to go beyond the reach of law and government, and what you hear spoken of as the "Great Trek" took place in the year 1835. Trek comes from the Dutch verb "trekken," to draw or drag, and this journey was so termed because the people who left the colony to seek another home farther inland travelled in huge ox-carts or waggons.

The first two hundred who left wandered on until they came to a country far from the sea, where, after many fights with the Matabele tribes, they held their own sufficiently to found the Orange Free State.

The second trekking party, among whom was the present President Kruger, then ten years of age, went over into the colony of Natal. There they failed in finding a resting-place, because they attempted to take land already in British possession. They, too, had their struggles with natives and many hardships to encounter, but finally they crossed the

Vaal River, and soon after, all the different settlers united themselves, for mutual protection, into a republic, under a man named Pretorius as president, and with Paul Kruger as commandant-general of the army.

It was not long before they found themselves unable to prevent trouble with the natives, and they appealed to England for protection. They were also heavily burdened with a debt, which they saw no chance of repaying. So Great Britain took them in charge, kept off the natives, and paid their debts, and at last, at the request of many of the settlers, the country was declared to be the possession of the British Empire.

It probably would not interest you to hear of all the political changes and discussions which have taken place in the country. It is enough to say that the Boers were not satisfied to be under English administration, and finally rebelled against it, with the result that, after a short war, their country was given back to them on certain conditions. These conditions not having been adhered to as England expected, the present war broke out. Let us hope for its early termination.

"I PRAY THE LORD MY CLOTHES TO KEEP."

The child was a boy, scarcely more than four or five years old. His parents had evidently been sent to prison, or had drifted away somewhere. When found by the Slum Sisters in New York, crouching in the corner of a hallway, one chilly night in March, he was but half-clad and numbed with exposure to the cold.

Taken to the barracks, the wail was washed, and dressed in clean clothes warmed and fed. He was delighted with the attention that he received, and particularly with his garments; so much so that when one of the sisters attempted to undress him for bed he cried, under the belief that he was about to be prematurely deprived of his new apparel.

This was very apparent when the sister attempted to teach him the words of simple prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Peeping between his fingers the little fellow lisped, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep," continued the sister.

"I pray the Lord my clothes to keep" whispered the boy.

"No, not 'clothes to keep,' 'soul to keep,'" corrected the sister.

"Soul to keep," said the boy.

"Now, say it from the beginning to end," urged the worker in the slums. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

But the poor little fellow was too intent upon his treasures. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my clothes to keep," he said, making the same mistake as before.

"No, no; that is not right," said the painstaking sister. "You pray to God to take care of your soul, not your clothes. I'll take care of those."

"And won't you pawn them?" replied the astonished lad to the astonishment of the sister, "and buy rum with them? That's what they always did at home when I had new clothes."

Tears filled the eyes of the Slum Sister, but she brushed them aside as she kissed the child. His few words of precocious knowledge had revealed to her the story of his brief life, and she needed no more to tell her of the misery of his home. Although he finally mastered his little prayer, it was with the words, "I pray the Lord my clothes to keep," on his lips that he fell asleep.

A BRAVE CRIPPLE.

Carl Sprengel, the crippled son of a signalman near a bridge called Devil's Gulph, in South Germany, was in the habit of taking his father's supper to the signal box. One very stormy and windy night, when he arrived at the place, nobody was there, and on going to the mouth of the bridge he found that it was blown down. He called out to his father, but there was no answer, for the father had gone down with the bridge. Then Carl remembered that the night train was due; but how was he to stop it, for he did not understand the management of the signals? Throwing away his crutches, he ran his father's wagon on to the line, and climbed on to it, that he might signal to the driver as best he could. The train, with two hundred passengers, was stopped just in time before it came to the broken bridge, but not before it had crashed into the wagon and killed little Carl. On a rock near the place were afterward inscribed the words, "Carl Sprengel, aged 16, died a hero and a martyr."