

WHITTLING.

A boy must have a knife, and he must whittle. No energy of man or boy should be wasted; so that it becomes all directors and guardians of youth to turn the whittling propensity to good account. Tell the boy what to whittle, how to whittle—or he will surely be aimlessly whittling a shingle, hacking the furniture, or carving his name on fences and benches.

The jack-knife is a simple tool, but one with which some excellent work may be done. By no means despicable wood carving may be done with it, and it may be pressed into service for the manufacture of numerous knock-knacks worthy of thought, in these days when boys are racking their brains to know what they can make for Christmas gifts. Let me give some suggestions as to whittling.

In the first place, have a good jack-knife. Not one of the flimsy little penknives, with blades not even big enough to play numble-peg with; but a right down substantial knife, with one big and one little blade. A smooth handle with rounded ends should be chosen because it will fit the hand better, and will not wear out the pockets. Keep the knife always sharp—first by having it well ground, and afterwards by frequent application to a moderately rough oil-stone. Don't by any means get one of those complicated and useless knives that combine in one handle a gimlet, cork-screw, file, saw, and a score more of useless but curious additions.

Having the knife, boys, don't whittle aimlessly. You can learn to make long, firm, straight cuts just as well in making an arrow as in shaving up a shingle. I know there is something extremely fascinating in the wisp of a cut through a cedar or pine shingle, and the odor of the newly cut wood is something simply delicious. But these charms need not be absent when you are making something besides shavings.

Well, what shall I make? the boy asks, in a perfect fever to be at work. Let me suggest a few articles. Paper cutters, in the shape of daggers, of hard wood, and with handles carved in some simple design. Finish them smoothly in every part, rub them down with painters' oil till they are polished, and you could hardly have anything better to give to father or mother for Christmas. Then for the little brother there is nothing better to make than a bow and arrows. A good stick of ash is easily fashioned into a bow, and an arrow of pine with a heavy head and light body is easily made. Or a cross-bow, with stock of black walnut and bow of ash, with a trigger of walnut and a good closely-twisted string to draw it with, is an implement which may be used to train the eye in shooting at a mark. Or, if you want to make a Christmas gift to some older male friend, go out into the woods and find long shoots of hickory or holly; cut them with the big root knots left on, trim off the branches smoothly, and, taking advantage of the natural lines of the root, make a handle by carving it into a more perfect resemblance of the grotesque head it is almost sure to look like in the rough. You have only then to hang it up to season, rub it down and varnish it, add a ferule, and you have a cane that will be prized far more than any one you could buy in the shops. Or take one of those curious Swiss toys, or long-nosed wooden nut-crackers—they, too are whittled by boys in the Swiss mountains—and see how closely you can copy it in soft cedar or pine. You won't do it, perhaps, as well as your model, but you'll be surprised how quaint and funny your copy will be when it is done, and how handsome it will be, too, when you've filled the grain with oil and rubbed smooth the puffy cheeks and long crooked nose. Then there are boats to be made; a row-boat for Johnny, all complete, with dainty oars and seats; or a sail boat, rigged, for Sammy, with his monogram painted on the sail. The boys can try them in the bath tub, and then lay them away to have fun with next summer. Or you can take a picture of a Venetian gondola, and see how closely you can make a miniature gondola by that guide. Make even the little cabin, and if you give the graceful craft to Sue or Polly, she can give her tiniest doll a "boat ride" in the tiny craft upon the surging waters of the wash-bowl. Or if you have a fancy, my boy, to make something of more importance than a toy boat, get a piece of half-inch oak stuff, and see what you can do towards making a weather-cock. One of the most astonishingly wide-awake roosters that I ever saw pictured

out was done in wood by a boy of twelve. It told the way of the wind capitably, and sat proudly on the barn gable, saluting every fresh breeze with a new "cock-a-doodle-doo."

Something, and quite a good deal, may be done with the jack-knife in the way of wood carving. A simple flat pattern on a panel of soft wood may be traced out with considerable nicety by a clever boy. Don't have the pattern too elaborate, let it be conventionalized (look that up in the dictionary), and begin by cutting the outline in a little trough-like groove, say sixteenth of an inch in depth. It is a knack easily acquired to cut smoothly and of even depth, and no good results can be had until it is acquired. Then having the pattern all outlined—a spray of oak leaves, or a quaint dragon or other grotesque monster from some Japanese design—and a groove cut all round it, you have only to remove the wood all round the pattern, and you have a carving in low relief. Perhaps you have left your ground a little irregular—smooth it all you can—and then with a sharpened nail make little indentations all over it. Rub some coloring into the ground, leaving the design in the natural color of the wood, or gild it with gold paint, and you have a panel that will surprise you. It can be made the front of a paper-rack to hang on the wall, or, if small, the end of a hook-rack to put on the table—or it can be put on the front of a box; used anywhere, in fact, where graceful ornamentation is better than plain surface.

And don't forget the useful things that can be fashioned with the jack-knife. The butter-paddle of hard wood, wooden spoons, and salad spoons and forks. I saw the other day a wooden spoon so well carved out that I could hardly believe it was the work of a school-boy. He had taken a common wooden spoon, such as is sold in the shops for three cents, and carved a fanciful design all around the handle, and left a monogram in relief upon the front of it. The mother who showed it to me was quite proud of it, I can assure you—as well she might be. It came to the dinner table with the dessert, and was used to dip nuts out of a wooden bowl that had also been carved and ornamented by another member of the family.

But I only suggest whittling—not the hundred and one things that can be made by a skilful whittler. Let everybody who has a jack-knife use it to some purpose. If anybody should say, "nothing can be made with so simple a tool," let me refer such a one to the nearest museum where South Sea Island curiosities are kept. Look at the elaborately carved war clubs, and canoe paddles, and spoons, and cocoa-nut drinking cups; they are simply wonderful—and were all wrought out with a knife so roughly made that a "second-best" Yankee jack-knife would be worth ten of it—yes, a hundred.—*Christian Union.*

TESSA'S GOOD THINGS.

BY KATE S. GATES.

She wanted so many things; it was so hard to understand why she could not have them, so hard to be willing to go without them!

They were all good things, too; things that she was sure it would be well for her to have, and yet she did not have them.

She wanted Mrs. Hoyt, her Sabbath-school teacher, she always helped her so, but Mrs. Hoyt was miles and miles away in her new Western home, with so many cares that she rarely found time even to write to Tessa. She wanted to teach in Sabbath-school herself, but her health was not strong enough to permit her doing so. She wanted to invite her old class of boys to the house one evening every week; they were getting rather wild, apt to spend their evenings in the streets with the boys; she was sure that they would come willingly to her, she knew she could make it pleasant for them and profitable.

She had it all planned when Aunt Sarah came to spend the winter with them. When she heard Tessa talking about it she said directly that she could never bear the noise and confusion, it always made her nervous to have boys around.

Just now Tessa wanted to go to Thursday evening meeting, but it poured in torrents. She had been looking forward to this evening all the week, and she was very, very much disappointed.

"It seems to me I am always wanting something that I cannot have," she thought to herself bitterly.

"And they are good things too; it would not be so hard to give them up if they weren't. I don't see why I can't have them!"

And then, nestling down among the sofa pillows, Tessa let herself be as miserable as possible and thought over all her disappointments, until life seemed very hard to bear.

By-and-by her father came in and took up the Bible for prayers. Mother and Aunt Sarah put up their work. Tessa went out into the sitting-room and sat down in the corner where it was too dark for any one to notice that her eyes were red from crying. The Psalm for the evening was the eighty-fourth. Tessa liked to hear her father read the Bible; she said she always felt a new meaning to the verses just from his tone and way of reading.

There was such a sure, triumphant ring to his voice, as he read the eleventh verse of this psalm: "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "No good thing," thought Tessa. She could not read these words in any such tone.

Then she noticed with a sudden pang how bent and gray and old her father looked. He was not so very old either; it was hardship and trouble that had made him a prematurely old man.

Still, for all that, he could say so positively that no good thing was withheld! She wondered how he could!

After prayers her mother went out in the kitchen to give orders for breakfast. Aunt Sarah went upstairs, leaving Tessa and her father alone.

"It—doesn't seem to me that that is true, father," she said, half defiantly.

"What, daughter?" he asked.

"That God does not withhold any good thing from His children. I have wanted so many good things—things that I'm sure would have been good for me, too, but I did not have them."

"Tessa, suppose that you were sick and I had two kinds of medicine for you; that one was good, that is, it would keep the life within you, and perhaps even give you a little strength, but the other would build you up into perfect health; which do you think I should give you?"

"The best, of course, father."

"God is the physician of our sin-sick souls. Cannot you trust Him that He will give you what is best for you? Nothing that is for our best good is ever withheld."

"But it is very hard to see it, father. For instance, it rained so hard that I could not go to meeting to-night. I wanted to very much. I needed the help I should have had there. Why couldn't I go? And why did Mrs. Hoyt have to go so far away? I used to be better for just catching a glimpse of her." Tessa spoke sharply, almost bitterly.

"I cannot tell why, daughter. Sometimes I think we depend too much upon earthly helps, and so the Lord takes them away to bring us nearer to Himself. It is not necessary for us to know the whys and wherefores always, though it is well for us to pray that we may learn the lessons God wishes to teach us in His dealings with us. The Lord has withheld many a desire from me. He has taken from me many a cherished object; but, Tessa, child, I do not believe that there has been one single good thing kept from me."

"But O, father," said Tessa brokenly, "why must we want the things we cannot have? If things are not good for us why need we care for them?"

"Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." "And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit," was the reply. And Tessa, hearing it, went slowly up stairs to her own room. She had had her word, now she wanted to be by herself to think it over.

"I hope that God will make me fruitful, even if I do cry out at the hurt of it. I will try to remember."—*Christian Intelligence.*

HOW TO PROMOTE THE EFFICIENCY OF OUR SCHOOLS.

BY D. A. CORMACK.

It has been said by an eloquent man, that speeches which cost no labor are worth nothing, but I am quite sure that Sunday-school instruction which involves no preparation is of no value. If we wish to be suc-

cessful in teaching a class of young people, we must go to them with the matter clear in our own minds, everything ordered consecutively, regularly ticketed, and put one side in different parts of the brain, then brought out and given to the scholars in a systematic, orderly manner.

Then, again, the higher state of elementary education makes increased demands upon us as Sunday-school teachers. In the past, a teacher would have to deal with a class of big boys, or big girls, who could only spell out something with difficulty. But thanks be to God, the time has come when such a state of things is rapidly passing away.

When the children enter our classes in the Sunday-school, they come to have that religious instruction perfected which is only partially given in the week-day school. Can we, therefore, imagine a more solemn responsibility than what the Sunday-school teacher has undertaken? The future of the rising generation depends, to a very great extent, upon the Sunday-school teacher. Thus we see the need of preparing well ere we undertake to go before our class in the Sabbath-school. As a means to this end, I strongly approve of teachers' preparation classes being held in all our towns and cities, and in connection with large schools in the country districts, where the teachers connected with the different schools can meet and confer together, with the view of perfecting themselves in the mode of teaching; because, after all, it is one thing to know, but another thing to teach. Teaching is an art, and it requires great patience, great skill, and excellent temper to train up children in the way they should be trained. I also think it would be a great improvement if all schools would have a short address on the lesson every Sabbath, say by one of the teachers; and as we have undertaken the duty of advancing the best interests of humanity, let us be real Christians, serving our common Master and arriving at the same common end.—*Intermediate Teacher's Quarterly.*

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Pelouet's Select Notes.)

February 1.—Acts 21: 15-26.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Review. Review briefly Paul's visit at Cesarea.

The map. Trace out the journey from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

The Diary. Have the scholars go over the diary of Paul for these few days. Call attention to the subject,—the return of the missionary. Paul had been at Jerusalem several times before this. His most important visit there was eight years before this, at the great conference in reference to the Gentile converts (Acts 15) in A. D. 50. But he made a brief stop there at the close of the second missionary journey (Acts 18: 21, 22).

1. Notice Paul's reception at Jerusalem (vers. 15-17.) Such a man as Paul would be dearly loved, and great numbers would rejoice to see and greet him.

2. Paul immediately reports to the leaders of the church (vers. 18-20.) It would be well for the scholars to bring together in the class the chief results of the last two great missionary journeys. His first journey he had therefore reported to the church there (Acts 15: 4.) Notice how large-hearted these leaders were, rejoicing in the work of others who had been blessed of God. They were not narrow or selfish men.

Illustration. Caesar's motto was "Aut Cesar aut nullus," either Cesar or nobody. He must be first. But true men want the work of God to prosper, no matter by whose hand it is done.

3. Then arise slanders against the Missionary (vers. 20-22.) Show the basis of truth in these slanders, and yet how false they were. The worst and most dangerous of lies are those which have a mixture of truth.

Illustration. From the caricatures of great men, which must always have some resemblance or the ridiculous and monstrous fictions would have no point.

4. The slanders are refuted (vers. 23-26.) The plan advised. How it was intended to work. How it was consistent with Paul's teachings and practices. Its success or failure.

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Gen. xxxv. 18. Josh. xv. 19. 1 Chron. vi. 67. Is. xxxvi. 2. 1 Sam. xiv. 1. Heb. xl. 21. Is. lxiii. 4. Gen. xv. 2. Acts. xvi. 14. Ex. xv. 22.

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