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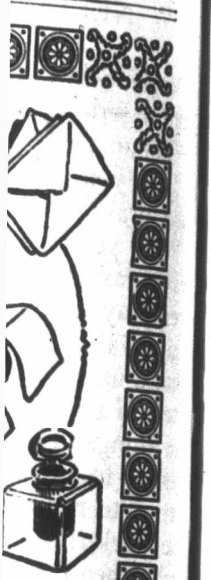
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we see the morbid stories and gloomy poetry some of our young folks are reading, we do not wonder that their mental atmosphere is as cheerless as that of a foggy November day. A few hours spent in the society of certain popular novels would be an effective cure for any ordinary attack of good spirits.

If cheerfulness is not spontaneous, we should make it deliberate. It is very pleasant to wake with a smile to find ourselves humming a song whenever we forget ourselves, to see the humour in all the little mishaps which occur in the best regulated day. But when our mood is far removed from this ideal, we can sing and smile and teach ourselves to search for the bright side. If Nature did not give us a cheerful disposition, let us "grow" one. No plant ever rooted in the heart better repays cultivation.

THE TWO CRABS.

"My dear," called out an old crab to her daughter one day, "why do you sidle along in that awkward manner? Why don't you go forward like other people?"

"Well, mother," answered the young crab, "it seems to me that I go exactly like you do. Go first and show me how, and I will gladly follow."

"BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL."

A couple of boys went out to the edge of the wood to look at some traps they had set for rabbits and quails. Will stopped and looked into his trap, and there sat a little brown squirrel looking straight at him with his big eyes. Dick came running up with Towzer at his heels. Towzer stood by the trap and barked as proudly as if he had treed the scug himself.

"Let's have some fun," said Dick; "let's turn him loose in the middle of the field, where he can't get into a tree, and then set Towzer at him."

"No," said Willie, "that's cruel." "You are too tender-hearted," said Dick.

"I believe in fair play," said Willie. "It isn't fair to set Towzer at him when he can't get away. You can kill him and have him for dinner; they are good to eat, you know. But do it fair."

Dick put his hand cautiously under the trap so as not to let the prisoner escape. To his surprise, the little captive put its mouth into his hand as if to eat out of it.

"Well," said Dick, "whoever saw the like of that?" He took the little beast out of the trap, holding loosely, as it was not trying to get away. Then, slipping from his hand, it perched on his shoulder, and sat there quite contented. How was he to kill such a confiding little creature? Yet, after taunting Will for being tender-hearted, he was ashamed to say he couldn't kill the squirrel.

"He is so tame, he will make a



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good pet for Amy," he said. "I'll carry him home to her." That got him out of the difficulty.

"Oh you dear, stupid Dick," said Amy, when he brought it, "why, it's my little Sprite."

So it was. She reached out her arms and Sprite ran to her, putting his mouth into her hands to ask for his breakfast, for he was hungry after his long imprisonment, and quite unconscious of the narrow escape he had had.

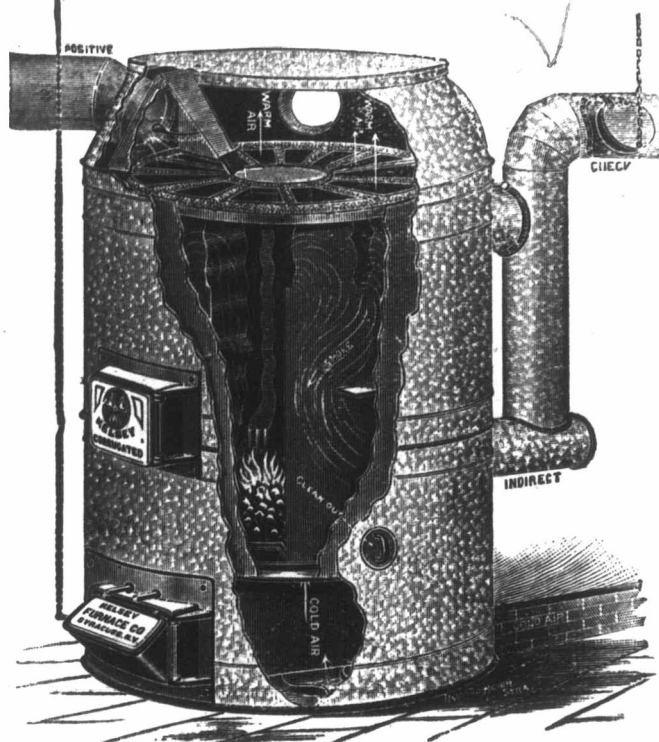
Dick never told Amy what his intentions had been. But he said to himself: "I wouldn't kill Amy's pet squirrel for a hundred dollars, and I wouldn't set Towzer on a defenceless beast for a thousand. I'll remember now henceforward."

THE VIPER AND THE FILE.

A viper entered a smith's shop, and looked up and down for something to eat. He settled at last upon a file, and began to gnaw it greedily. "Bite away," said the file, gruffly, "you'll get little from me. It is my business to take from all and give to none."

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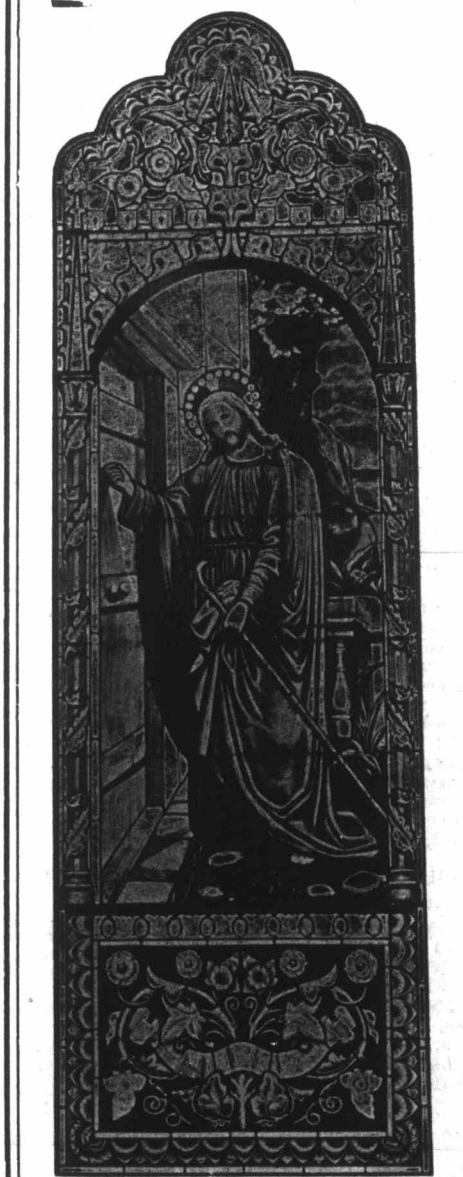


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