

A Faithful Witness.

When the late Professor Elmshie preached his first sermon, his mother, unable to be present, wrote to a friend whom she knew would be among the hearers, to know how her boy got on. His text was "Behold, I stand at the bar and knock," and we may guess the character of the sermon from the following beautiful lines, the lady's reply to Mrs. Elmshie's question:

"He held the lamp of truth that lay
So low, that none could miss the way,
And yet so high to bring in sight
That picture fair, 'the World's Great
Light.'

That hung up—the lamp between—
The hand that held it scarce was seen!

"He held the pitcher, stooping low,
To lips of little one below;
Then raised it to his very saint,
And both him drank, when sick and faint;
They drank—the pitcher thus between—
The hand that held it scarce was seen!

"He blew the trumpet, soft and low,
That trembling sinners need not fear;
And then, with louder note and bold,
To raze the walls of Satan's hold,
The trumpet coming thus between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen!

"But when the Captain says: 'Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant, come!
Lay down the pitcher and the lamp,
Lay down the trumpet, leave the camp,
The weary hands will then be seen,
Clasped in those perced ones—nought be-
tween."

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1892.

THE FIRST AND GREATEST SCHOOL.

Words will never make a boy religious; speech will never persuade to faith. It is character that day by day unfolds before him, plays upon him with its nameless forces, works around him with its plastic hands. It is that character, and that alone, that will shape the boy and determine his life. I have in my time learned of many masters, have loved to go into the ancient classic time and seek from men that there lived the secret of the search for truth, or the discovery of the fittest speech in which to present the living thought; I have learned of masters in my own land, living and dead; through voice that uttered and through words; I have learned of men who represented great scholars and continued the traditions and methods of great thinkers of a past generation; but the longer I live, one thing becomes ever the more obvious to me—the greatest influence that entered my life, entered into it amid the obscurity, and the silence, and the sweetness, and

severity of home; and were I to select two persons out of all that ever lived round and about me, the two would be a man who died before I was born a humble man who owned but a small farm, but strove to do his duty to his God, to his neighbour, to his home, to his family. But that man's daughter was my mother, and she loved her father and thought of him as the kind of man she would like to make her son to be, and she managed to bring out of the past the image of the man whose name I bear, till it lived in me, till it became a kind of regulative principle, shaping thought and out guiding speech, and at this hour I know only these as the two pre-eminent persons that have formed my character and life—the grandfather I never saw, and the mother who was his daughter.

THE CIGARETTE.

The Milwaukee school board is going to make "a thorough investigation of cigarette smoking among the pupils." The president of the board declared that the habit prevailed to an alarming extent, and that something must be done to break it up. That is the right course to take. Let parents, teachers, legislators and judges unite in this crusade against the deadly habit. But will boys ever take seriously (boys are not prone to take things seriously anyway) the efforts of men to abolish cigarette-smoking, while the same men practise cigar smoking? Boys are pretty wise in their generation, and on a Sunday morning not long ago we heard a boy (a Sunday-school scholar) criticising the bad example of a man (a conspicuous worker in the same school) who approached the church while puffing a cigar. He was really an excellent and useful young man, but may it not be that he was unconsciously causing little ones to offend, and to offend, too, in something possibly more injurious, if not more unbecoming—cigarette-smoking. Will boys give much heed to the admonitions and laws of men against the hurtful habit of cigarette-smoking, when the same men practice, or protect or apologize for the more hurtful practices of drinking and gambling? What does the boy of average smartness (and that is pretty smart) think of the preaching of a newspaper against cigarettes when at the same time a defender of the licensed saloon and the licensed race-track? If the battleship, Christian Civilization, is going to fight the devil successfully, we must clear the decks more effectually.—Standard.

PEBBLES AND PEARLS.

"Yes," said Mabel, "the ocean is just grand. I never tire of looking at it. I do love the water, whether in ocean, river, lake or brook. How much there is of it, and how useful to our needs. I'd never tire of it as I do of some people—like Mr. Hobson, for instance, who drinks his wine and boasts of his riches. He laughed the other day when he saw my badge, and asked what good it did to wear that? I told him I wore it to show my colours. He meant to look very wise when he said that temperance societies, and especially children's, were all nonsense, for we could never expect to accomplish anything. I told him we were learning something new every day, and asked him if he remembered how David slew the giant. He said of course he did; he used nothing but small pebbles, but he didn't see what that had to do with the matter. Very stupid of him, I must say; but I had to explain that he might call our children's societies young David's if he liked. David used only small pebbles from the brook; but small things are not to be despised, for we are laying up stores of pebbles to help to kill our giant. He didn't know what I meant, and I had to tell him that our pebbles are real solid facts and truths that we learn every week at our meetings. If we get our minds filled with them it will be easy enough to tell to others by-and-by. We'll get ourselves right first."

"He laughed at that, and said: 'Oh, a pebble is too common a thing altogether for dainty young girls like you; why not go about collecting pearls?' I thanked him and said, we would get both. So pebbles and pearls, which shall be to us bits of truth and wisdom, are what we are after."

THE DREGS OF THE CUP.

BY ALICE JACKSON.

THE following incident was related by an evangelist in the north of Scotland:

"I often met, in the course of my ministry, a woman of middle age, pleasant, cheerful, and most earnest and self-denying in her visits from house to house amongst the poor in their scattered cottages. Her quiet unobtrusive labour excited my admiration, and I felt a desire to know more of one so whole-hearted in her devotion to the Master. An opportunity soon occurred. We met one day at the cottage of a sick woman quickly 'wearing away' to the land 'o' the leal.' Our visit over, we left the house together, and as our way lay in the same direction, it afforded me the opportunity I had sought. We spoke of the distress around us, and at last I said, 'You seem devoted to the work amongst the people here, never weary of ministering to their necessities.'"

"She answered, 'Whatever little bit of service I may be allowed to do for any of his suffering ones, I do it gladly for his sake; how can I help giving up my whole heart to him who lived and died for me?'"

"May I ask how you were brought to the knowledge of the exceeding greatness of his love?'"

"It is many years ago," she replied; "I was just a lassie living with my parents in our cottage on the hillside, when one day a pedlar called at the door with his basket of wares. He was an honest man in his dealings, and my mother supplied her needs from his store. I was young and full of mirth, and amused myself for some time, as I thought, with his serious talk. The day was warm, and I asked him if he would like a glass of milk. He said he would be thankful. I brought it to him, and waited to take back the cup, after he had finished, but instead of giving it to me he still kept it in his hand, and looking me steadfastly in the face, said earnestly, 'If I were to offer you the dregs at the bottom of the cup, would you think I was doing you a great honour?' I answered, 'No, indeed; I should think you were just making game of me.' He repeated very solemnly, 'And how are you treating the Almighty God? You are young now, full of health and mirth, living only to amuse yourself: if you live on like this until you are old and gray-headed, and have no more strength to take pleasure in the world, do you think it will be fair to the loving Lord to offer him the dregs of your life? Do you think that he will think it an honour if you bring him the worst part of your life and devote your best part to the service of sin?' He gave back the cup and went on his way, but his words had struck home, and before I left the doorstep I determined to give my heart to Christ, and devote my life to his service. The promise is that those who seek me early shall find me,' and from that hour he has guided me with his counsel. I have never seen the pedlar since, but I thank God for those few earnest words."

A GOLD MEDAL.

I SHALL never forget a lesson I received when at school in A—. We saw a boy named Watson driving a cow to pasture. In the evening he drove her back again, we did not know where; and this was continued several weeks. The boys attending the school were nearly all sons of wealthy parents; and some of them were dunces enough to look with disdain on a scholar who had to drive a cow. With admirable good nature Watson bore all their attempts to annoy him.

"I suppose, Watson," said Jackson, another boy, one day, "I suppose your father intends to make a milkman of you?"

"Why not?" asked Watson.

"Oh, nothing. Only don't leave much water in the cans after you rinse them; that's all."

The boys laughed; and Watson, not in the least mortified replied, "Never fear. If ever I am a milkman I'll give good measure and good milk."

The day after this conversation there was a public examination, at which ladies and gentlemen from the neighbouring towns were present. Prizes were awarded by the principal of our school, and both Watson and Jackson received a creditable number;

for in respect to scholarship they were about equal. After the ceremony of distribution, the principal remarked that there was one prize, consisting of a gold medal, which was rarely awarded, not so much on account of its great cost as because the instances were rare which rendered its bestowal proper. It was the prize of heroism. The last medal was awarded about three years ago to a boy in the first class who rescued a poor girl from drowning. The principal then said that with the permission of the company he would relate a short anecdote:

"Not long since some boys were flying a kite in the streets, just as a poor lad on horseback rode by on his way to the mill. The horse took fright and threw the boy, wounding him so badly that he was carried home and confined some weeks to his bed. Of the boys who had unintentionally caused the disaster, none followed to learn the fate of the wounded lad. There was one boy, however, who witnessed the accident from a distance, who not only went to make inquiries, but who stayed to render service."

"This boy soon learned that the wounded boy was a grandson of a poor widow whose sole support consisted in selling the milk of a cow of which she was the owner. She was old and lame; and her grandson, on whom she depended to drive her cow to the pasture, was now helpless with his bruises. 'Never mind,' said the boy, 'I will drive the cow.'"

"But his kindness did not stop there. Money was wanted to get articles from the apothecary. 'I have money that my mother sent me to buy a pair of boots with,' said he, 'but I can do without them for awhile.' 'Oh, no,' said the old woman, 'I can't consent to that; but there is a pair of heavy boots I bought for Thomas, who can't wear them. If you should only buy these we should get on nicely.' The boy bought the boots, clumsy as they were, and has worn them up to this time.

"Well, when it was discovered by the other boys at school that our scholar was in the habit of driving a cow, he was assailed every day with laughter and ridicule. His cowhide boots, in particular, were made matter of mirth. But he kept on cheerfully and bravely, day after day, never shunning observation, driving the poor widow's cow and wearing his thick boots. He never explained why he drove the cow, for he was not inclined to make a boast of his charitable motives. It was by mere accident that his kindness and self-denial was discovered by his teacher.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, Was there not true heroism in this boy's conduct? Nay, Master Watson, do not get out of sight behind the blackboard. You are not afraid of ridicule; you must not be afraid of praise."

As Watson, with blushing cheeks came forward, a round of applause spoke the general approbation; and the medal was presented to him amid the cheers of the audience.—The Children's Queen.

"CLEAN INSIDE."

WHEN the first missionaries in Madagascar, a large island near the east coast of Africa, had converted some of the islanders there, a Christian sea captain asked a former chief what it was that first led him to become a Christian. "Was it any particular sermon you heard, or book which you read?" asked the captain.

"No, my friend," replied the chief, "it was no book nor sermon. One man, he a wicked chief; another man, he drunk all day long; big chief, he beat his wife and children. Now, this, he no steal; drunken Tom, he sober; big chief, he very kind to his family. Every honest man gets something inside him, which make him different: so I become a Christian, too, to know how it feel to have something strong inside of me, to keep me from being bad."

"Now, that old chief had the right idea of Christianity. He had got something new and strong inside of him. He had a new motive; it was the desire to be true and pure."

At one of the ragged schools in Ireland a minister asked the poor children before him, "What is holiness?" Thereupon a poor little Irish boy, in dirty, tattered rags, jumped up and said, "Please, your reverence, it's to be clean inside." Could anything be truer?