

telligently. My friend is delighted with the experiment. He says he is sure I hit upon the one boy in town who will suit him, and has offered him a good position with a fine salary. Messenger boys are easy to get; but a boy who can make a blind man see is at a premium. You see, that boy, though he did not know it, was on the watch for a good opportunity, and when it came he knew how to manage it.—Michigan 'Christian Advocate.'

### 'A Very Little Fault.'

(Mrs. Cutler, in the 'Sunday at Home.')

'I do think you're making an awful fuss about it, mother.'

Frank Mansford stood by the window, his hands in his pockets and a frown upon his usually bright face. Mrs. Mansford looked up from her needlework with a slight smile.

'I have no wish to make an "awful fuss," as you call it, Frank,' she remarked, 'but I am very sorry your father had to do the books himself when he was so very busy.'

Frank shifted uneasily.

'Of course, if I'd known he was in such a jolly hurry——' he commenced.

'My dear boy,' broke in his mother, 'that is misrepresenting things a little bit, isn't it? You had the whole evening in which to do the books, and at bed-time they were only just begun. So father did them himself after you were all in bed.'

There was nothing to be said to this, so Frank was silent, but the frown upon his face deepened.

'Anyway, mother,' he recommenced after a little pause, 'if I'm a little lazy that isn't as bad as some things. You know what Mr. Adams says about me. I don't play truant like young Tomkins, or disobey you—why you say yourself the Hanburys never take any notice of what their mother says—and I never—at least hardly ever—fly into passions like——'

'Dick,' put in another voice, as a boy a year or two younger than Frank rose from the easy chair where he had been curled up and laid down the book he had been reading. Both Frank and his mother looked round in surprise, for Dick had been so quiet that they had entirely forgotten his presence; indeed, Dick when buried in a book did not count as an auditor, and had it not been for the fact that he had just reached the end of the last chapter, it is probable that he would have heard nothing of the present conversation.

'Go on, my dear brother,' he said, 'don't let me interrupt you. Your trumpeter's dead, evidently. "Don't fly into passions like Dick" you were about to remark. Then I should like to know the meaning of that dig in the ribs you gave me when you got into bed last night. He asked me if I wanted all the bed, mother, and I was lying stiff and straight on the very edge of it.'

Dick described his wrongs so comically that even Frank could not help laughing.

'Well, I was a bit cross last night, certainly,' he acknowledged, 'but that was because father talked as if I didn't want to do the books. But you know what I mean, don't you, mother?'

Mrs. Mansford waited till Dick had gone before she answered. Then she laid down her needlework, and crossed the room to where Frank was standing.

'Frank,' she began, 'I do understand perfectly, and I don't want you to think I am scolding you. I know very well that Mr. Adams cannot say enough in your praise, and there are your good-conduct prizes as a proof. You have so many good qualities that I can't bear to see

this one fault growing upon you, as I am sure it is. The great danger lies in the fact that you think it so small and unimportant. But a small fault unchecked has often spoiled a whole character, and hindered the usefulness of a life. You must forgive me talking so seriously, Frank, but I don't want anything to spoil the noble Christian life that I have planned for you,' and the speaker's eyes rested lovingly on the boy's serious face.

Frank raised his eyes as his mother finished and smiled back at her.

'You're awfully good, mother,' he said affectionately, 'and I really am sorry about the books. But don't be afraid. You shall see a difference in the future. I'll work like a nigger just to please you.'

'Not just to please me,' his mother responded smiling, 'there is some one else you want to please, I know. Ask God to give you the strength, my boy. Without him you will find it impossible to conquer even the smallest fault.'

When Frank told his mother that for her sake he would conquer his laziness, he really meant what he said. But it is always easier to make resolutions than to keep them, and though he had listened seriously to her words, he still retained the feeling that after all there was no cause for alarm. Perhaps his position in the school, as one of the most promising pupils, had helped to make him somewhat self-satisfied, and inclined him to overlook a fault which had so little interfered with his progress there. But in school, where he was fond of his work and very anxious to please his master, and perhaps to surpass his school-mates, there were few temptations to laziness. It was at home, when required to perform some little duties in the house or in the garden, to help his father in the shop, or to make up the business accounts, that his fault was most in evidence.

'Look out, Frank!' cried Dick some few mornings after the foregoing conversation, as he jumped briskly out of bed, 'there's mother calling again. You'd better get out of it sharp.'

Frank's only answer to this was a dissatisfied grunt as he turned over and again settled himself comfortably in the bed.

'Oh, very well,' remarked Dick, somewhat offended at the effect of his words, 'it's nothing to do with me, of course. Pray do as you like, only remember if you're late for breakfast again father'll have something to say.'

Dick said no more till he was ready to go downstairs. Then he paused, the door-handle already in his hand. 'I'm sorry to disturb your slumbers,' he said sarcastically, 'but I should just like to say that mother's called you three times already, and it must be getting late.'

There was an impatient movement in the bed.

'Why can't you leave a fellow alone,' came Frank's voice from under the clothes. 'You don't suppose every one takes so long to dress as you, do you?'

Frank was really feeling very tired this morning, and much inclined to indulge himself. However, he had learned by this time that it was of no use waiting until he wanted to get up, and this being so, it was very unwise of him not to do so at once.

What happened next he could only guess afterwards, but gradually there came over him a vague feeling that Dick had been gone some time. With a thrill of alarm he sat up and listened. All was very quiet downstairs. He must have been to sleep again. Was it very late? he wondered anxiously.

It took our hero but a very few minutes to dress and rush downstairs. Ah! it was as he feared! The other had finished breakfast

and gone, and his mother was alone in the room. Worst of all, the hands of the clock pointed to five minutes to nine. There was just time, if he hurried. Frank picked up his books.

'You haven't had your breakfast, Frank,' interposed his mother.

Now Frank was rather ashamed of himself and wanted very much to lay the blame of what had happened upon some one else. As this was clearly impossible, he was becoming decidedly cross.

'I don't want any breakfast,' he said, shortly. 'It's time I was at school now.'

'Nonsense, Frank,' said another voice, as his father came into the room, 'you'll certainly not go to school without any breakfast. I have more regard for your health than that. Your mother called you three times and I would not allow you to be called any more. If you are late it is entirely your own fault.'

There was no help for it, so Frank sat down. Never before had he eaten his breakfast so quickly as he did that morning. At last, after what seemed like an interminable time, but was really only five minutes, he was allowed to go.

There was a special reason just now to account for this great desire to be at school in time. Mr. Adams had been much annoyed lately by unpunctuality, and was inclined to treat with severity those who could not show an adequate reason for it in the shape of a message from their parents.

When Frank arrived breathless in the school-porch he found it occupied by three boys, two of whom were passing away the time with a game of marbles, while the other was rather disconsolately watching them. But, what was of far more consequence to Frank, the door was shut.

'Hullo, Frank,' cried the players, 'are you late, too? You've got a note, haven't you? Old Dodson hasn't, that's why he's looking so glum. You and he are in for it, I expect.'

Frank felt an insane desire to knock the two cheerful questioners down, but fortunately there was no time for more, as the door was now thrown open.

As Frank followed the other boys down the school-room and up to the master's desk he felt decidedly uncomfortable, while the triumphant way in which his two companions displayed their notes made him long to do something desperate. To his great relief, however, the ordeal was not so bad as he had expected. Mr. Adams, in spite of his desire for punctuality, had no wish to treat with severity two boys who bore such a high character as the present culprits, so though they had no excuses to present, he contented himself with a word of warning respecting the future. But the relief which Frank felt was mingled with another, and much stronger feeling. That walk up to the master's desk had been very hurtful to his pride and had made him feel very small indeed. The rather interested glances which he received from his class-mates he magnified into insults, and when, catching Dick's eye as he sat in the next class, he was greeted with a look which said very clearly, 'I told you so,' Frank felt a strong desire to hurl something at his brother's head.

(To be continued.)

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