

AUNT NORA'S CORNER.

AUNT NORA has a suggestion to make this week to her youthful readers. It is that they should sign their contributions by their full and real name.

AUNT NORA wishes to all her boys and girls who read this portion of the True Witness a happy and a blessed New Year.

A SHORT ESSAY ON TRIFLES.

Looking in the dictionary, I find that a trifle is a thing of little value or importance; but, if we consider for a while, we will find it very difficult to draw the line between important articles and trifles.

In every position of life we find the importance of attending to those little duties which come under the title of trifles. It is generally on the faithful performance of small duties that a great deal of success in life depends.

No matter in what station of life in what business or private affairs, trifles have to be attended to, and the neglect of them often causes disorder or trouble where prosperity and peace should reign.

The Holy Scriptures say: "He who contemneth small things shall fall by little and little," thus showing the care that should be taken of trifles, for no man ever plunged right into vice;—he came to it first by little acts, and through the various stages until he ended by losing his God all together.

It is the same with everything else. No one ever reached the top of the ladder without beginning at the bottom; so great things can only be accomplished by attending to the trifles which come first.

A friend once having pointed out to Michael Angelo that he had made little progress on a statue he was carving, the great sculptor answered: "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

We should not, however, attach too much importance to trifles and worry our brains about things which are not worth the trouble.

We should learn the worth of everything and not value a thing too highly until we know there is some good in it. In the future I will attend to those duties which, though they seem to me to be of small value, are not to be despised, and in doing so will remember:

"Little by little all tasks are done; So are the crowns of the faithful won, So is heaven in our hearts begun."

M. SCULLION. Montreal, Dec. 23, 1896.

MARY'S LILY.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception flowers of the brightest hue adorned the shrine of our Virgin Mother, nature's richest offerings were laid at the feet of the Madonna.

Among the different blossoms I perceived a lily of spotless whiteness; most potent does this fair flower speak to the heart of Mary's Child. It is a reflection of our Mother, an image of our Queen! Oh! yes, sweet flower, most acceptable must thou be to the Immaculate Virgin.

We too, her faithful votaries, may be lilies in her sight, and most agreeable to her.

Mary's lily should try to purify herself by great singleness of intention in all her actions and carefully abstain from any word, look or thought which might sully this priceless gem.

Purify was Mary's dearest grace, her Immaculate Conception her greatest privilege, and she ever delights to see this virtue shining in the hearts of her children.—"As a lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters."

LITTLE COX. Pupil of the Academy of Our Lady of Good Councils. Montreal, December 24, 1896.

ABRIDGED NAMES.

DEAR AUNT NORA,—Will you allow the big "grown up" to be your nephew for this once? My interest in the Children's department is my apology for intruding in the young people's space.

DEAR AUNT NORA,—I suppose there will be a whole big rush of boys writing to you this week, since you asked them specially to do so. I will not take up much of your time, as I have very little of interest to tell you at present.

I beg to remain, pro tem, Your Nephew, BABBETA. Montreal, Dec. 26, 1896.

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of an evening. I like Irish stories and am now reading "Carroll O'Donoghue," which is very interesting.

I hope there will be lots of letters from boys in the next TRUE WITNESS. I do not care much for letters from girls. Wishing everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. WILLIAM KANE. Montreal, Dec. 23rd, 1896.

DEAR AUNT NORA,—Perhaps I am too little to try to write to the papers, but I have no big brother or sister and my papa says that I cannot begin sooner to be a newspaperman than now. I think it nice to be a newspaperman and to tell everybody all what you know.

I will be eleven years old on January 7th and can skate. In summer time I play lacrosse and am a backer of the Shamrocks.

I like to read little stories and I wish you would put some in your paper. Why don't you write one yourself, I am sure it would be nice.

I have an aunt Nora of my own. She lives in Ireland and I hope when I grow up and become a man I will be able to go and see her.

My father is a home-ruler and so am I. I wish I was big enough to do lots of good for Ireland. My father took the TRUE WITNESS long before he got me. PATRICK SANSFIELD RYAN. Montreal, Dec. 23rd, 1896.

SANTA CLAUS' PONY.

The children of Belgium have a charming Christmas legend about Santa Claus' pony. They always place their wooden sabots on the window ledge, stuffed full of oats, hay and fodder for the "dear Christmas pony."

In the early morning they run on tiptoe to look, and behold! the hay is all gone, and the shoes are brimming over with toys and sweetmeats! Then the children clap their hands with glee, and wish they could only have waked in time to see the pony munching his oats. That would have been such fun!

THE THREAD OF LIFE.

From the French, by G. M. Ward (Mrs. Pennee.) A little child, who was corrected by his nurse, exclaimed angrily: "Why can I not be ten years old, so as to have done with this bothering nurse! I should then be a big boy and the servants would not dare order me about."

Suddenly, there stood before him a Genius who, smilingly, presented him with a mysterious-looking ball of thread. "Child," said the Genius addressing him, "this is the thread of life. Whenever you wish to advance in age you have nothing to do but to unwind the thread; but be careful, life can be lived but once and our steps cannot be retraced. Death lies at the end of the ball of thread."

Having spoken thus, the Genius disappeared. The child could not contain himself for joy; he found himself master of his own fate. He at once tested his good fortune by pulling at the thread, and behold! he was ten years old! He was emancipated from that terrible nurse, and this was a great happiness. However, he found himself at college, where he had to submit to keeping regular hours, writing exercises, learning lessons, all of which he found to be very tiresome. Rising early every morning, working for hours in the class-rooms, keeping silence, when he would much rather have been playing and talking, became very hard to bear. Very soon he was heartily tired of his new state of life.

If I were but a pupil in Rhetoric, he said to himself, my studies would be more agreeable, I should be of more consequence here, and I should be looked on as a young man.

As he had only to unwind some more thread to find his desires fulfilled, he had recourse to his ball and at once found himself in the Rhetoric class. But hardly had he had time to admire his own proportions and to realize how much he had grown, when he heard his fellow pupils speaking about the examinations necessary for taking his Bachelor's degree.

He knew he must plunge into an endless multitude of studies, that Latin, Greek and a lot of other distasteful matters must occupy the whole of his time and thoughts. So he was again disappointed.

What was he to do? Should he leave college? Should he set himself free to go out in the world and run after frivolous pleasures in companionship with other young men? Why yes, that would be delightful. But it would be prudent not to run on too fast, therefore he would only unwind a little of the magic thread and await the period when he would find a beard on his lip and chin. His studies being then finished, he took a cane in his hand, put a cigar in his mouth and went all about the town like all other young men.

At last I am free and happy, he exclaimed. I will remain as I am. The young man forgot how despicable was such a useless life and how every vice is fostered by idleness. Besides, he was not rich enough to be able to live without working. So, in order to supply his own needs, he had to go into an office and work steadily for several hours every day.

Oh! but this is wearisome work he said, quite discouraged. Had I but an office of my own and a fine family around me, how happy I should be! I will again have recourse to my thread of life.

The next moment he found himself in a house of his own, surrounded by a number of young children who had stammered him with their noise and tired him out with their perpetual games of play. He became conscious, too, of having to bear the weight of many anxieties and much care, all of which he had not foreseen.

I have not yet arrived at the happiest period of life, he exclaimed, my business affairs worry me and I am pre-occupied about my children's prospects. I would like to see them all started in

life or married so that I might lead a quiet and retired life. Then, I should be able to take some rest and enjoy the society of my family. I will advance a little further in life. And again he unwound some thread.

He now found himself in a drawing-room, opposite to a looking glass which, alas! reflected back his gray hairs. This startled him and he determined on not again abridging his life. But several of his children failed to get on in the world, and again, several of them died. Then, he himself felt sick and, just as he was recovering, a terrible fever carried off his wife and he looked on himself as the most unhappy man on earth. As he had never learned to suffer, he knew nothing of the consolation to be found in exercising patience and submission, so he gave way to despair.

Soon he became infirm and was stretched on a bed of suffering. The medical art could furnish no alleviation of his pain and he felt himself unable to bear any longer with his trials. Thanks to that fatal ball of thread he could easily deliver himself from all his sufferings. For a long time he hesitated, for to die was too terrible. At length, overcome by what he was enduring, he unwound what was left of his thread and expired.

But six months had elapsed since the Genius had appeared to him. Had we been in his place would we have wished to have lived any longer? Are we more moderate in our desires and less impatient when they are not fulfilled? Alas! we are for ever desiring to find happiness on earth, when God has only promised that we shall find it in Heaven!

Let us then remember that if there be a way of finding happiness on earth, it consists in learning how to support the trials of life and not in striving to flee from them.

THE VALUE OF OLD STAMPS. A Wurtenburg parish priest, having collected 9,000 pounds of postage stamps in eighteen years, has sold the lot for \$5,000 and given the money in charity.

TEMPERANCE WORK. An idea of the efforts made by the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of the United States to help along the cause of Temperance, and of the great progress that it is making, may be gleaned from the following statement which has been issued by its Publication Bureau:—

During the last four years the output of the publication department has sufficiently demonstrated the need and the efficiency of this branch of the service. From September, 1892, to September, 1893, there were printed 705,000 8 page pamphlets and 25,000 Lenten pledge cards.

From September, 1893, to September, 1894, there were printed 481,500 8-page pamphlets, with 157,000 Sacred Third cards.

We then changed the tract from an 8 page to a 16-page pamphlet and issued it every two months. From September, 1894, to September, 1895, there were printed 121,600 16 page pamphlets and 159,000 Sacred Third cards.

From September, 1895, to September, 1896, 140,200 16 page pamphlets and 282,000 Sacred Third cards.

The total output, therefore, of this department during four years was 1,448,300 tracts, or 13,681,000 pages of literature, with 748,000 Sacred Third cards.

It may be readily seen that this enormous amount of literature has not been without its effect on the Catholic temperance sentiment of the country. These white-winged messengers certainly found their way into places where the total abstinence sentiment has been unknown, and have fulfilled their silent mission. They have without a doubt been instrumental to a large extent in awakening a deeper love for the practice of total abstinence.

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PATENT REPORT. Below will be found the only complete weekly up to date record of patents granted to Canadian inventors, which is prepared specially for this paper, by Messrs. Marion & Marion, solicitors of patents and experts, head office, Temple Building, Montreal, from whom all information may be readily obtained:—

51121.—David Bradley, hook for harness. 51122.—Chs. Escher, skylight support. 51265.—T. Potvin, car coupler. 51236.—Mark T. Smith, mechanical movements.

51290.—George Tyler, joint for the wooden fellos of vehicle wheels. 51292.—Richard S. Caswell, lubricants for bicycle chains. 51295.—James H. K. McCollum, automatic air pumps for pneumatic tyres. 51296.—Isaac P. Patton, bicycle driving gear.

51299.—The Diamond Machine and Tool Company, pedal and pedal barrels. 51301.—John P. Brown, auxiliary links for bicycle drive chain. 51302.—Edgar D. Miener, bicycle brakes.

51319.—John W. F. G. Aldo, life belts. 51340.—William H. Johnston, compression grease cups. 51326.—Francis N. Denison, short circuiting devices for stopping dental motors.

51387.—Reuben C. Elridge, snap hooks. 51382.—S. Stephens, Hamilton, Ont., Street Cleaners or Sweepers. 51389.—Joseph Letourneau, St