

by step, until she became principal of a school in a small city, and although she valued her education at its full worth, she was ever careful about advising anyone else to venture what she had in acquiring it. 'An education is one of the most desirable of possessions,' she was wont to say, 'but it may be bought at too great a cost to those whom we love, though the selfishness of youth sometimes fails to understand this until too late.'

Is Oil More Than Character?

Mrs. Davis walked briskly along, her footsteps ringing crisply on the frozen snow. She cast quick glances from side to side at the houses that lined the street.

'I declare,' she mused, 'one would be led to think that oil is worth its weight in gold. Four out of every five houses are black in the face. What a cheerful appearance the street would present if everybody would live more in their front rooms. Here is our house, too, dark and gloomy in front and only a blur of light at the side windows. I've been thinking of this for some time.'

She entered the front door and walked the length of the dark hall that opened into the sitting-room.

'Mrs. Moore is better,' she said in answer to the general look of inquiry. 'The custard I made for her is the only thing she has relished to-day.'

Coming in from the delicious air the room seemed hot and stuffy. The family was crowded about the one lamp on the table. Her husband was reading; Stella, a girl of twelve, bent over her grammar with a look of desperation in her face; Frank, almost a man, was craning his neck towards the light, engrossed with his beloved study—the dictionary. He was a type-setter in his father's office, and in one pocket he carried a book on punctuation, and in the other a dictionary. 'The Dic,' he was wont to say, 'will tell you almost anything. It gives you the word you want, the synonyms, and all the trimmings of t-i-o-n, tion, l-y, ly.' A small boy and girl were playing dominoes, carrying on the game in whispers and pantomime, while Robert, aged four, was drawing a slate full of be-gengines with the screechiest of slate pencils. Mrs. Davis seated herself with her mending basket, taking mental notes meanwhile. Frequently her husband read a bit of news aloud to her, which drew a sigh of despair from Stella and an impatient change of posture from Frank.

'Oh, dear!' thought Stella, 'I'll have to get a hammer and pound this old grammar lesson into my head. Common school grammar, indeed! with its rules and five hundred or so exceptions. My head throbs so I can't remember a thing!' Presently she got up and put on her wraps.

'Mother, I'm going to study with Myrtle. If she asks me, may I stay all night?'

Mrs. Davis reluctantly gave her consent. She knew Stella preferred sleeping at home, but she felt that it would be quite impossible for herself to concentrate her own mind on any study under existing circumstances. Myrtle had a small stove upstairs in her room, where the girls could study undisturbed. Robert's pencil agonized around smoke-stacks and wheels as if in excruciating pain. Suppressed giggles and frequent bursts of excitement came from the domino players. Frank, after shifting his position several times, quietly closed his book, put it into his pocket, and left the room. His mother, with senses alert, heard the back door close, then the gate shut, and she knew he had gone up town.

Frank wandered along, objectless, save to straighten the kink out of his neck, when a boy across the street hailed him.

'Hello, Davis!—That you?'

'The same, Sambo.'

Sam ran across the street to join him.

'Where you bound for?'

'Nowhere. Where you bound for?' asked Frank.

'Nowhere, too,' then they both laughed and turned their steps towards the brilliant stores.

'How good the air is; I'd like to eat it,' said Frank filling his lungs.

'Awful poky, shut up in a small space in the house. Hello! Hear that? Some one is dancing a clog in there,' indicating a saloon close by; 'let's go in a minute.'

'I don't go into saloons,' said Frank, pausing and looking at the door.

'Pooh! neither do I, as a rule. We won't touch any of their snaky stuff, but it is light and warm in there, with a reading-room at the back, and magazines to look at for nothing.'

Sam opened the door, and Frank followed. Although feeling much out of place, the two boys sat down, and while Sam looked over the literature on the table, Frank got out his well-thumbed dictionary, and said he would 'flush another covey of synonyms.' He thought of the crowd around the table at home, and settled back comfortably in his chair.

When the younger children were abed, Mrs. Davis had a talk with her husband.

'Whose coming?' was the question the following evening, when the parlor door was opened, revealing a glowing fire. 'The junior Davises are coming to study,' said the mother, laughing.

'Is it really for us? Oh, how lovely! I'll clean the lamp, and keep the room as neat as wax,' exclaimed Stella.

'And I will make that woodpile think Dewey has arrived with all his guns primed,' said Frank, waving his books above his head. As he drew up a chair he thought in self-disgust:

'Think of my sitting in that saloon like any old bum! Because they saw me there I've had to snub half a dozen rowdies to-day who tried to be too chummy with me.'

The experiment worked like a charm. However trying the daily task, the knowledge that a cosy evening awaited them acted like a tonic to the tired nerves. A week later Frank looked up from his book and said:

'Sam wonders why some benevolent gentleman doesn't fit up a place where boys can spend their evenings harmlessly; but I've been thinking that benevolence, like charity, begins at home, instead of saddling it all on to one man, it should be cut up in pieces, say the size of a yeast-cake, and a piece dropped into every home, where it would ferment and expand until home seems the brightest spot on earth. This afternoon when I was slinging type, this pretty room rose up before me, so to speak, and I got so hungry for supper that I felt like eating up all the p's, and lower case, and drinking up the t's ditto.'

Stella laughed, then said, 'I used to envy Myrtle but I don't any more. I haven't failed in a single recitation since we have had this room to study in. It's a kind of anchor to my memory.'

Mrs. Davis overheard this conversation, and thought to herself:

'Some talk big about benefiting the world, while the little home-world over which we preside grows comfortless and cheerless. Once out of its protecting walls

they are in an unknown country where the objectionable is met on every hand. I'll introduce the idea of Frank's unique yeast-cakes at the next Mothers' Meeting.'—Advance

How We Earned Our Missionary Money.

(By Clara Pierce, in 'The Occident'.)

Just a month before Christmas our superintendent, Mr. Brown, told us that our home missionaries were suffering because the board could not get enough money to pay their salaries. This made us sorry, for how would they buy food and warm clothing for the winter? Mr. Brown also told us that Christian people were going to raise money to pay the salaries of California missionaries and asked if we would not like to do something to help.

We thought of the missionary children whose fathers might have no money for Christmas, just because the church did not pay what it owed them, and we decided to give our Christmas offering to them.

'If your parents give you the money,' said Mr. Brown, 'the offering will be their gift not yours; can you not earn what you give? I think every member of this school can earn fifty cents, and then at our Christmas entertainment each may tell how he earned his money.'

'Fifty cents!' I never can earn so much! whispered Eva to me, and I heard Charlie say, 'I've got fifty cents in my bank.'

It was only a month till Christmas, and we didn't know how we could earn money, but we wanted to try, for we felt so sorry for the missionaries.

Our school was very small—there were only fifteen children—but everybody says we have the 'nicest little Sunday-school,' and we meant to do our very best. Of course the big boys—some of them are fourteen years old—could earn money easily, they could do a hundred things, but what could the little girls of our class do and the little bits of folks in the infant class? It did seem that there was nothing that they could do!

We talked it all over before we went home, and we talked about it at home and Charlie said he dreamed about it. We asked our mammas what we could do. Ours said, 'Where there's a will, there's a way,' and she was right. For as soon as we began to look for something to do we found it.

There's Mary Brown's mamma—Oh, she makes the sweetest, crispiest ginger snaps, and she promised to make as many as Mary and Emma could sell, if they would help her all they could. They liked this, and when the dishes had to be washed or the table set or the floor swept, they didn't fret one bit.

When the cookies were baked and folded in a white napkin in a dainty basket, the girls had ever so many customers. It made one's mouth water just to see the pretty brown snaps or get a whiff of their spicy smell. The students bought them, and the house-keepers bought them—they make such a nice dessert with custards or they are good with coffee at breakfast—and the children all begged for a nickel to buy a dozen ginger snaps from Emma or Mary. Mrs. Brown had to bake ever so many times and every time the cookies were just as good as the first and sold just as quickly. She didn't say she was tired of her bargain, but I guess she was glad when Christmas was over.

Eva's mother paid her for darning stock-