

rascal," getting his living by stealing from others. He cannot dive as his companion can, but he is quite as fond of eelery, so he waits patiently until his victim disappears in quest of food. "A violent commotion now goes on under the water. It is the struggle of the duck with the plant. Finally, the luckless canvas-back emerges, blinded momentarily by the water. The widgeon 'gibbles' quickly forward, snatches the morsel, and is off ere the dupe has got the water out of his eyes." The canvas-back does not like this, yet—except at feeding-time—he and the widgeon are very good friends.

The Fossil Raindrops.

Over the quarry the children went rambling,
Hunting for stones to skip,
Into the clefts and the crevices scrambling,
Searching the quarrymen's chip.

Sweet were their voices and gay was their laughter,
That holiday afternoon,
One tumbled down and the rest tumbled after,
All of them singing one tune.

Here was a stone would skip like a bubble,
Once were it loosed from its place,—
See what strange lines, all aslant, all a-trouble,
Covered over its face.

Half for a moment their wonder is smitten,
Nor divine they at all
That soft earth it was when those slant lines were written
By the rain's gusty fall.

Nor guess they, while pausing to look at it plainly,
The least in the world perplexed,
That the page which old Merlin studied vainly
Had never such wizard text.

Only a stone o'er the placid pool throwing,
Ah— But it told them, though,
How the rain was falling, the wind was blowing,
Ten thousand years ago!

A Preacher's Boy.

BY THE REV. T. C. READE.

Tom was an unhappy boy. He was, of course, an exception to the general rule, for most boys are happy; and so they ought to be, for if one is ever to find any pleasure in living it should be while all his senses are perfect, and he is full of life and vigour. It is sad to see an unhappy man, but an unhappy boy is a sight extremely pitiful.

But I must tell you the cause of Tom's unhappiness. It was not because he was poorly fed, or meanly clad, or overworked—for in these respects he was as fortunate as most of his playmates. He was kept at school, and enjoyed the benefits of the best society, and was indulged in all innocent amusements; but still there was one fact that weighed upon him like a mountain; there was one cloud that cast its shadow over every bright scene in his life; there was one bitter ingredient in every cup of joy—he was a preacher's boy, and that fact made him very unhappy. I know you will smile, and say: "That was a strange thing to make a boy unhappy!" for so it was. But that fact was the great burden of Tom's life.

When his associates asked him to go hunting or fishing on Sunday, he used to answer in a rueful tone, "No, I can't go. My father is a preacher, and I have to go to church to-morrow." Neither was he allowed to play cards, or go to theatres, or smoke, or chew tobacco, or go inside a saloon.

Frequently, as Tom would approach a group of his playmates, he would hear some one say: "Keep still, boys, keep still; there comes the little preacher," and immediately all was silent, and an air of mystery pervaded the group that made Tom feel very uncomfortable.

One day he came home from school with the

usual unhappy look upon his face and said to his father: "Pa, why wasn't you a lawyer, or a doctor, or a merchant, or something else? I just hate to be a preacher's boy."

His father, of course, was shocked and deeply grieved, but he called Tom to his side, and put his arm about his neck, and, with tears in his eyes, he said: "Tom, if you will be a good boy, the time will come when you will be proud that you had a preacher for your father."

Tom drew himself rudely away, and said: "I don't want to be a good boy; and I am not going to be called the preacher's boy any more."

That night Tom had a dream that cured him of his unhappiness. He dreamed that his father died. He saw him lying cold and white in the coffin, but he could not shed a tear. His mother sobbed till her heart almost broke. His sisters and little brother wept; and a large congregation, over which his father had been the faithful pastor, wept; but Tom did not weep, for something kept whispering in his ear: "You are no longer a preacher's boy, and you can now do as you please."

Tom could scarcely wait till the funeral was over to find his associates. They were shy and reserved in his presence at first, but he soon surprised them by swearing a strong oath. They immediately took the hint. They saw that he was no longer the preacher's boy, and so they received him into their confidence. They taught him to play cards; and he was so fond of the dissipation that in a few months he became an adept. They taught him every vice they knew, and he soon grew to be a leader in their wicked diversions. They taught him to drink, as the crowning vice of all, and he made rapid progress in the path of intemperance.

Years rolled by, and the boy card-player had become the young man gambler. One night he was with his associates, drinking and gambling, in a room which they had secured for that purpose, when a quarrel arose between him and his most intimate associate. The quarrel ended in a fight, in which Tom drew a knife, and stabbed his friend. Tom looked into the ghastly face of his friend, as he lay dying before him, and in a moment he became sober.

He realized his crime—he saw his danger; but while he was looking for a way to escape, an officer of the law laid a heavy hand on his shoulder, and he was dragged away to prison. He was tried and convicted, and sentenced to a long term of years in the penitentiary.

He kept up his courage as long as he was in the city where his old associates lived, but when he was taken to a distant place and shut in behind prison walls, and put on the striped clothes of a convict, his courage failed him, and he sank down upon the prison floor, and wept as though his heart would break.

Oh, what visions of past happiness swept through his mind! They were visions of home, and in those visions the central figure was always that of his father. "Oh," said he, "if I had only obeyed my father I should not have come to this! Oh, if I had only been contented to remain a preacher's boy, instead of lying here, a despised felon, I might be free and respected and happy!"

While he lay there, groaning and sobbing, a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a kind voice said:—

"What's the matter, my dear boy?"

Tom started. He had not heard so kind a voice as that for many years. He thought it must be the chaplain of the prison who had observed his agony, and come to comfort him.

"Who are you?" said Tom; and, without waiting for an answer, "You must be a preacher. I

was a preacher's boy once, but I was not satisfied to remain so. I had such a kind father, but I did not like him because he wanted me to do right. After a while he died, and then I despised his instructions and took my own way, and this is the result."

Tom could say no more, but again buried his face in his hands, and wept. But the hand upon his shoulder shook him, and the kind voice asked again: "What's the matter, my dear boy?"

Tom awoke from his dream. He found his pillow wet with tears, and his own dear father bending over him.

"What's the matter, Tom?" said his father. "I was kneeling by your bedside, praying for you, and all at once I heard you sobbing."

Tom threw his arms around his father's neck, and cried.

"Is this you, father? Oh! is this you? And am I still your boy? Forgive me, father, for all the wrong I have done and thought and felt, and I will cheerfully follow your advice in future. And hereafter, the proudest thought of my life shall be that I am a preacher's boy.—*Our Youth.*

The Secret of It.

WHATEVER may be our young readers' desires for the future, we are pretty safe in saying that they all want influence over others. And what is the secret of gaining that influence?

When Alexander the Great was storming one of the cities of Malli, in India, having forced the gate, he made his way at the head of one of his columns to the citadel, whither the Indians had retired. Impatient that the work of scaling the citadel's wall did not progress as fast as he desired, he seized a ladder, planted it himself, and was the first to ascend.

Seeing the king alone, and in great danger, the soldiers made such a rush to the rescue that the scaling-ladders broke beneath the over-weight, and Alexander was left in the midst of his enemies with only three soldiers, who had gotten up before the ladders broke. Nothing daunted, the great soldier leaped inside the wall, and stood, like a tiger at bay, until he fell exhausted by the loss of blood. One of his comrades had been killed outright; but the other two locked their shields together over their king's prostrate body, and, though dripping from many a wound, whirled their swords fiercely in their other hands, keeping off their enemies.

Meanwhile, with a valour equally determined and irresistible, the Macedonians forced an entrance, and, enraged beyond control at the supposed death of their king, they literally wiped the town from the face of the earth.

Whence came this overmastering devotion to their leader? Turn back the story's page, and you will find that—during the pursuit of Darius, after marching four hundred miles in eleven days, when but sixty of his men could keep up with him, and all were dying, it seemed, of thirst—a helmetful of water was offered to Alexander. He declined to drink because there was not enough for all!

Does not this act of pure unselfishness answer the question, Whence came the king's marvellous influence over his soldiers? There is no power of wealth or genius or position or fame so strong as the power of unselfishness.

"PAPA," said Harry, "Who was George Washington?" "George Washington was the father of his country, my boy." "Well, who's this uncle Sam they talk about? Was he Washington's brother?"