

Enigma.

They say I am superfluous in our great family;
I know I cannot go alone, you always follow me.
I wonder why we are such friends, and how I got my name;
Some argue that it was applied to shill my comic frame,
I am of Eastern origin, adopted by the West,
And useless as they say I am, I'm ever in request,
'Tis true I'm first in quarrels but still keep out of strife,
And in the midst of earthquakes live yet lead a quiet life,
In oriental mosques I'm seen, but out of church I stay,
And once I used to lead the choir yet neither sing nor play,
I'm lacking not in quantity, in quality as well,
But far from perfect, and so small my name I'll never tell.

Ans.—The letter Q.

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Pleasant Hours:

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 11, 1899.

BE THOROUGH.

"I never do a thing thoroughly," Mary said to me the other day. She had just been competing for a prize in composition. "I only read my composition once after I wrote it, and never practiced in the chapel at all."

She was naturally far more gifted than Alice, who was her principal competitor. Alice wrote and rewrote her article, and practiced it again and again.

The day came. Alice read her composition in a clear, distinct voice, without hesitation or lack of expression. It was condensed and well written. Mary's could not be heard beyond the fifth row of seats, and was long and uninteresting. Alice won the prize. One remembered and the other forgot the truth so trite, but so aptly put by Carlyle: "Genius is an immense capacity for taking trouble." One, by patient, persistent effort, obtained what the other relied on her natural talent to win for her.

Whatever you do—whether you sweep a room, or make a cake, or write an essay, or trim a hat, or read a book—do it thoroughly. Have a high standard for everything; not alone because only thus can you win honour and distinction, but because this is the only honest, right, Christian way to use the gifts God has bestowed upon you. To be honest before him we must be thorough.—Observer.

HOW THEY LOST THEIR RIDE.

BY ELIZABETH P. ALLEN.

"Katie, you promised to go for the Millers this afternoon, and take your sled down to Long Hill, don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, but I'm not going to do it. Uncle Frank told Buster and me to wait at the pump, at three o'clock, and he would give us a sleigh-ride."

"An' he has two stings of bells," added Buster, conclusively.

"But you promised Katie," remonstrated the older sister "and the little Millers will watch for you, and be disappointed when you don't come."

"Oh, it's no matter," answered Katie, carelessly, "another time will do."

Uncle Frank, reading his paper in the back parlour, while this little talk was going on out in the hall; he laid down The Daily News when he heard Katie's last words, and looked very grave. Soon he walked down to the stables, shaking his head and saying, "It's a great pity, but they've got the lesson to learn."

At "free" o'clock, by the fastest time in the house, the two children were booted and gloved and capped, and waiting by the pump. Wouldn't they have a jolly time when the grey horse, with two rows of bells, came around the corner?

But the grey horse didn't come; many a belled sleigh went past, many a fur-capped boy and girl looked out at Katie and Buster, but no Uncle Frank made his appearance. Sorrowfully the disappointed children went home. About five o'clock Uncle Frank came in, in a fine glow of humour. "I've had a fine ride," he cried, "I took the two little Millers with me."

"Oh, Uncle Frank, why didn't you take us?" exclaimed Katie, bursting into tears. "You promised!"

"Eh? Oh, yes, bother, so I did, but it didn't matter, you know, any other time would do as well."

Katie knew that he was thinking of her speech about the Millers, though she wondered how he knew about it. But that lost ride taught Katie, and, perhaps, even little Buster, what it feels like to be disappointed in a promised treat. It was a good afternoon's lesson.

TWO INTRODUCTIONS.

"Why, Gay, what is it? Your cheeks are red as two lobsters—boiled ones," cried Esther Tripp, in her clear, sympathetic little voice. It was so queer to see Gay's face anything but laughing. Just now it was full of indignation and little sparks shone in her eyes.

"Come over in the secret corner and I'll tell you," Gay said, mysteriously, looking still more indignant.

The "secret corner" was over at one end of the playground, where a little leafy nook between two syringa bushes made a splendid place to tell secrets in. Gay and Esther hurried to it with their arms around each other's waists, but Gay's daintily-shot little feet made hard thumps on the pavement at every step. She was so indignant.

"Now tell, Gay; quick, or the bell will ring."

"Well, what do you s'pose? Miss Hope's been introducing me to that new scholar that came this morning."

Esther laughed in spite of herself. It was such a funny thing to be cross over.

"Is that all, Gay Tenney? Why, she introduced me, too. I guess I'm going to like her—she's got such funny little freckles on her nose."

"Freckles! Esther Tripp, she's my washerwoman's daughter."

Gay's voice rose, shrill and indignant. It pierced right through the thick syringa leaves and hurt a little shabby, gentle-faced girl going by.

"And that isn't all—but I hope that's enough. She's got on my old gingham dress this minute—and my boots. I know 'em by the prickled spots all over 'em where I went through the blackb'ry bushes. Mamma gave 'em right to the washerwoman. There! An' Miss Hope went and introduced me!"

The bell rang then, and Gay stumped back across the paved yard with her pretty, fluffy head in the air. Esther followed slowly, and a gentle-faced little girl with "prickled boots" on and a "prickled" place in her heart, went last of all with heavy feet.

Something even more dreadful happened to Gay that afternoon. As if the introducing hadn't been dreadful enough. But this! Miss Hope put the gentle-faced girl with the funny freckles at Gay's desk beside her.

"She is near-sighted, like you, dear," Miss Hope whispered, "and she can see the board better here."

It was very dreadful to sit next to your own old gingham dress with the tips of your own old boots just touching the floor beside your new ones—and then to remember about the washerwoman.

Gay was sure the gentle-faced girl smelt of soap-suds and steam. And she thought the tips of the little red fingers looked puckered up and parbolly—probably she inherited it from her mother's fingers.

But Gay was too well-bred to turn her back on her seatmate, or—well, she couldn't help cowering some, truly.

It was composition day, and Miss Hope read them a beautiful story about the bell in the market-place that people rang—the king told them to—when they were wronged, and somebody would come and

help them. And when the bell rope grow old and frayed with so much pulling they mended it with a vine, and one day a poor, old, half-starved horse strayed in under the roof and covered the bell and nibbled hungrily at the vine in the rope and rang the bell. And the people came to see who was wronged.

It was a beautiful story, but the best part of all was the beautiful ending, where they gave the poor horse a stall and shelter and plenty to eat.

"Now, tell me the story," Miss Hope said, and all over the room pencils began to scribble and little lips to chatter, softly—all but Gay's.

It was such dreadful work to write out Miss Hope's stories. You couldn't think of a thing to say. There was Esther Tripp's pencil going like everything—and, oh, dear, the washerwoman's daughter's pencil, too.

Gay bit her own pencil and then wrote, "Once" in shaky, down-hill letters. Then she looked across at the little, neat rows of even letters at the other side of the desk. Such a lot of rows, too.

"Once—on—a—t—l—m—e," wrote Gay, laboriously, "a horse nibbled a bell and—"

"Now, we'll see who's told the best story," Miss Hope was saying, brightly, and she was holding out her hand for Gay's.

The best story was always read aloud, and this time Miss Hope read the gentle-faced little girl's whose mother was a washerwoman. Gay listened to it with honest admiration—it was so prettily told. Oh, if she could only write like that! If she could only think what to say!

"Well, anyhow," she thought, "she had on my gingham dress and my boots, so 'twas some mine." And then she laughed, and then she slipped her hand under the desk and squeezed the little gentle-faced girl's hand.

And that was the second time they were introduced that day.—Our Boys and Girls.

DOINGS OF DRINK.

The following touching incident, by the Ven. Archdeacon Farrar, is given by The Scottish League Journal:

"At the entrance of one of our college chapels lies a nameless grave; that grave covers the mortal remains of one of its most promising fellows, ruined through drink. I received not very long ago a letter from an old schoolfellow, a clergyman, who, after long and arduous labour, was in want of clothes, and almost of food. I inquired the cause; it was drink. A few weeks ago a wretched clergyman came to me in deplorable misery, who had dragged down his family with him into ruin. What had ruined him? Drink. When I was a Cambridge one of the most promising scholars was a youth who, years ago, died in a London hospital, penniless, of delirium tremens, through drink. When I was at King's College I used to sit next to a handsome youth who grew up to be a brilliant writer; he died in the prime of life, a victim to drink. I once knew an eloquent philanthropist, who was a very miserable man. The world never knew the curse which was on him; but his friends knew that it was drink. And why was it that these tragedies are daily happening? It is through the fatal fascination, the seductive sorcery of drink, against which Scripture so often warns. It is because drink is one of the surest of the devil's ways to man, and of man's ways to the devil."

DOWN WITH THE SALOON.

Down with the saloon! Let that be the slogan, and every voice a trumpet to proclaim it!

Down with the saloon! It is God's relentless enemy, the nation's, and yours.

Down with the saloon! It has no respect for home, the church, the Sabbath. It curses the one, blasphemes the other, and tramples upon the third.

Down with the saloon! It breeds violence and ruin. Twenty anarchists were dragged from an apartment of a Chicago doggerly the other day. It was a fitting place for them. The two bad things mix.

Down with the saloon! It is pledged by the most infamous means to perpetuate its diabolical rule. It fattens upon the corruption it breeds, and, like the wrecker, is enriched by the ruin it works.

Down with the saloon! It multiplies mad-houses and prisons, and crowds their cells with brutalized, raving, cursing human wrecks.

Down with the saloon! It controls our politics, corrupts our legislators; intimidates our judiciary, and insults every sense of decency with insolent contempt. Down with the saloon! Its ranks are

filled by troops of murderers, thieves, perjurers, tramps, libertines, and harlots, who scoff at the restraints of society and thirst for blood.

Down with the saloon! It robs thousands of homes of their most promising boys, and, all besotted and ruined, huris them into drunkards' graves.

Down with the saloon! Talk against it. Plan against it. Work against it. Fight against it. Pray against it. Vote against it.—Epworth Herald.

THE PURIFICATION OF SANTIAGO.

Major Barbour, with 126 men dressed in spotless white, and thirty-two United States mule teams and carts, having dug out from the streets of Santiago the filth of ages, is now able to keep them absolutely clean. Every day, by the aid of petroleum, the garbage of the city is burned. The work of sanitation is not confined to the streets, but extends to the dwelling-houses, shops and buildings of all kinds. To accomplish this, however, the doors of houses had to be smashed in, and people throwing filth into the thoroughfares were publicly horsewhipped in the streets. The campaign has ended in a complete surrender to the sanitary authorities.—Chicago Record.

A MEXICAN MERCHANT.

The Mexicans have little knowledge of business, as compared with their American neighbours. A St. Louis traveller says: "While travelling in Mexico a few years ago, I had a funny experience with a Mexican vendor while I was on my way to some mines up in the mountains."

"At the station where we left the train to take the stage I saw an old woman selling some honey. She did not have more than ten pounds of it altogether, and it looked so good I wanted to buy it all to take along with us. I asked our interpreter to buy it. Much to my surprise, the old woman would sell him but two boxes, claiming that if she sold it all to him she would have nothing to sell to other people, neither would she have anything else to do during the remainder of the day."

This reminds us of an experience in the Adirondack woods a few years ago. The only storekeeper in the tiny village near us was induced by his summer customers to send for some turkey red calico. It turned out a great success, for those who had cottages bought it eagerly for cushions, curtains, etc. Indeed, there was quite a pilgrimage of buyers to the little store, and the calico went like wildfire. But the storekeeper did not approve of this active trade. When the first piece was sold, he refused to order more.

"It sells out so fast it's a sight of trouble," he said. "I only got it last week, and now it's gone." And no persuasion could induce him to change his mind!

A PARABLE OF LUCK.

A king in the East said to his minister:

"Do you believe in luck?"

"I do," said the minister.

"Can you prove it?" said the king.

"Yes, I can," said the minister.

So one night he tied up to the ceiling of a room a parcel containing peas mixed with diamonds. In the room were two men, one of whom believed in luck, and the other in human effort alone. The former quietly laid himself down on the ground, the latter after a series of efforts reached the parcel, and feeling in the dark the peas and stones, he ate the peas one by one and threw the diamonds at his companion, saying, "Here are the stones for your idleness."

In the morning the minister came with the king and bade each take to himself what he had got. The man of effort found that he had eaten every one of the peas. The man of luck quietly walked away with the diamonds.

The minister said to the king, "Sire, you see that there is such a thing as luck; but it is as rare as peas mixed with diamonds. So I would say—let none hope to live by luck!"

A thousand school-masters—industrial teachers—would do a hundred times more to keep the peace in the Philippines than a hundred thousand soldiers, and they would cost a hundred times less. Suppose we try what can be done in such populations by weapons that are not carnal. A peaceful invasion of arts and industries would greatly lessen the cost of armaments. And this is the way to get speedy and splendid returns. If we wish to extend our markets, then we must civilise these people and thus multiply their wants.—Independent.