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The Old Box Maker; or, Never put off
Till To-Morrow.

"I am to take the stage coach on Wednesday morning, and I must have it by six o'clock," said I to the old box-maker one Monday; so he promised—I was going to say, faithfully, but faithlessly would be the proper word—that by six o'clock on Wednesday the box should be delivered.

Well-knowing that too often a promise is but a poor pledge of performance, and fearing lest it should prove so with the old box-maker, I called on him the following morning, to see how he was getting on. He was hard at work at a heavy hair trunk. Now, working hard at a heavy hair trunk is not the way to make a light wooden box. I inquired further, but obtained nothing more than another promise, that at the time appointed, the box should be with me.

Notwithstanding these promises, I yet had my misgivings, and failed not

to look in about five o'clock in the afternoon, to see if the box was about to be sent off. "Show it to me," said I, "that I may be satisfied. If you have not finished it, what have you done towards it?"

Alas! alas! the old box-maker wished to set about it at the time I gave him the order; he then intended to begin it towards evening; and after that resolved that nothing should prevent his beginning and finishing it in the morning—yet still the box was not even begun! I could indeed have been very angry, but the thought occurred to me, that in many things I was quite as culpable as the old box-maker.

How many good things are never done, just because they are not begun! We know that many things, when once put in motion, keep on of themselves. Wind up the clock, and it will go on of itself for eight days longer; sow seed in the garden, whether you look at it again or not, it will grow