

procession. Both saw him at the same moment.

"It is the gentleman," said Nellie, in a low voice. "He promised to come and see us, and he has come!"

"Yes," replied Miss Page. "Let us go and meet him. We are glad to see you, Mr. Denison," she said, advancing with welcoming hand. "The children are going blackberrying, but Nellie got a splinter in her finger and I stayed to remove it. Would you like to come along with us?"

"Surely," replied the visitor. "But who is this fat little girl you have with you?"

"This is Nellie," answered the child, laughing. "I am fat. I can see it in the glass."

"You certainly are!" replied Peter. "But I thought you were only to remain for a fortnight?"

"Two kind ladies who go to see Grandma wanted me to stay," replied the child. "And she wanted it, too."

"The change is marvelous," said Peter who had deposited his luggage on the grass near the roadway.

"The blackberry patch is not far away," said Miss Page, "and there are loads of berries which the children are gathering for tea, and also for jam, when some kind friend sends us a supply of sugar."

"I shall be very glad to provide the sugar," replied Peter, putting his hand in his pocket and producing a gold piece, which he pressed between Nellie's little fingers.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said the child, giving the money to Miss Page.

"Perhaps, I may have a taste of the jam before I go," said Peter. "My grandmother used to make it, and I am particularly fond of it."

"Oh, but it takes hours and hours to cook," said Nellie. "And they won't begin to boil it till tomorrow morning. I think it will be late in the afternoon before it is done."

"But I have come to stay a week or more," rejoined Peter. "That is, if some one can find me a place to stop. In that case I'm sure I shall."

"That is good news," said Miss Page. "I am sure you will enjoy your visit. There will be no trouble about a lodging—there are several in the neighborhood." Then turning to the child she said, "Suppose we don't go blackberrying, Nellie, but take Mr. Denison over to the Bates house. I am almost sure they can take him in."

"Oh, yes, let's do that," said Nellie, and Peter said, "I have a package here which I would like to leave now. It's pretty heavy, and it's for you, Nellie, to divide with your young companions. A bucket of candy."

"And have you carried that heavy thing all the way from town?" asked Miss Page.

"Not altogether," replied Peter laughingly. "The boat carried it part of the way, and the stage part."

"You are a good man," said Nellie gravely, while the two elders smiled at her earnestness.

"Here, Milton!" called Miss Page to a boy who was moving nearby. "Take this to the house and leave it outside the door of my room. She pointed to the candy, which the boy lifted to his shoulder and conveyed to its destination. The three then turned in the direction of the farmhouse where Peter hoped to find lodging.

"I shall be looking forward to that jam, Nellie," said Peter as they proceeded.

"It will be good—very good," said the child. "Mrs. Bunker, she's the cook, can make very nice things. Do you know how to make jam, Mr. Denison?"

"Denison," said Peter. "Mr. Denison, do you know how to make it?"

"I'm afraid not, Nellie."

"I do—I watched her the other day."

"Well, how is it done?"

"First, you wash the berries very well indeed, in a large pan. Then you put them in the big kettle, mash and mash them, and put them on the stove with the fire not too hot. You have to weigh them—I forgot to say that. Some people put water with them, but that spoils them, Mrs. Bunker says, but it makes them go farther. The juice that comes out when they are mashed is quite enough, and they are much richer. When they come to a boil you put in as many pounds of sugar as there are berries, and let that come to a boil. Then you set them back on the stove over a teeny-weeny fire to simmer—no, simmer—four or five hours. Some ladies cook them fast, but Mrs. Bunker does not think that is the best way. And my, but her jam is good! She is going to give me a little pot of it to take home to grandmother."

"You make my mouth water. I can hardly wait for a taste of it," said Peter. (He had a small pot of his own to take to his boarding-house when the jam was done. Mrs. Bunker thought it none too good for the kind gentleman who had brought that huge bucket of candy.)

On Sunday Peter went to Mass at the little church, served once a month only from a large mission. He could hardly explain to himself the great pleasure he felt when Miss Page, at the head of a procession of children, walked up the side aisle to the four front pews, where she seated them, kneeling immediately behind them.

"As the Sisters do," thought Peter.

After Mass he took his place beside the lender. "I was very glad to learn that you were a Catholic!" he said, after they had exchanged greetings.

"The feeling was mutual," she replied. "It is wonderful, isn't it, what a fellow feeling we 'Papists' have when abroad, though at home we might attend the same church for years without taking any notice of each other."

"Yes, it is strange," said Peter. "And I suppose Nellie is also a Catholic. I see her back there with a rosary in her hand."

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Page. "Nellie is a good little Catholic; she has a prayer-book which belonged to her grandmother when she was a little girl."

"Poor lady!" said Peter. "Is she very old?"

"Yes, she is," replied Miss Page. "Nellie's mother must have been the child of her old age."

"Is she very poor?"

"Very poor."

"We must try to do something for them when we go back," said Peter, and Miss Page thought, "He has a tender and compassionate heart!"

The fortnight was nearly over. It was Sunday evening and Peter was about to take his departure in the morning. He had said good-bye to the children, including Nellie, who had clung to his hand, and lifted her face to be kissed, an invitation which Peter accepted with pleasure, not unaccompanied by embarrassment.

"Miss Page," he said, when the leave-takings were over, "will you come for a last short walk down the road?"

She turned at once to accompany him.

When they had passed the gate, he said: "Miss Page, I have taken a great fancy to Nellie. I do not wish to lose sight of her."

"And I am worried about her," said Miss Page.

"What is wrong?" inquired Peter. "She seems perfectly healthy, and I have never seen any one improve as she has since the first day I saw her."

"She is very well," replied Miss Page—"she really has improved wonderfully. But her grandmother died last week, and she has no home. We have not told her yet, not wishing to spoil her outing. But a home must be found for her at once or she will have to go to an asylum!"

"To an asylum!" exclaimed Peter. "I hate the thought of such places."

"People are eager to adopt infants, but it is not so easy to find a home for a child of Nellie's age. They often make drugges of the poor little creatures. Nellie is not strong, and she is unusually sweet and refined."

Peter did not reply immediately. He walked on with his eyes on the ground, his lips firmly set, as though in deep reflection. Miss Page, watching the tense expression of his countenance, wondering what thoughts were in his mind.

"Miss Page," he said at last, coming a step nearer and regarding her earnestly with his honest eyes, "I have just spent the happiest two weeks of my life since I was a little chap passing my vacation at my grandmother's. It has been a delight to me to be among these little children. I realize now that I have been a selfish man—unconsciously, perhaps—that I have not mingled enough with my fellow-men. But I mean to turn over a new leaf. Your kindness and self-abnegation have taught me a lesson."

"But I am paid for this work, Mr. Denison," replied Miss Page. "It is my vocation."

"No money could pay for such devotion as yours. You are a born mother. Why have you not married?"

"To tell the truth, I have never thought of it," she replied, as simply and frankly as Peter had spoken. "I am alone in the world," she continued. "I have been an orphan ever since I was five years old. So I can sympathize with children, like these. Don't you think it's time to turn back, Mr. Denison? It must be nearly ten, and the doors are locked at half-past."

Peter stood still. In the moonlight she could see his lips tremble. Finally, after what seemed to the listener a very long silence, he said: "Miss Page, I want to adopt one."

"Nellie. How can I get her?"

"Adopt her!" she exclaimed. "Send her to a good school until she is grown—a convent school—where she would spend her vacations, as I would have no home in which to receive her. Unless, my dear Mr. Denison," he went on hurriedly, taking her hand, and then, affrighted at his own temerity, dropping it again, "unless you will come and help take care of her. I think I fell in love with you that first day."

"Is this a proposal?" inquired his companion, with an arch glance. "It certainly is," replied Peter. She slipped her hand within his arm and looked up at him—he was tall—with a shy yet happy smile. "I shall be glad to help you take care of Nellie," she said.

RELIGION IN THE HOME

The only true guide of man on his voyage through life is religion. Reason helps him to seek and stay on his road, but if that road is to lead him to temporal and eternal happiness he needs religion "and must practise it." Next to the duty of Catholic parents' having the sacrament of baptism bestowed upon their children, indispensably necessary for salvation is the Christian training of their children. This Christian training must begin early. To wait until the child is of school age is too late. The parents themselves are the first instructors of the children in religion.

The religious foundation must be laid at the tender age of two and three years. At this age the children are like a piece of wax in the hands of parents. They can mould in whatever way they will. When a tree is young you can bend it in any direction you desire; when once it has become old, and is naturally deformed, it will be difficult to give it a shapely and rightly appearance. When a child is young it is susceptible or apt to respond to the untiring efforts of the mother to make her child a good Christian. It cannot be asserted too emphatically and repeated too frequently for Christian parents that the religious foundation must be laid during the tender age of the life of the child. Religion must, as it were, become part and parcel of its spiritual being, bone of its bone, flesh of its flesh. A pious priest says: "I can never forget the principles of religion which my parents instilled into my soul during the years of my infancy." Consequently, as soon as the child becomes capable of speech it should learn to utter the Holy Name of Jesus and the ever sweet name of the Mother of God. It should learn to make the sign of the cross, and know that it has a guardian angel continually by its side to guard and guide it, to shield it against dangers of body and soul. Parents should in all earnestness impress upon their children reverence and respect toward their guardian angel and urge them to follow his promptings. Parents desirous of making the most of their children, i. e., worthy and exemplary members of holy Church, and useful and model members of family and social life and an inspiration for those with whom they come in contact, must make this Christian education the prime factor in their life and must not let themselves grow remiss in the fulfilment of this duty, but must keep this parental care unceasingly before their minds and must bring themselves daily, and again and again, face to face with this Christian duty. Christian training is an art, and a difficult art, and not all parents succeed in the practise of this art. Experience tells us that even the best parents have made the saddest mistakes in the training of their children and that notwithstanding the untiring efforts on the part of parents to bring up their children good and pious, the children have turned out failures. It is a consolation, however, to know that this is the exception rather than the rule and that most parents are successful if they want to make it a success.

It is a time-honored custom and earnestly to be recommended for Christian parents to establish the pious practise of family devotions, to perform their prayers in common. This pious practise is bound more than all else to convert the home into a pious sanctuary. No day is begun without prayer, no meal is ended without prayer before any eaten without prayer before any after. To make their children feel at home, it is well for the parents to allow the oldest or the youngest to lead in prayer. This pious custom will have later on this advantage, when the children are grown up, that they are expected to be at home at the right time and the proper hour.—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

Reverence is an attitude of mind and heart that should be assiduously cultivated, especially by the young. To be irreverent means to miss the finest things in life and to be deprived of its sweetest joys.

I expect to pass through this life, but once. If there is any kindness or any good thing I can do my fellow beings, let me do it now. I shall not pass this way again.—William Penn.

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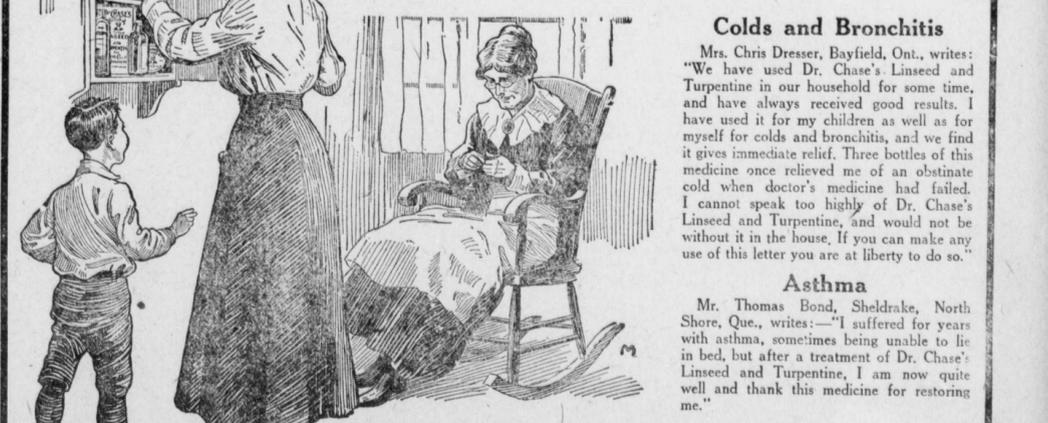
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