

I Can't!

If anything you need of T. I can't! He always said, I can't! And one fine day, there came 't' h'm A present from his aunt

It was a parrot, gaily and in white and red and green Tom said so fine a bird as his Had never yet been seen

He bought a cage, a splendid cage And placed the bird within He tried to make his parrot talk, But not a word could win

All nully the bird did sit A week passed by and now But not a single word he said Or all he learned before

"Oh, Polly, speak!" cried Tom one day, His bonnet the bird had hid from He tried to make his mouth he cried, I can't! I can't! I can't!

OUR PERIODICALS:

Table listing various periodicals such as Christian Guardian, Methodist Magazine, and others with their respective prices.

WILLIAM BRIDGES, Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto. C. W. COLTAR, S. F. HEZRA, 217 1/2 St. Catherine St., West End Book House, Toronto.

Pleasant Hours: A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 5, 1899

A JAPANESE SERVICE.

Boys and girls sometimes complain of having to keep quiet in church through a long service. Perhaps it would do them good to be obliged to take part, just once, in such a Japanese service as is described in the following.

THE PRICE OF A SOUL.

A gay young lady was deeply impressed with a sense of her sinfulness, and found no peace day or night. A brother who had always shared with her in worldly amusements was troubled and annoyed at her present state of mind.

unmoved. A short time afterwards she was also called away and she died as she had lived. The awakening from the frightful lethargy of sin was upon the dear precious soul for ever then. How stands the man? with your own soul? Is it safe in the good fold of a Saviour's love, or are you bartering it for bubbles upon time's ocean?

THE STAR THAT SHONE ABOVE THE TREES.

A boy's voice in grandmother Remick's kitchen was piping up clear and strong, and these were the words spoken.

"When marshalled on the nightly plain—"

"I forgot, grandmother." Grandmother Remick looked up, and her dark eyes shone behind her spectacles. "I'll tell you, Joseph, to say that by yourself again. You study it some more. If you're going to speak it to-night you want to know it by heart. There will be a good many in the school-house to-night."

Joseph went out into the back entry, and grandmother could hear the sound of his voice and the soft thud of his footsteps as he walked back and forth. "I've got it now, grandmother. He stooped up once more and said, without hesitation—"

"When marshalled on the nightly plain, The glittering host bestows the key, One star alone of all the train."

Then he said the other stanzas of this familiar hymn. Joseph was considered to be a very good singer when Grandmother Remick at the close said, "Very well done," she felt she did not repeat him. Then she added this, "You remember just like Nathan Brooks."

"Oh, a boy here once, but he has been gone twenty years. Only his mother left on the Brooks place. You know her."

The school-house was crowded the night of the Sunday-school concert. For lack of a church people at "the Corners" used the school-house, and they rallied in force to hear the young folks.

When Joseph had finished his "piece," Grandmother Remick nodded her head approvingly.

The next speaker was a man. He made some remarks. He said he was a stranger probably to almost every one present. He urged the young people starting now to make their lives just as good as possible.

"Have a high aim and stick to it," were his closing words. Grandmother again nodded her head approvingly. "His voice sounds natural, but I can't just seem to place him," she told herself.

After the service the people scattered promptly. Grandmother Remick was taken home in a neighbour's team. "I'll go across the fields," Joseph proposed.

It was a dark night but Joseph was used to going alone in the dark.

"What did he hear?"

A voice came from a tall form rising up in the shadows. "Can you tell me the way over to the 'Fore Road?' You could once go across the fields, but I have not travelled that way for many years. The trees may be grown up, and might be a little hard to find."

"Oh, I know the way," said Joseph, complacently. "I'll show you."

Joseph trudged through the fields, the stranger following closely.

"I see you just as far as I can see anything. This must be the old way," said Joseph's companion.

Soon he exclaimed, "Those trees don't look natural. Their shadowy forms throw up before him."

"Oh, that is a young growth of pines. But look!"

"Where?"

"Right over the tops of the trees! Don't you see that bright star?"

"Certainly!"

"That will bring us out on the 'Fore Road.'"

"I've noticed that is quite an idea."

"I've noticed that is just the same."

"Fore Road," I will repeat it to you." The journey through the young growth of pines was not a lengthy one. When Joseph was in the "Fore Road," they halted.

"There," said Joseph's companion, "I see where I am now. That house I can just make out is old Mr. Remick's—"

"Is he?" That's interesting. Well, you tell her I am Nathan Brooks, and am going to see my old mother."

"I mean your verse."

"When marshalled on the nightly plain."

"He good and follow that star."

When Joseph reached home he told his grandmother about the stranger.

"Indeed!" she exclaimed. "I might have known that. I thought he looked 'nat'ral."

Grandmother talked away, but Joseph was silent. He seemed to be absorbed in his thoughts.

"What are you thinking of, Joseph?" she asked at last.

"I—was thinking of this. He, Nathan Brooks, told about being good; and when he left me, said, 'Be good'—you know—"

Grandmother had a soft, loving hand. She laid it on Joseph's curly head. She had, too, a very pleasant voice.

"Joseph," she said, "there is one who helps us to be good: the Saviour, born at the east in the Star to follow. You look to-night; tell him all that is in your heart, ask him to forgive you, receive you, and make you his child. Do it to-night. Now!"

Soborly, thoughtfully, Joseph went upstairs to his little room under the roof, and next the big chimney, in Grandmother Remick's house. He looked out of the window near his bed.

"There it is! It is still open, I'll pray now."

Then he knelt by his bed. It was very still there under the roof. A boy looking to see if he gave himself away.

When he arose from his knees the star was still shining.—The Presbyterian.

THE TURN OF A HOSE.

BY EMMA C. POWD.

Mr. Randolph advertised for an office boy, whereupon seventeen applicants presented themselves.

The senior partner of the firm of Randolph & Co. was a shrewd business man, neat and orderly, honest and honourable in all his ways. When he cast his eyes over a boy, and noted dusty shoes or finger-nails that bore traces of yesterday's work and play, he dismissed him with few words.

It happened, therefore, that only five of the seventeen left their addresses with Mr. Randolph. Of these five one stood out prominently in the manufacturer's mind. This was Lynde Otis, a neatly-dressed, handsome lad, with an alert and pleasant countenance.

The longer Mr. Randolph thought of him the stronger grew his determination to give him the trial, and the testimony of a prominent tradesman that the boy was a good character in town added weight to his decision.

So a letter to Lynde Otis was penned and sealed, and lay on Mr. Randolph's desk in his little home-office—the tower room that overlooked his wide lawn and garden.

The gentleman wheeled about in his chair, and was about to take up a newspaper when his eye rested on a boys' paper that marked the boundary of the lawn, and Lynde Otis, and the face of the manufacturer lighted up pleasantly.

"A bright-looking boy!" he murmured, as he noted the laughing face that glanced to him from the paper.

Patrick, Mr. Randolph's man, had left the garden-hose stretched, snake-like, across the lawn, and from the open end was issuing a tiny stream of water. This was Patrick's way of keeping the grass fresh.

"He's after a drink!" thought the on-looker in the tower room, as he saw his future office boy step over the stone steps that marked the boundary of the lawn, and lift the end of the hose.

But, no, the quenching of thirst was not the aim of Master Otis. With a quick movement he turned the pipe and directed the stream of water toward the sidewalk. Then he ran to overtake his companion who had passed by and stood waiting for him a little ahead. The lad glanced back to survey his work, and

chucked as ladies and children picked their way over the wet flagging.

Mr. Randolph's face was grave and regretful, then he took the letter he had just written, and deliberately tearing it in two, dropped the pieces into the waste basket.

Another boy came up the street. His name was also on Mr. Randolph's list of five. The gentleman recognized him indifferently. Boys had slight interest for him, but not for this one.

But Thomas Gago's manner arrested his attention. He stopped at the wet place on the sidewalk, and in a moment appeared to have, in the situation, for lifting the end of the hose, he carefully laid it back on the lawn.

Mr. Randolph bent forward to scrutinize the lad as he proceeded up the street. Then he turned to his note-book. Against Thomas Gago's name he had written: "Tidy, respectful, but unattractive."

After a little thought, the senior partner wrote another letter, and it was addressed to Master Thomas Gago.

The next morning the lad who had turned the stream of water from sidewalk to lawn presented himself the second time at Mr. Randolph's office, and after a short conference with the gentleman who pleased both his employer and his fellow workmen.

From office-boy to book-keeper, from book-keeper to confidential clerk, and from confidential clerk to junior partner of the company, were the promotions that marked the career of Thomas Gago; but it was many years before he knew that the turn of a hose had had anything to do with securing his position, which had led to competence and honour.

A PARABLE.

One night a man took a little taper out of a drawer and lit it, and he began to ascend a long winding stair. "Where are you going," said the taper. "Away high up," said the man; "higher than the top of the house where we sleep."

"And what are you going to do there?" said the taper.

"I am going to show the ships out at sea where the harbour lies," said the man.

"How do you stand here in the situation, to the harbour, and some ships far out on the stormy sea may be looking out for light even now?"

"Alas! no ship could ever see my light," said the little taper, "it is so very small."

"If your light is small," said the man, "keep it burning bright, and leave the rest to me."

Well, when the man got up to the top of the house, for this was a light-house they were in, he took the little taper and with it lighted the great lamps that stood ready there with their polished reflectors behind them, so that the light of so small account, can you not see what God may do with it? Shine—and leave the rest to him.—The Wespriester.

A CRUEL CAPTAIN.

It would not occur to many people that a voyage in one of the swan-boats which sail the little pond in the public garden of New England could be attended with horrors; but that idea was firmly fixed in the mind of a small maiden of seven years.

"Would you like a ride in one of the swan-boats, Marjorie?" asked the little maiden's aunt, as they crossed the bridge over the pond one day.

"No, indeed!" said Marjorie, with sudden shrinking. "I couldn't bear to see them throw the babies in."

"The man says that's what he does?" she asserted, with rising excitement, as her aunt looked much perplexed. "Hear him—he's saying it now!"

"I am sure it is not a word of a truth, the man's statement, viewed from Marjorie's standpoint, was far from reassuring."

"Take a ride in the swan-boat!" he called, loudly, from the landing. "Grow up, you center children, five!" And then, with a deceptive smile, he added: "Babies thrown in."

Bennie had spoken aloud in church; and, to mamma's caution against doing it again, he exclaimed, "But mamma, when my mouth's so full of talk, I can't help it's leaking some!"

"Tommy," said the teacher to a pupil in the juvenile class, "what is syntax?"

"I guess it must be the task on whiskey," replied Tommy. And the teacher thought he was entitled to a credit of 100 per cent.