

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

ADJUSTING EXPENSE — A TRUE STORY

Brother and Sister Careful were seated by their cosy fire on New Year's day. They made a careful review of the year's receipts and expenses. The returns had not been what they had expected. The surplus was small. Then they began to talk about the year just beginning, and to lay plans. That which seemed to impress Brother Careful most was that "there must be retrenchment." They must economize, and they would as well begin it now as to wait. The sooner began the better.

"One thing sure, my dear," said Brother Careful, "we must cut down some of our expenses; we must spend less this year."

"Yes," said his wife, "we will have to deny ourselves of some things which we have enjoyed in the past. I have already begun to think what I shall deny myself."

"That's the way it has to be," said her husband, "and we might just as well decide what it is we shall cut off, and begin it now."

So the two sat silently meditating over their problem. After a few moments the good wife said:

"I have had my heart set on going to see my sister, and I don't see how I can abandon the idea. I haven't seen her in two years; and besides, the trip will be so full of pleasure I don't feel that I can give it up."

"No, my dear," said her husband, "you should, by all means, make that trip. The round trip is only forty dollars, and you certainly can afford that."

"But the railroad fare is only a part of it," she replied. "If I go it will require two or three extra dresses for the occasion, and quite a good lot of accessories."

"How much extra do you think it will require to fit you out?" he asked.

"Oh, about one hundred and fifty dollars. I think I can make out on that amount."

"Oh, well," said her husband, "if that is all, then we will count that as part of the year's plans. Is there nothing else you think of, my dear?"

"Well, our survey has been in use now two years, and the polish is about all gone. It looks as though we will just have to sell it, and buy a new one. Why, I am really ashamed to ride in it, and especially since the Highfliers have such a lovely one."

"Yes, indeed, we must have a new survey. I couldn't think of you driving to the club meetings in that old trap, and stopping it alongside the Highfliers' carriage. No, indeed, we'll get a new one. We can get a new one with the old one and two hundred dollars."

"Well, we will count that settled," said his wife. So they went over a good long list of things in which she was most interested, and found none that could be dispensed with, though some of them were pretty expensive.

They next took up the case of Brother Careful, to see what he could deny himself of, that expenses might be cut down. The trip to the grand lodge just must be made. He simply could not think cutting that out. He hadn't missed a session in six years, and though it usually cost him about seventy-five to a hundred dollars, he got his money's worth in pleasure. A long list was gone over, and nearly every thing seemed to be such that it "just must be." He could not give up his membership in the fishing and hunting club; he must keep up his lodge dues; his cigars and tobacco were necessities that could not be dispensed with, and

it began to look as though the economy and retrenchment could not be inaugurated.

After some moments of silence he spoke up, saying: "Wife, I have been thinking of our church expenses. It seems to me we have been altogether too profligate in that matter. Why, last year I paid our preacher twenty-five dollars, and gave five dollars for missions, and Brother Closest, who is worth twice as much as I am, only gave twenty dollars all told."

"Yes, but there was Sister Goodly, who isn't worth half so much as you, and she gave over fifty dollars."

"I know," he said, "but Sister Goodly is something of a fanatic in matters of that sort, and women are not supposed to rank one in business matters."

So the two sat and talked the matter over at great length, and finally decided to cut their contributions to the church expenses in half, and to stop their church paper, because times were so hard they "simply could not afford it." —Christian Courier.

FAITH FOR SIXPENCE.

I was walking along the streets of London one cold and wet night with a despondent friend, trying to cheer him, and longing to see a spark of hope kindled in his heart. In our walk we arrived at Victoria Station. While talking together a little child stepped forward and said, "Any lights, sir?"

"No, Topsy," I replied, "I don't want any; I don't smoke."

"Oh, but please, sir, do buy a box!" she persisted, in a pleading tone.

"No, no; run away, Topsy," I continued; "I have no use for lights."

But still she persisted. At last, seeing her earnestness, I asked her what she did all day, and at what time she was going home, for it was then past ten o'clock.

"Oh," she replied, "I go to school in the day, and after four o'clock I come out here."

"But why do not your father and mother take care of you?"

"Father has run away, and mother is ill in bed."

"And what do you come out here for?"

"I come and stay here till I have taken sixpence."

"But you don't always take sixpence, do you?"

"Yes, I do, sir."

"But you won't get sixpence tonight."

"Yes, I shall, sir."

"Well, how much have you now?"

She seemed inclined not to let me know, but I said, "Come, Topsy, you must tell me all about it." So, half afraid, she drew some coppers from a pocket in her cotton dress and counted out three pence halfpenny.

"Well, now, you will never get sixpence tonight," I said.

"Oh, yes, sir," she answered, "I shall; I always take home sixpence!"

"Now, Topsy, tell me what makes you so sure of getting sixpence?"

For some time she would not answer, but after a little pressing she said: "Because, before I come out, I kneel down by mother's bed and say the Lord's Prayer, and mother says our Father will help me to get sixpence; and He always does."

"Oh, but I thought you said your father had run away?"

"Don't you know, sir," she simply asked, "that we have a Father in heaven?"

"Yes, but you don't mean to say He hears you about a sixpence?"

"Yes, He does, sir; and He will send me sixpence."

"Well, if I were to give you twopence halfpenny, what would you do?"

"Why, sir, I would run home to mother, because my Father had given me all I asked for."

It was needless to say that the twopence halfpenny was produced, and suitably acknowledged by the little one, who merrily tripped home. I turned to my friend, who all this time had stood by without saying a word. Our glances met, and my only remark was, "There, H—, you have got your lesson." We forthwith separated—I to my bachelor's chambers, he to be led into hope and righteousness by the faith of a little child.—Selected.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO FISHED.

The little boy lived a long, long time ago. He went to school in a rough log schoolhouse and sat on a high board bench, without any back to lean against. And the bench was so very high that his small feet could not touch the floor. And, too, he had no desk on which his teacher could put pretty pictures and bright blocks and sticks for him to play with. He never sang pretty motion-songs or marched to sweet music.

So this little boy used to get very tired sitting still and doing nothing but swing his feet hour after hour. Once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon he went out on the floor and stood by his teacher and learned his A B C's, and how to spell "A-b, ab."

Don't you suppose he often thought of the shady woods, where the birds were singing and the squirrels scampering about, or of the silvery little brook that ran through the meadow in which the tiny minnows were darting around?

One day while he was twisting about on his high seat he spied a little gray mouse peeping out from a hole in the floor in the corner near him. He almost laughed out loud. Then he quickly pulled a piece of line out of his pocket and tied on it a bit of cheese from his dinner basket. Then he threw the line out as far as he could toward the mouse's door in the old floor.

It was not long before the teacher saw him. "Jimmie," said she, "what are you doing?"

"Fishing, ma'am," the little Jimmie answered, frightened.

"What are you fishing for?"

"For a mouse, ma'am."

The children all laughed; but little Jimmie didn't, for he saw that the teacher looked very sober.

"Very well," said she. "I will give you just five minutes to catch that mouse. If you don't get him in that time I'll have you punished for playing in school."

Jimmie sat very still, holding the line, his heart thumping very fast, and such a lump in his throat.

There was perfect silence in the little log schoolhouse. Every childish heart was full of sympathy for Jimmie. No one thought of laughing.

Pretty soon a pair of bright eyes peeped again out of the hole. The string lay so near and the cheese did smell so good! So the poor, foolish mouse—out he crept, nearer and still nearer, all unconscious of the eyes watching him. He took a dainty nibble—how good! He took another and another and—

"Oh, ma'am, I've caught him! Here he is!" shouted Jimmie, flinging the mouse up in the air, his tiny teeth stuck fast in the hard cheese.

Then the children laughed and clapped their hands so glad that Jimmie would not be punished. I am sure the teacher was glad, too.