

Peter, the tailor, would lend us his old boat for a shilling a week?"

It was clear that Rob had been carefully considering the details of this scheme of co-operation. And it was eagerly welcomed, not only by Neil, but also by the brothers Duncan and Nicol, who had been frightened by the thought of Rob going away to Glasgow. The youngest of all, Nicol, boldly declared that he could mend nets as well as any man in Erisaig.

No sooner was the scheme thoroughly discussed than it was determined, under Rob's direction, to set to work at once. The woman who kept the lodgings and cooked their food had intimated to them that they need be in no hurry to pay her for a week or two until they should find some employment; but they had need of money, or the equivalent of money, in other directions.

Might not old Peter, who was a grumbling and ill-tempered person, insist on being paid in advance? Then, before they could begin to make a net out of the torn and rejected pieces lying about the shed, they must needs have a ball of twine.

So Rob bade his brothers and cousin go away and get their rude fishing-rods and beat themselves to the rocks at the mouth of the harbor, and see what fish they could get for him during the afternoon.

Meanwhile, he himself went along to the shed which was used as a sort of storeroom by some of the fishermen; and here he found lying about plenty of pieces of net that had been cast aside in the process of mending.

This business of mending the nets is the last straw on the back of the tired-out fisherman. When he has met with an accident to his nets during the night—when he has fouled on some rocks in dragging them in, for example—it is a desperately fatiguing affair to set to work to mend them when he gets ashore, dead beat with the labors of the morning.

The fishermen—for what reason I do not know—will not intrust this work to their wives; they will rather, after having been out all night, keep at it themselves, though they drop off to sleep every few minutes. It is not to be wondered at, then, that often, instead of trying to laboriously mend holes here or there, they should cut out a large piece of torn net bodily and tuck on a fresh piece.

The consequence is, that in a place like Erisaig there is generally plenty of netting to be got for the asking; which is a good thing for gardeners who want to protect currant-bushes from the blackbirds, and who will take the trouble to patch the pieces together.

Rob was allowed to pick out a large number of pieces that he thought might serve his purpose; and these he carried off home. But then came the question of floats and sinkers. Sufficient pieces of cork to form the floats might in time be got about the beach; but the sinkers had all been removed from the cast-away netting.

In this extremity, Rob bethought of rigging up a couple of guy-poles, as the salmon-fishers call them, one for each end of the small seine he had in view; so that these guy-poles, with a lump of lead at the lower end, would keep the net vertical while it was being dragged through the water.

All this took up the best part of the afternoon; for he had to cudge about before he could get a couple of stout poles; and he had to bargain with the blacksmith for a lump of lead. Then he walked along to the point where the other MacNicoles were busy fishing.

They had been lucky with their lines and bait. On the rocks beside them lay two or three small codling, a large flounder, two good-sized lythe, and nearly a dozen saithe. Rob got hold of these; washed them clean to make them look fresh and smart; put a string through their gills, and marched off with them to the village.

He felt no shame in trying to sell fish; it was not the whole trade of the village. He walked into the grocer's shop.

"Will ye buy some fish?" said he; "they're fresh."

The grocer looked at them.

"What do you want?"

"A ball of twine."

"Let me tell ye this, Rob," said the grocer, severely; "that a lad in your place should be thinking of something else than fleecing a dragon."

"I dinna want to fleec any dragon," said Rob; "I want to mend a net."

"Oh, that is quite different," said the grocer; "and then he added, with a good natured laugh, "Are ye going to be a fisherman, Rob?"

"I will see," Rob said.

So he had his ball of twine—and a very large one it was. Off he set to his companions.

"Come away, boys, I have other work for ye. Now, Nicol, my man, ye'll show us what ye can do in the mending of nets. Ye havena been telling lies!"

Well, it took them several days of very hard and constant work before they rigged up something resembling a small seine; and then Rob affixed his guy-poles; and they went to the grocer and got from him a lot of old rope on the promise to give him a few fresh fish whenever they happened to have a good haul. Then Rob proceeded to his fateful interview with Peter, the tailor.

Peter was a sour-visaged, gray-headed old man, who wore horn-rimmed spectacles. He was sitting cross-legged on his bench when Rob entered.

"Peter, will ye lend me your boat?"

"I will not."

"Why will ye no lend me the boat?"

"Do I wan't it sunk, as ye sunk that boat the other day? Go away with ye. Ye're an idle lot, ye MacNicoles. Ye'll be drowned some day."

"We want it for the fishing, Peter," said Rob, who took no notice of the tailor's ill-temper. "I'll give ye a shilling a week for the loan o't."

"A shilling a week?" said Peter with a laugh. "A shilling a week? Where's your shilling?"

"There," said Rob, putting it plump down on the bench.

The tailor looked at the shilling; took it up, bit it, and put it in his pocket.

"Very well," said he; "but mind, if ye sink my boat, ye'll have three pounds to pay."

Rob went back eager and joyous. Forthwith, a thorough inspection of the boat was set about by the lads in conjunction; they tested the oars; they tested the thole-pins; they had a new piece of cork put into the bottom. For that evening, when it grew a little more toward dusk, they would make their first cast with their net.

Yes; and that evening, when it had quite turned to dusk, the people of Erisaig were startled with a new proclamation. It was Neil MacNicol, standing in front of the cottages, and boldly calling forth these words:

"Is there any one wanting cuddies? There are cuddies to be sold at the West Slip, for a six pence a hundred!"

*Fleecing a dragon—flying a kite.*

*(To be Continued.)*

THE EYE-GLASS VENDOR.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

Two men, strangers to each other, one day fell into conversation at the dining table of a public-house.

The talk ran, naturally, from the business outlook to politics, and in talking up the different issues the temperance question was discussed quite warmly.

The younger man was for prohibition, and in support of his argument said: "Now let me tell you, sir: Even in my little business of selling eye-glasses and spectacles from house to house through every town in this State the advantage of a prohibition town over one where licenses are granted is most marked. For instance there is South Dillingfield, a no-license town from the beginning. There are no very wealthy people there but nearly every family lives in their own neat, pretty little home. The women and children are well dressed, the houses are comfortably furnished. There are good gardens and plots of blossoming flowers before the doors. A sewing machine in nearly every house, and the women are busy fashioning garments or about some dainty bit of fancy work that is to lend a new charm to the home. There are good schools in that village, a flourishing church and Sunday-school, and about everything a pervading air of independence, prosperity and self-respect. Trade is always good with me there. I sell not only cheap bowled glasses but those with bows of shell and gold as well, and they buy cords and chains and pins. But the good trade is not the best part of my day there. I get full of bright temperance thoughts and ideas that I peddle all

along my route. Public sentiment in Dillingfield is all based on thorough temperance principles. There is a temperance society, a Band of Hope, and the subject is kept alive and fresh before the people. I tell you when an excursion goes from that town to Black Island or any other place of resort the young men do not all come home the worse for liquor, as I saw a car full the other day at a place twenty miles below Dillingfield, a village of about the same number of inhabitants and with the same industries. There are two hotels and a half dozen saloons in this latter place, and the proprietors of these drinking places are the only ones who have money to buy eye-glasses. The state of affairs in that village is pitiable. Public sentiment is dead from run from its cradle. Misery and squalor are everywhere. I tell you, sir, that little village is a missionary field for some one. The women and children are weary and sad-eyed. The face of one of these women has haunted me ever since my last visit. She was a quiet, ladylike person, who I was sure must have been better days. Her small room was tidy, and she herself was neatly dressed with a bit of something white about her throat. She was sewing diligently, and I took note at once that her eye-glasses did not fit her at all. I told her so and she admitted the fact but added, "They will have to do. They were my father's, and I am glad to have even them."

"But the old fashioned heavy brass-horns are wearing a dint upon your nose," I said laughing. "Do let me sell you a lighter pair and a younger; you need a number twenty," but she shook her head again saying:

"I know all that, but there is no use in talking; I cannot purchase." She was so quiet and decided that there was nothing I could do but to go, yet I have felt conscience stricken ever since that I did not give that poor woman a pair of glasses. I inquired about her later and heard that her husband had formerly been an owner in the mill but drink had ruined him; he has pawned everything of value that he possessed and would even pawn those brass bowled glasses were they worth the value of a glass of whiskey. Now, sir, in those two villages you have the whole effect of license and no-license set before you."

The older man had finished his dinner and now sat with his hands clasped upon the table paying the young eye-glass vendor the closest attention.

"You are quite a temperance lecturer," he said, in a half mocking tone, "but,—"

"I beg pardon, papa," said a young girl who sat beside him and who had also closely followed the young man's talk, "it seems to me there are no 'but's' in this case. I want to ask, if the mill-owners in this last village understood the better state of affairs at the prohibition village where the pennies and dollars go for comforts instead of for liquor would not they make the attempt at least to have no-license in their town another year?"

"I think not," replied the young man respectfully, "and I will tell you why. I have been told that the mill owners themselves carry on the liquor business, and the money they pay for wages comes right back to their own coffers for rum, and while their wives and daughters dress in satins and seekings and enjoy every advantage of ease and luxury, the wives of the poor operatives have to suffer."

"Deplorable!" said the young girl; "and what is the name of this town?"

"Ware-House Neck," said the vendor. "There are old drunkards there, sitting round the hotel, who are seventy-five and eighty years old, fairly pickled in liquor."

The young girl gave a start, bit her lip, looked at her father, but said nothing as she rose from the table, and the old gentleman only added:

"You make good use of your tongue and of the knowledge you pick up here and there, young man."

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "I have decided opinions, and when I am pretty sure they are on the side of truth, right, humanity, and integrity I do not hesitate to express them. No one can tell where a good seed will take root; it is the safe way to scatter as you go, lest you should lose an opportunity. Good-day."

A year later, as the young man was making his annual round, he could hardly believe his eyes as he entered the village of Ware-House Neck. There was not a dram shop in the place. The streets were cleaned,

new side-walks made, fences repaired, gates hung anew, houses freshly painted! The glasses vendor could hardly believe his eyes. Almost the first house he entered was that of the woman who had so excited his sympathy a year before.

"Ah! you have new glasses," he said in the ready pleasant way that always won him customers, "and yet you would not buy of me a year ago."

The woman knew him at once, and said with a smile, "These were a present a year ago from Miss Edith, the daughter of the owner of the mill, and her father charged me when you came again to be sure and send you at once to him; he lives in the great house on the hill yonder."

Supposing something in the way of his trade was required, he went as requested. It was quite a pretentious mansion and had always been closed on the young man's previous visits. Being shown into the library, what was his surprise to find his table acquaintance of the year before.

"You set out my business and my village to my daughter in fine style that day, young man," said the master of the house, rising and extending his hand. "I was sure you would come, and I have waited for you patiently. Edith says the Lord set you down to the table with us that day, and led the conversation for her benefit. You see she has had no mother since she was an infant and had never been here to this home. She came from the school where she had been educated with a heart full of zeal to engage in some work for the Lord, and it was given you to show her the duty lying nearest her hand. As it had been the chief object of my life to accumulate wealth for my daughter, I have, since she came home, found my chief joy in gratifying her wishes, and you see some of the results in the general appearance of the village. But the greatest change is in me. I gave up wine at my table, then I gave up tobacco, and seeing the beneficial results of temperance living in these people all about me, and in observing my young daughter's beautiful life, I have been brought to feel the need of that Saviour who is able to cleanse even such a sinner as I am, and to indulge in a hope that through his love I may be accounted worthy to take a part in his work."

"Now, since you talked temperance to such good advantage to me that day, I have wanted you to come here and educate public sentiment until every child in this village shall have the ground-work of his character based on firm unswerving temperance principles. I will pay you a salary and you can, if you please, make your home here."

The young man accepted the work at first as a temporary arrangement in which he might perhaps sow seed in good ground; but as time went on, he, with the full sanction of the rich manufacturer, became the husband of Miss Edith, and now they carry out together many good schemes for the benefit of the poor, the lowly, the uncared for, and in their own village and elsewhere they make the underlying principle of their work—whatever it may be—that of Christian temperance.—Church and Home.

THE KITCHEN.—Last in the thoughts of many, the kitchen should come first in the thoughts of all who wish to keep house successfully. Far from being an unimportant factor in the comfort of the family, it plays a part really superior to the parlor. Yet how much is lavishly spent to make that room beautiful and attractive in houses where the kitchen is damp, dark, small, and insufficiently supplied with conveniences for doing the housework. See to it, friends, that the kitchen utensils are whole, in good order, and handy to use. If you cannot have the new chair, the dainty vase, the longed-for rug for the drawing-room, have at least enough spiders, sawn-frames, pots and gridirons for the easy preparation of the meals. Let the kitchen be well-lighted and cheerful, with a painted floor, if possible, or a bright, thick oil-cloth. Have one strong, large table, and a couple of smaller ones, with chairs that are comfortable as well as serviceable. I believe in making the kitchen an inviting place, and in keeping its appliances up to the times, just as a farmer insists on having the latest labor-saving contrivances in his fields and barns. Far too many women spend their energies wastefully in "making things do," after the things in question are worn out and fit for the junk-shop. This is mistaken economy.—Selected.