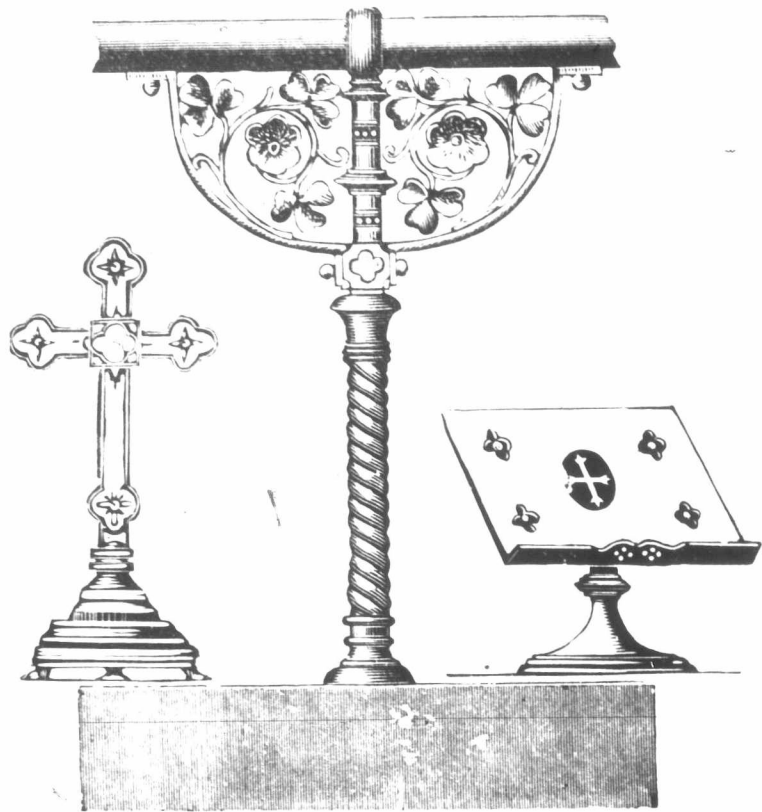


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White as Snow.

"Herbert," said Mrs. Stanley, going to the door with a pan of coal ashes, "take these and scatter them along the garden path."

"Oh, mother, please, I'd rather not," replied Herbert.

"But I want the pan," urged Mrs. Stanley, surprised that her boy should hesitate, "and it does not seem necessary for you to tramp through the snowdrifts to the ash heap; besides, it might come off cold and be slippery."

"Couldn't I put them somewhere else?" pleaded Herbert, the tears starting to his eyes.

"Well, I suppose you might find some place in the coal cellar to empty the pan; but why not strew the ashes in the path, Herbert?" said Mrs. Stanley.

"Because, mother," replied Herbert, "the snow is so beautiful, and this morning when the sun shone down it sparkled as if it had been sprinkled with diamonds. It is so pure and white that I don't like to fling ashes all over it and make it look dingy. I'll shovel the snow all out of the path so it won't be slippery."

"You are right, Herbert," said Mrs. Stanley, "it is a pity to soil the beautiful snow, and we will keep the little space around our house clean and white as long as we can. We won't mar the beauty that God has surrounded us with. You may put the ashes where you please, for I see that it is purely from a love for neatness and beauty that you object to throwing them on the snow, and not from any desire to avoid doing work."

While Herbert went off to the cellar

with the ashes Mrs. Stanley stood by the window and gazed out upon the picture. The quiet country village in its dazzling white robe looked as if it were fresh from the hand of God. It was indeed beautiful, and the mother could but feel proud of her boy for his appreciation of it.

When Herbert returned Mrs. Stanley called him to her side and putting her arms around him said, "I didn't suppose boys cared much how the snow looked so long as they had plenty of fun."

"Oh, yes, they do," replied Herbert, "Tom Jones says it makes him angry whenever their hired girl throws things out on the snow, and I am always wishing that it would stay clean and white as long as it lasts."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Stanley, "we haven't much of this world's goods, but you and I have been very happy together, and I shall always be a happy mother if you will let the beautiful things and the pure things rule your life. I want you to love them,

to cultivate a taste for them. I want your life to be pure. God wants it to be just as white as the snow; and remember this, dear, that every evil thought you think, every bad act you do, and every wicked word you speak is just like throwing ashes on the snow; each leaves an ugly stain; each somehow gets ground to your life and in becomes a part of it. Keep your heart pure; let it be so full of good that evil things can find no place to enter. Don't soil your lips with one impure word. Choose your companions from those who love what is good and pure. Your better nature will plead in your hour of weakness just as you plead for the snow to-day. Mother cannot always be with you to shield you from the rough world, but there is One who ever stands near. If you will let Him, He will make your life pure and happy, for He it is who says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.'

The Archduke and the Gypsy.

An incident of the Austro-Prussian war of 1865 was told by the Archduke Joseph to a party of friends, which shows how much can be gained by observing nature. He said: "On our retreat before the advance of the Prussian army, we camped in the neighbourhood of a Bohemian town. I was lodged in a peasant's cottage, when, about midnight, I heard the sentry challenging some new comer. My adjutant entered and reported that a gypsy wanted to see me in private. A soldier (a gypsy) entered, and on my asking what was the matter, he told me the enemy was approaching to surprise us. 'The outposts have not heard anything suspicious,' I said. 'No your Highness, because the enemy is still a long way off.' 'But how do you know this?' I asked. 'Come to the window, your Highness,' answered the man. 'Do you see those birds flying over the wood toward the south?' 'Yes, I see them, what then?' 'What then? Do not birds sleep as well as men? They would certainly not fly about if they were not disturbed. The enemy is marching through the wood, and has frightened all those birds.' 'Very well, my lad; you can go.' I at once ordered the outposts to be reinforced, and the camp to be alarmed. An hour later the outposts were fighting with the enemy, and our camp was only saved by a keen observation of a simple gypsy." Boys, be observant. Cultivate the faculty. Hear sharply, look keenly.

A Bright Boy.

I knew a boy, a scrap of a lad, who almost needed a high chair to bring him up to the general level of the dining-table, who liked to read the encyclopædia. He was always hunting around in the big books of the encyclo-

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pædia—books about his own size—for what he wanted to know. He dug in it as another boy would dig in the woods for sassafras root. It appeared that he was interested in natural history and natural phenomena. He asked questions of these books exactly as he would ask a living authority, and kept at it till he got answers. He knew how to read. Soon that boy was an authority on earthquakes. He liked to have the conversation at table turn to earthquakes, for then he seemed to be the tallest person at the table. I suppose there was no earthquake anywhere of any importance but that he could tell where it occurred, and what damage it did, how many houses it buried, and how many people it killed, and what shape it left the country it had shaken. From that he went on to try to discover what caused these disturbances; and this led him into other investigations, and at last into the study of electricity, practically as well as theoretically. He examined machines and invented machines, and kept on reading; and presently he was an expert in electricity. He knew how to put in wires, and signals and bells, and to do a number of practical and useful things; and almost before he was able to enter the high school he had a great deal of work to do in the city, and three or four men under him. These men under him had not read as much about electricity as he had.

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