

Our Young Folks.

A BIT OF WISDOM.

"Grasp the nettle with both hands,
And it shall not sting.
Take this bit of wisdom, dear,
Into every thing.
If the lesson's long and hard,
At it with your might!
Do not let it conquer you
While you've strength to fight.

Foolish people stand and fret,
Wonder what to do,
Bear their trouble twenty times—
Such a silly crew!
Get the trial over, dear;
Never frown and pout;
With a brave and steady look
Put the foe to rout.

Carry not to-morrow's load,
Little heart, to-day;
Trip with happy feet along
Life's uneven way.
"Grasp the nettle with both hands,
And it shall not sting."
Take this bit of wisdom, dear,
Into every thing.

THE STORY OF THE EYE.

A detective who had been very successful in discovering and arresting criminals under every disguise, said lately, "I have but one rule to guide me. I obtain a picture of the man and examine his eye. Then I search for that eye. Every other feature of his face, together with his height, his size, his dress, he can alter. But his eye he cannot change. That tells the story."

A gentleman who has long made a study of amateur photography, asserts that its chief interest to him lies in the unconscious revelation of character in a photographed face. "If a man has any noble or mean traits latent in his nature, unknown to the world, it comes out in his photograph."

Hawthorne declared that dominant family traits and likenesses were always revealed in these sun-drawn pictures, even though they might not be visible on the real faces of the sitters.

These assertions, if correct, only illustrate a truth as old as mankind; that as years go by, the character of a man writes itself indelibly upon his face.

Not only the actions, whether mean or noble, but the secret thoughts, which are never put into deeds—the sensual imagination, the cruel purpose, the lofty hope, the kind feeling—all these record themselves upon the features, or at some unexpected moment peep out at the world from behind the eye.

The sin which we welcomed as a pleasant guest in youth may be hateful to us in middle age, but we can never again make it a stranger to us. Some look or mark in our faces betrays to a keen observer that we were once very familiar with it.

Among the superstitious legends of the Scotch there are many stories of an unclean, wicked little fairy, who obtained entrance to a house, and lived thereafter in the cellars and coal bins, taking a mischievous part in family life.

His persecutions became so intolerable to one household we are told, that they hired a new dwelling, and at great loss "flitted" from their old house, going secretly by night, to escape their tormentor. But when the cart with their movables entered the gate of the new home, the shrill, hateful voice of the wicked fairy was heard from among them, crying, "Here we are!"

The legend hints at a terrible truth. How many men have rushed from one occupation to another, from home to home, from country to country, to escape some vice or habit which had grown loathsome to them! Alas, they could not travel away from themselves.

God's grace, it is true, can banish the evil spirit from the heart, but the mark of its footprint remains upon the threshold while life lasts. It is in youth that we must shut the door if we would keep that inner chamber undefiled.

JUST A LITTLE.

"Only just a little, a very, very little!" said the brook to the bank.

And the bank was silent, and the brook wore its sides till the earth melted away and the sods floated down the same stream.

"Just a little more, a very little more!" said the brook again.

And the waters pressed against the roots of the willows that grew beyond the bank, and laid them bare.

"Just a little more," said the brook again.

And the widening stream advanced with fresh force till, one by one the willows fell, and were borne away in the torrent.

"Alas!" cried the meadow, as the waters closed in on it, "if I had not neglected the first attack on my bank, my fence would never have been destroyed; but now my protection is gone, and I am rightly served in being turned from a fruitful field into a watery waste."

It is always so with the beginning of evil. Yielded to "just a little," by-and-by it claims the whole.

GEORGE WISHART.

Spanning one of the streets of the Scottish Dundee there is an old arch, the solitary relic of the walls which in the olden time, according to the prevailing custom, encircled the town. Carefully has this old arch been preserved, for there is an interesting story associated with it—a story connected with a notable period in our country's history.

In the year 1544 Dundee was visited by that terrible scourge, "the plague." You have read, no doubt, of its awful ravages in London more than a hundred years later, when no fewer than twenty-six thousand persons were cut off in a single month. Though the visitation from which Dundee suffered, in the year referred to, was not so severe, it was yet sufficiently deadly. Having once found entrance, the fearful malady spread itself with frightful rapidity, till in the end comparatively few families escaped. The poor, as might be expected, suffered most, but the rich were by no means passed by. It laid its fatal hand on all, showing itself no "respector of persons." As many as could made haste to quit the scene. In all directions young and old, with terror-stricken countenances, sought to escape the dreaded foe by flight.

Now at this time lived that great and good man, whose name even now we honour and revere, George Wishart. He was one of those raised up by God to make known the pure Gospel, which (preached by the early Celtic missionaries) had for long, long years been hidden away under the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome. A man of rare saintliness of character he seems to have been. He has been described as "a tall man, black-haired, long-bearded, comely of personage, well spoken of by his country of Scotland, courteous, lowly, lovely, glad to teach, and very charitable to the poor." Like the Master in whose steps he sought to walk, he would sometimes spend whole nights in prayer. And such was his benevolence that he not only freely parted with his money, but often parted even with his clothes to relieve the destitute; while, as a preacher of the new evangel, he wielded over the hearts of those who listened to him a winning power by his sweet persuasiveness.

When Wishart heard of the sad state of affairs in Dundee, he resolved to hasten with all speed to the help of the suffering and the dying. And on his arrival he caused it to be announced that he would preach at the East-gate or Cowgate the following day, where, in response to his invitation, a large congregation assembled to hear from his lips the words of eternal life. Without the gate stood those infected of the plague, while within stood those who had as yet escaped its dreaded touch. The text from which Wishart on this memorable occasion discoursed was eminently appropriate to the circumstances, viz., Psalm cvii. 20: "He sent His word and healed them." "It is neither herb nor plaister, O Lord," he exclaimed, in the quaint Scotch tongue of the day, "but Thy word that heals all." Listening to him the poor stricken people learned that there was another and a worse plague than that which had wrought such desolation in their midst. You know what plague he meant? He referred to the plague of sin.

Comparatively few homes in Dundee, as has been said, escaped in that dark year the awful visitant. There were some, however, that did. And even when it entered a home, it did not necessarily lay its hand upon all the inmates. In a strange, capricious way it would seize upon one and pass another by. But not so with the plague of sin. Its poison had entered into them, every one. Had he asked those infected by it to stand on one side of the gate, and those who were free from its infection to stand on the other, what then? The whole congregation had been compelled to stand together on the same side. Not one of them could have presumed to stand apart as claiming freedom.

And then, what a deadly plague this plague of sin is! We talk about the healing power of nature, meaning by that, the power it possesses of shaking off disease and effecting self-recovery. No doubt many of those poor sufferers, in virtue of this healing power, fought and overcame the assailing foe. Without physician's aid they won their way back from sickness to health. But no such power did any one of them possess to throw off the plague of sin. It had too firm a hold. Let alone, it could have but the one end. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

But here was the glad part of the preacher's message. Whereas for the one plague no remedy had been discovered, for the other a sure remedy had been found. Wishart could tell them of Jesus, and of the healing virtue there is in Him for all sin-stricken souls. One of the names He wears is this, "the Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And to this end was the Word, in the fulness of time, sent into our world, that from Him, lifted up for our sins upon the cross, healing power might go forth, as from the uplifted serpent of brass to the smitten Israelites. He is, in virtue of His cross, Jehovah-Rophek, "the Lord, the healer." And to His healing power there is no limit. There is no case so desperate as to be beyond His divine skill. "He is able to save to the uttermost."

All this and more that eager audience heard that day from Wishart's lips. And his words made them glad. There at the city gate they had the fear of death taken away, for they learned that to the true believer in Jesus "death is the gate of life." Says John Knox, with reference to this sermon. "He raised up the hearts of all that heard them, that they regarded not death, but judged them mair happie that sould depairt, than sic as sould remaine behind."

ORDER.

"Where's my hat?"

"Who's seen my knife?"

"Who turned my coat the wrong side out and threw it under the lounge?"

"There you go, my boy! When you came to the house last evening you flung your hat across the room, jumped out of your shoes and kicked 'em right and left, wriggled out of your coat and gave it a toss; and now you are annoyed because each article hasn't gathered itself into a chair to be ready for you when you dress in the morning."

"Who cut those shoe-strings?"

You did it to save one minute's time in untying them! Your knife is under the bed, where it rolled when you hopped, skipped and jumped out of your clothes.

Your collar is down behind the bureau, one of your socks on the foot of the bed, and your vest may be in the kitchen wood-box for all you know.

Now, my way has always been the easiest way. I had rather fling my hat down than hang it up; I'd rather kick my boots under the lounge than place 'em in the hall; I'd rather run the risk of spoiling a new coat than to change it.

I own right up to being reckless and slovenly—but, ah, me, haven't I had to pay for it ten times over? Now, set your feet right down and determine to have order. It is a trait that can be acquired.

An orderly man can make two suits of clothes last longer and look better than a slovenly man can do with four. He can save an hour per day over the man who flings things helter-skelter. He stands twice the chance to get a situation and keep it, and is much more likely to conduct his business with profit.

An orderly man will be an accurate man. If he is a carpenter, every joint will fit. If he is a turner, his goods will look neat. If he is a merchant, his books will neither show blots nor errors. An orderly man is usually an economical man, and always a prudent one. If you should ask me how to become rich, I should answer:

"Be orderly—be accurate."

WORK FOR CHEERFULNESS.

To keep the face cheerful, the voice cheerful, to do good like medicine, we must keep the heart cheerful. This is not an easy matter. One does not simply have to say, "I will be cheerful," and then have it so. He has to work for cheerfulness, just as he works to be honest, or kind, or brave, or learned. He must be looking out for bright things to see and do. He must deliberately, yet quickly, choose which things he will think about, and how. He has to shut his teeth, as it were, sometimes, and turn away from the gloomy things, and do something to bring back the cheerful spirit again. If we are cheerful for others, we are doing for ourselves. Good given means good sent back. Cheerfulness can become a habit, and habit sometimes helps us over hard places. A cheerful heart seeth cheerful things.

A lady and gentlemen were in a lumber yard, situated by a dirty, foul-smelling river. The lady said:

"How good the pine boards smell?"

"Pine boards!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Just smell this foul river?"

"Thank you," the lady replied, "I prefer to smell the pine boards."

And she was right. If she, or we, can carry this principle through our entire living, we shall have the cheerful heart, the cheerful voice, and cheerful face.

USE YOUR LEISURE.

"The Devil finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Dean Stanley gives the following advice, which will enable us not only to keep the Devil out of our leisure hours, but make them serve the good.

Leisure misused—an idle hour waiting to be employed, idle hands with no occupation, idle and empty minds with nothing to think; these are the main temptations to evil. Fill up that empty void, employ these vacant hours, occupy these listless hands; the evil will depart, because it has no place to enter in, because it is conquered by good. The best antidote against evil of all kinds, against the needless perplexities which distract the conscience, is to keep hold of the good we have. Impure thoughts will not stand against pure words and prayers and deeds. Little doubts will not avail against great certainties. Fix your attention on things above, and then you will be less troubled by the cares, the temptations, the troubles of things on earth.

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST.

A beautiful statue stands in the market-place. It is that of a Greek slave-girl, but she is well dressed, tidy and handsome. A dirty, forlorn, ragged slave-girl passes by. She sees the statue, stops and gazes at it in rapt admiration. She goes home, washes her face and combs her hair. Another day she stops, in passing, to look at the statue. Next day her tattered clothes are washed and mended. Each day she stops to look at the statue, and each next day she has imitated some of its beauties, until the dirty ragged slave becomes completely transformed, she becomes another girl. This is the way Christ teaches. He does not hurl His own individuality upon others; He simply lives and works and loves before men, not to be seen of them, but to inspire them to a holy emulation.