

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

THE WINDOW BEHIND THE BRANCHES.

It was a great trial to Kenneth that he was not so big and strong as his brother Harry. It would have been strange if he had been, for Harry was four years older, and those four years counted for a good deal. But Kenneth was anxious to do whatever Harry did, and to do it in the same way.

There came a day in school that brought a test of another sort. Kenneth went out into the yard one bright spring afternoon to get a drink of water, and as he passed back into the building again, shied a stone that he had picked up into the branches of a big tree in the next yard.

Before school began the next morning, the principal had a call from the man who lived in the house next to the school building. He reported with some indignation that one of his windows, on the side toward the school-yard, had been broken by a stone, and he wanted to have the boy punished who had done it.

"Do you know at what time of the day it was done?" the principal asked. "No, I don't," was the reply. "My family were away all day, and it was not until night that we discovered it." The principal shook his head. "I am afraid it will be hard work to find the boy," he said.

That was how it happened that the principal went into every room that day, asking if any boy had thrown the stone which had broken the window. In every room there were denials from all the boys, until the principal reached Kenneth's room.

Kenneth had never thought that his stone might break a window, but when the principal told what had happened, he had an uncomfortable certainty that he was the boy who was to blame. Evidently there was a window behind the branches of the big tree.

"But you're not sure of that," a voice whispered to him, adding, a moment later, "And nobody saw you do it. If you say no, they'll never know the difference."

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Honorable Conduct.

In November, 1841, the mercantile house of Sheldon Bros. & Co., of Boston, found it necessary to suspend payment of their debts, and to close up the business of the firm. Their creditors, after an investigation of their concerns, agreed to receive 50 per cent. of the amount of their respective demands, and release the house entirely from their obligations.

Some time after the failure of the house, Mr. Henry Sheldon, one of the partners died. Mr. Philo. S. Shelton, the surviving partner, proceeded, with undoubted and persevering energy, to wind up the concerns of the old firm, and to commence business anew, on his own account. In his enterprise he has been prosperous, and soon made a new dividend of 25 per cent. among all his creditors, upon the full amount of their cancelled demands against the original house, paying out to them the aggregate sum of \$40,000 for which they had no legal claim upon him whatever.

It is an awkward thing to begin the world without a dollar—and yet hundreds of individuals have raised large fortunes from a single shilling. We know a gentleman, a builder, in an extensive way of business, now well worth \$100,000, who was a bricklayer's laborer some six years ago, at \$1 per day. He became rich by acting upon principle. He has frequently assured me that even when he was in ill-paid employment he continued to save 50 cents per day, and thus laid up \$182 the first year.

Another extensive firm, one of which has since died, and left behind him an immense property, the other is still alive, has realized as much, and yet both these landed in New York without a cent, and swept the very shop wherein both afterwards made their fortunes. Like the builder whom we have just mentioned, they possessed an indomitable spirit of industry, perseverance and frugality, and the first dollar became in consequence the foundation of a million more.

The world at large would call these individuals fortunate, and ascribe their property to good luck; but the world would be very wrong to do so. If there was any luck at all in the matter it was the luck of possessing clear heads and active hands, by which means multitudes of others have carved out their own fortunes, as well as those instances we have above cited. But the word business means habit. Paradoxical as it may seem at first sight, business is nothing in the world except habit—the soul of which is regularity. Like the fly-wheel upon a steam engine, this last keeps up the motion of life steady and unbroken, thereby enabling the machine to do its work without this irregularity, your notions as a merchant may be capital, but never will be profitable.

Developing Skill by Practice. Some of the lighter forms of amusement that appear almost trivial would have educational value if they should be used to reflect upon the almost marvelous skill that can be developed by practice. The gymnasts and acrobats who amuse us in a vaudeville show by their exhibitions of skill have no special gift and are very often below the average intelligence of man, but by daily practice for years they have developed their muscles to a marvelous degree, and have obtained complete control of them. The jugglers are still more wonderful, having such sleight of hand and apparent quickness of eye as seem marvelous to the untrained. They have undoubtedly developed a high degree of skill which serves them at times, but they depend mainly upon a training that makes their movements automatic. The ball player depends more upon skill and judgment, for the feats he performs are seldom if ever exactly alike, but the juggler and gymnast do the same thing over and over again under precisely the same conditions at all times.

The lesson to be drawn from such exhibitions is that skill of a more useful kind may be developed in precisely the same way. The young artist has only to be as patient in learning how to handle and control a brush as he is in practicing with a billiard cue, and he will surely make a name for himself as a skilled man, technically, though that accomplishment may not make him a great artist. So also the mechanic can become as skilful and judgmental in the handling of tools as the juggler is with balls if he will practice as diligently as the juggler to obtain such skill. It is really shameful that men make such little use of their opportunities.

The human body is a wonderful piece of mechanism, provided with all most innumerable muscles, the majority of which are left unused in the ordinary walks of life. These muscles are capable of being developed to a degree of strength far beyond the normal; they will produce movements unknown to the majority of men, and they can be controlled with marvelous precision. All that is needed is such patient practice as some boys give to ball playing, others to billiards or pool

and still others to the various forms of athletic exercises. These amusements are good in their way. The boy ought to learn how to play well, but he should also learn how to work by a precisely similar method—that is by steady practice until he has obtained complete mastery of his muscles. The performers in the vaudeville show serve a useful end when they afford amusement to tired spectators who need relaxation from the business cares; they are helpful teachers when their skill inspires young people with the thought that the drudgery of daily practice in some useful calling has its compensations in the development of skill of another kind, less marvelous only because it is more common.

My Mother. Amongst his fellows he stood tall and handsome, the twenty years of his young life sitting lightly on the open manly brow, from which looked forth clear, truthful eyes telling of the noble soul within. Arthur Wilson from the first day of his arrival in K— several years before this day, had been the idol of the University, beloved by teachers and companions alike, though it was known amongst them, that he was the only son of a poor widow in C—He could neither boast of family nor wealth, but what was still greater than these, a noble soul and heart, and he determined that he would repay his widowed mother for all she had done for him those years to give him the one desire of his heart, a college education. The day of his graduation had come and it wanted now but a short time before the closing exercises, so the principal vaudeictorian was spending the minutes with some near chums under the great cedar trees where he had often spent such happy times. "Yes, boys," he was saying, "the day for which I have worked so hard, and longed for, has at last come, and there will be here to-day, to participate in my triumph, one whose goodness to me, I can never pay back, and that is my mother. Even now I can see her dear old face and silver hair," and he smiled happily at the picture he had drawn of his best friend on earth. Those standing near him listened and applauded. The simple manly words had touched them, and some began to wonder what Arthur's mother would be like, when they saw him suddenly leap apart them towards an old, bent figure, tottering laboriously up the front walk and heard his voice exclaim joyously, "Mother, is it you?" Some were about to follow to witness the meeting of the two, at closer bounds, but the others held them back with, "We must not. It would be intruding. Let Art have his mother to himself." Arthur seemed oblivious to every one and every thing: only of his mother was he thinking, and in full view of his companions he embraced her fondly, while tears of joy, at the sight of her noble son, welcoming her so warmly, rolled unreservedly down her withered cheeks, and she could only say tremblingly, "My Arthur, my son, may God bless you." Soon she found more voice, and began answering the numerous questions he put to her—how the little home was? how she had been since last he saw her (two years had passed), and all the while he was leading her towards the great entrance hall. Meeting some of the faculty he introduced the bowed, gray headed figure, with the simple words, "My mother," then passed on with her into the assembly room, to procure her a seat. A fashionable audience had already begun to arrive and to take their places, but this mattered not to the young graduate who placing his mother in a position where she could see all that would be going on without straining her eyes, left her saying, tenderly, "Now, mother, you will hear your Arthur, and see him a graduate soon." She, simple and trusting, forgot the elegant surroundings, the like of which she never had seen before—forgot the grand people in whose midst she was sitting, some of whom looked coldly and scornfully at her plainly dressed figure, forgot everything except that her Arthur was soon to graduate.

The oration of Arthur Melton, was over, and as he stepped off the platform, crowned with honors the applause with which he was greeted was deafening. "Is he not handsome?" said one. "So brilliant!" said a second. And "a perfect success in every way," said a third, and all the time the gray head in front of them was being bowed lower and lower, her heart blood quickening at these praises of her son. At last the end of the exercise came and Arthur Melton was the one subject of conversation, amongst the audience who still lingered about the room, and seeing him making his way towards their centre, crowded about him to offer him their congratulations. He glided through them, thanking them briefly, and hastened to his mother, who sat unnoticed and alone, to receive her congratulations and blessings, which were far more precious to him than wishes of strangers. Then it was that those who before had scorned and treated her coldly, seemed anxious to make of her, but he knowing their real dispositions gently warded them off, and bore her to another room, where he could have her all to himself, for the short while that would elapse ere they would take the train for home, leaving those in the assembly hall to wonder at and

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admire "the devotion of young Melton to his mother."

Years afterwards, when the fame of the great lawyer Melton had become widespread, and his beautiful home on the Hudson, the centre of a distinguished group of men brilliant like himself, he never forgot that gray haired parent who had done so much for him, and though the grasses on her grave had been growing for thirty years he always spoke of her, as "mother, my sainted mother."

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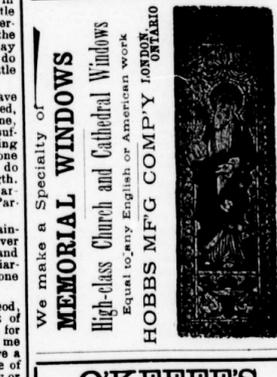


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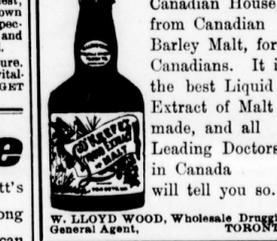
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