



A Botanical Raft; the Victoria Regia in the Botanical Gardens, Regent's Park.

A BOTANICAL RAFT.

There is now growing in the gardens of the Royal Botanic Society a remarkably fine plant of Victoria Regia. Quite recently Mr. J. W. Sowerby, the assistant secretary, counted eleven large leaves, several of which were over seven feet in diameter, and for some time they have had a new flower open every day. He sent to the 'Daily Graphic' a photograph of himself sitting on a leaf floating on the water, showing the enormous buoyant power it possesses, the total weight supported being one hundred and fifty pounds.

FIVE DOES.

A SHORT SERMON FOR CHILDREN.

(By Mr. Martin.)

I have sometimes wished I could be the minister of a church with no one but children in it. Not knowing of any such, I have asked the editors to lend me their pulpit for one Sunday afternoon, so that I could preach you a short sermon—all for yourselves. My subject is, 'What children are to do,' and I will give you five things—a full handful—which I hope you will carry away and keep. I will not take any text, but will let you select five, that is, one appropriate for each part. (If any of you think you have selected the right ones, I would like to know it.)

1. Do something. It is natural for children to be doing something, it is not natural for them to be idle. I like to see boys and girls who are alive and active, with heads or hands or feet. One young friend of mine has a little workshop where, out of school hours, he is always busy making a cart or a telephone line, a boat or a bureau. I watch the operations of another little fellow, who seems never to be happy unless he is doing something—drawing a cart, building a bonfire, or shoveling snow. A great rain on Sunday is a call to him to dig trenches to keep the water away from the house—that is a work of necessity. Last Sunday he came in to empty the basket of envelopes under my table so as to cut off the stamps, which I wished to send to the Children's Hospital—a work of mercy! Such boys will amount to something. So I encourage children to collect stamps, minerals, historical relics, make scrap-books—anything to keep them out of idleness. This is order No. 1—do something. (The text was written by a king, who called himself 'The Preacher'.)

2. Do right. The question about right and wrong is always coming up. 'Shall I do this?' 'Shall I do that?' How are you to settle it? Not by asking whether you will get any fun out of it, whether the other children will like you or laugh at you for it. Ask whether it is right. The question may be whether you will play when you have some work at

home which you ought to do, whether you will get your lesson at school, whether you will cheat in your recitation, whether you will tell the exact truth or a little untruth, whether you will put a cigarette into your mouth, or let a bad or unkind word go out of your mouth. There is only one safe way to settle every such question—do what is right. That is always the easiest way in the end, and you will always be glad you followed it. (The text is part of a verse in Deuteronomy—what Moses wished taught diligently to the children.)

3. Do what the Master says. 'One is your Master'—you know who he is. The disciples were his friends as well as his servants, they loved him, they wanted to do what he told them to do. Do you remember the story of a great man who saw a light and heard a voice on his journey? When he realized that Jesus was the true Master, the first word he said was, 'What shall I do?' We want to be the friends of Jesus Christ, we are proud to be so. Let us be proud to do just what he wishes. What is your 'Junior' pledge?

We promise, dear Jesus, to try to be true, And to do what our Saviour would like us to do.

That is one way of knowing what is right, to learn what he said. We cannot mistake when we follow his saying. What a noble, happy company of youth you children would be if you always tried to do what the wise and kind Master of men commands! (The text is one of the last things Jesus said, and John wrote it down for us.)

4. Do something for somebody else. A boy or girl—or even a man—may do things that are right, may be industrious, truthful and honest, and yet have a very weak, poor character. Why? Because it is all for self. I pity a wholly selfish boy or girl, only caring to be happy themselves, never caring a bit about anybody else. That is not the way to live. Make someone else happy. Don't be so anxious to have the biggest piece of pie, the best seat, the first chance in the game, that you forget the happiness of others. How about the little thing you can do for father or mother that will give them comfort and help—filling the wood-box or coal hod, clearing off the table? How about some other boy or girl who has not the privileges you have? A kind word spoken, a paper sent, a book lent, a lift or a gift of some kind, will be a greater joy to them than you can think. You know what the 'Two Little Pill-grims,' in Mrs. Burnett's book, said: 'Everybody has something they can give to somebody else.' (Would the 'rule' that Jesus gave about others be a good text for this part?)

5. Do in his name. What does that mean? It means that you will need help to do right. You cannot succeed alone. Paul found that out. See what he said in Rom. vii., 21.

Jesus knew how it would be. Can you find where he said, 'Without me ye can do nothing?' Boys and girls, that is the greatest and best thing I can tell you, that this wonderful Saviour who lived on the earth and loved his disciples still lives and still loves and will still give us help to do what he commands us to do. It means that it is easier to do right things when we remember that he wishes us to do it. I look up on my wall and see the portraits of my dear father and mother. I think I would do almost anything if I knew that it would please them to have me do it. We know that it pleases our Father in heaven and Jesus Christ, our Master, if we do what we do because we love God, because Jesus commanded us. If we are kind to others we do it 'in his name,' and he will give us joy and help to do more and better. Paul had a motto which is just right for us, for it showed how he was able to do so much. You will have a Happy New Year, all the way through, if you remember these things—and do them. 'Congregationalist.'

SMOKING: A DIALOGUE.

CHARLIE AND HARRY IN A STREET TALK.

Charlie—Harry, why do you smoke in public, or in these streets?

Harry—I suppose I have a right to enjoy my cigar just as I please.

Charlie—Oh, no! you have no such right, if you injure others by it.

Harry—How do I injure others? For I don't know.

Charlie—Of course you don't. Tobacco-smoke tends to stupefy its votary and render his senses obtuse. A man may listen to the roaring of artillery till he is deaf. He may look upon the sun till he is blind and you may smoke till you so blunt your olfactory as not to know that tobacco smoke is a nuisance.

Harry—You are blunt, Charlie! Please drop rhetoric, and tell me how I injure others.

Charlie—Violent diseases require violent remedies. Your habit is a disease, a violent one; I should be glad to cure it.

Harry—O come to the point, and tell me how I injure others.

Charlie—You load the air with a nauseous, noxious, abomination!

Harry—Poh! I see no reason or force in your talk.

Charlie—I suppose you don't; therefore I say to you, in the language of Dr. Sam Johnson, 'To be sure it is a shocking thing, blowing smoke out of one's mouth into other people's mouths, eyes and noses, and having the same thing done to us.'

Harry—You make a great ado about a little smell or smoke.

Charlie—It is more than smell or smoke; you poison the common air.

Harry—Poison the air! Make that out if you can.

Charlie—Tobacco is a poison; it takes rank with poisons in Materia Medica the world over. Your smoke is this poison in infinitesimal particles—it is the lampblack of tobacco and your breath; and this delightful compound you compel us to inhale; and is this fair play?

Harry—Fudge! you strain at a gnat! Who was ever poisoned by the whiffs of a cigar or pipe?

Charlie—To be drunk is to be poisoned in a legitimate sense; and I dare say you have been drunk on tobacco smoke. The first time you smoked you were sick, dizzy, and reeled over, and 'cast up your accounts' in a hurry! Did you not?

Harry—I had an awful time! But how do I poison others? That is the point.

Charlie—Not only the smoke, but the stench from the body and clothes of a smoker often poisons ladies and children in cars and stages. Many a smoker has made his wife the shadow of a shade and poisoned his children to death. Ladies have passed resolutions in some places to the ef-

fect that smokers should never marry and never own a baby!

Harry—My wife and babies live in spite of smoke.

Charlie—Well said, in spite of smoke! Some are not so easily poisoned by ivy, dog-wood, arsenic or tobacco, as others. Your family may be exceptions; but many a father kills his baby, and don't know it, and almost cries his eyes out at its grave!

Harry—Did you say we poisoned the air about us?

Charlie—Yes; and you have as good a right to throw a pound of ratsbane into that well or place a dead horse on this sidewalk as to charge the air with the nuisance of your cigar or pipe.

Harry—The smoker, I think, injures himself, not society. His vice is a social, generous vice.

Charlie—No, sir. Smokers are the most selfish characters we have. They are not controlled by courtesy, but by the stern exactions of society, by sign-boards, 'No Smoking Here,' and the like.

'A selfish habit,' says the Hon. Charles Hudson. 'A smoker entered a stage-coach. "Ladies," he said, "ladies, I hope my cigar will not be offensive." "Yes, yes," was the reply; "it will be very offensive." He gave a significant nod, muttering, "Tis so to some," and smoked on.'

Harry—Well, sir, I'm determined not to injure others. I tell boys not to smoke.

Charlie—I saw a little boy strutting up Cornhill, before breakfast, puffing a cigar! I told him he would look better with a piece of bread and butter in his mouth. 'Yes,' he said, 'but it would not be half so glorious!' His father, I presume, threatened to flog and disinheret him, and smoked like a volcano himself! Like begets like. Look out for young volcanoes!

Harry—I am convinced. Live or die, survive or perish, I shall smoke no more!

Charlie—Then sign this pledge: I hereby pledge myself to abstain from the use of tobacco, in all forms, totally and forever.

Harry—It's done, sir. It's signed! I'm no more a slave!—H. L. Hastings.

A DAUGHTER OF THE KING.

Surely every one has seen her,
For so very oft she goes,
With her modest, shy demeanor,
Through the city's rotting rows;
And you'll note, if you observe her,
That this maiden whom I sing,
Bears a badge that seems to nerve her
In the vineyards of The King.

I. H. N.—the letters glitter
'Neath a fair and youthful face;
I. H. N.—a legend fitter
Far than costly gems to grace.
A bosom filled with tender pity
For those wretched and in shame,
As she threads the thronging city
Bearing blessings 'In His Name.'

There are women, old, bed-ridden,
There are younger, stamped with sin,
There are children starved and chidden,
There are sick men, gaunt and thin,
Who on seeing her, unshrinking,
Flitting down the fetid lane,
Cease their cursing and their drinking,
Rise and bless her in their pain.

She sees woe that strong men, blackened
By life's battle-smoke's eclipse,
Dread to look on, yet not slackened
Is her ardor, though her lips
Grow more tremulous and tender
As her Christ-like acts proclaim
All the glory and the splendor
Of her labor 'In His Name.'

Go your way, my gentle maiden,
All unconscious on your part,
That your soft eyes, pity laden,
Sad, have touched a cynic heart;
Climb the white stairs to the portals
That your visions rapt behold,
For the Joyous, glad immortals,
There will greet your heart of gold.

—VAL. STARNES.