

noon in their own way. Mrs. Egbert went in to add her cordial welcome to grandma's own guests, but she remained only a few minutes.

'It's just too lovely to see them,' Hilda reported. 'They are sitting there so cozy and comfortable. Some of them brought their knitting along, and they are telling funny stories and laughing just as we girls do. I would like to have stayed, if we had not agreed to relieve them of our presence.'

When it was time to serve the five o'clock tea, the girls surveyed the results of their labor with justifiable pride. And grandma and her guests declared that it was just like old times.

'I congratulate you, young ladies,' said stately old Madam St. Clair. 'If this is a sample of your skill, you will be as notable housewives as your grandmother was.'

And grandma beamed her delight at this.

In the evening, when the company was all gone, Mrs. Egbert came downstairs and told the girls that grandma wanted to see them before she went to bed. They found her sitting before the fire with a happy smile on her face.

'I want to tell you how happy you made me this afternoon,' she said. 'The party was delightful, just what I would have wished, and all the arrangements were perfect. But that was not the best part. I know now that my girls think of grandma, for they took the time to plan and work for me. It has done my heart good, and I think we shall understand each other better after this.'

They sat down and talked with grandma for a half hour, and then went downstairs.

'I'm very much ashamed that we never thought of it before,' said Hilda.

'And to think that she cared for our company all the time,' said Maud; 'I thought we would annoy her if we went to her room very often.'

'Well, at any rate, we won't be so stupid again,' said Clare.

And the others echoed, 'No, indeed.'

### 'Honor Bright!'

'Yes, mother, I will, honor bright! Did you ever know me to break my promise?'

'No, no, my son, I never did.' And Mrs. Dunning stroked the soft brown curls lovingly, as she looked down into honest eyes that had never, in all Harry Dunning's fifteen years, failed to look straightforwardly back into hers.

'Well, mother, you never will. I'll be home by ten, sure. Now, I'm off.' And Harry sprang down the steps, and was away like an arrow.

His chum, Arthur Mayhew, had invited him to a birthday party; and Arthur's invitations were always accepted by his boy and girl friends, for Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew, and grown-up sister Nell, had to perfection the knack of making a good time for young folks.

No wonder that Harry could not believe his own eyes when, in the height of the fun he looked up, and saw the hands of the clock pointing to a quarter of ten. No one looked as though even thinking of going home. But Harry's 'honor bright' promise rang in his ears. Nobody guessed the struggle that was going on in the boy's heart, as he mechanically performed his part in the merry game. 'Why can't I stay until the rest go? Don't I work hard enough? And I haven't had an evening out for weeks.'

'It isn't late,' he thought, irritably. 'Mother's only nervous.' Then his cheeks reddened, and he straightened up quickly.

'Who had a better right to be nervous?' he thought, fiercely, as though fighting an invisible foe. His sweet, invalid mother. And he

knew little May was not well. She had been fretful all day. And he had promised. Abruptly he excused himself, bade hasty good-nights, and sped away across the fields, putting on his reefer as he ran. His mother met him at the door.

'May is worse,' she whispered huskily. 'It's croup. Run for the doctor—quick'

And Harry ran—ran as he never dreamed he could. The old doctor, electrified by the boy's breathless energy, harnessed old Jim, with Harry's help, in an incredibly brief time, and drove off down the hill at a pace that brought night-capped heads from darkened windows, and caused many a conjecture as to who was sick down in the 'holler.'

The keen-eyed old man looked very serious as he bent over May. But he was a skilled physician, and before long the little girl was breathing easily again.

'But let me tell you,' he said, impressively, 'ten minutes later it wouldn't have been very much use to call me or anyone else.'

Harry listened silently, but when they were once more alone, he drew his mother down by his side on the shabby little sofa, and told her of the resisted temptation.

'And, O mother,' he concluded, 'I'm so glad I kept my promise, "honor bright!" I feel as though I just escaped from being a murderer.'

'I have perfect confidence in my brave, true laddie,' said the happy mother, stroking the bonnie head on her shoulder.—'The Sunday school Messenger.'

### Novel Reading.

Some one very well says that 'it is nothing to boast of to be up in all the latest novels.' Boys and girls should make up their minds to be ignorant of nine-tenths of the sensational novels put upon the market to-day. Too much novel-reading for young people is one of the worst dissipations. It impoverishes and enfeebles the mind, and wastes sympathies needed for the real sufferings of the world on that which is imaginary and which never energizes. Read biography; read the lives of those who have done something worth remembering, who have had noble ambitions and have translated them into deeds. Read travels, and learn all you can of the varied charm and interest of the world's scenery and peoples. Read a few of the masterpieces of fiction that have lived and will live; read the great poets and memorize some of their finest passages. Don't let it be your chief ambition to enrich your materials or mental wardrobe with 'silk waists and sweep-skirts.' Richer things may be yours for the seeking, things that neither moth nor rust can corrupt, things that neither time nor life's sorrows and vicissitudes can ever steal.—'The Children's Friend.'

Oh, who can stretch himself in ease,  
Before the world's most glorious deeds  
In indolence can bow?

When martyrs, saints and heroes all  
Do after him unceasing call?

'O Idler, what art thou?'

—From the German.

### A Bagster Bible Free.

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### Faith's Soup-kitchen.

(Mary Almira Parsons, in the 'Presbyterian Banner.')

Snap, snap went the great white sheets. Jofie's little aprons threw their tiny arms gayly toward the blue sky, and every towel and handkerchief tugged valiantly at the wooden pins, as if eager to be free to fly away with the high wind for a merry frolic.

But the little washwoman's face was long and sober. Not one twinkie of satisfaction was there at the thought that her line was full of snowy garments before even Mrs. Trapps, her most enterprising neighbor and weekly rival, could appear on the scene with her first basket of white, steamy clothes.

'Faith!' called a tremulous voice.

'Yes, father, in a minute,' she replied, cheerily enough, but lingered pretending to fasten again a refractory clothespin, in reality whisking away a tear from the end of her nose, and then another, and still another.

'If only my name wasn't Faith,' she sobbed, miserably. 'It's dreadful to have a name that preaches at you all the time. I hate it. I haven't any faith; everything keeps getting worse and worse and no chance of anything better,—oh, mother!' There was a note of longing and loneliness in those last two words that would have touched the hardest heart and would have told better than words why the little washwoman hid her face in the great wet sheet and wept tears of bitterest grief and discouragement.

Poor little faithless Faith! Ah, well, the year had been a hard one and long, a year of keenest test and trial, and Faith had borne it well. But the clouds had thickened, troubles and cares multiplied, until even a wiser head than Faith's might have been troubled, a stouter heart have faltered.

It had been just such another bright, gusty day when it had first been made apparent to her that her mother was failing rapidly. Of course school had to be given up, and with it many a bright plan for the future, for Faith was an ambitious girl and had her own secret aspirations for a broad and noble life, but the sacrifice was made so cheerfully that even her mother scarcely suspected the cost. For a time, under Faith's loving care, Mrs. Duncan seemed to grow stronger, but the improvement was only temporary, and with the passing of the springtide she had left them peacefully, almost restfully, leaving for Faith's young shoulders the burden which had become too heavy for her own.

'I do not ask you to promise to be good to the children, Faith,' she had said, 'for I know you will do your best.' And Faith had done her best, working early and late so that her father should always find the little home bright and tidy, and the children miss as little as might be the mother's watchful care. She had hoped to find time to study, but the care of a family of seven left but little possibility of this. Even when she sat down for the mending or sewing there was little Jofie to amuse and Faith had not the heart to turn her away. Then had come a heavier trial still—her father's terrible fall, the long weeks in which at any moment the sick man might slip away from them, the slow, almost imperceptible coming back to life, a recovery without joy to the sick one, for with it had come the consciousness that he would never regain his strength and that before them as a family was only the prospect of bitter poverty. Even now the coal bin was nearly empty, the supply of vegetables in their little cellar was dangerously low and only that morning Joe had declared 'that Jack Frost wasn't half smart if he couldn't pinch his toes, for he could do