

that he could never touch a rifle until he could hit the centre of the target at every shot? But after all, this is no more foolish than to declare that you will keep out of the society of ladies and gentlemen until you can enter it without embarrassment. This, too, is something that comes by practice.

Resolution will do much toward checking your nervous ways, but custom will do more. Instead of letting the realization of your awkwardness make you more awkward, try to copy the well-bred composure of the people you admire. You can never learn good manners by shutting yourself away from the society of ladies and gentlemen; and, however hard the lesson may be, remember that it is a very necessary part of your education.

THE FOX AND THE BRAMBLE.

A fox, hotly pursued by the hounds, jumped through a hedge, and his feet were sadly torn by a bramble that grew in the midst. He fell to licking his paws, with many a curse against the bramble for its unkind treatment.

A SMALL OPPORTUNITY.

"Ah, you have brought home the sewing. I will take it up. Nora has stepped out for a few minutes."

Chancing to be in the kitchen, Miss Agnes lingered to notice further the child who had come in—a small, neglected-looking girl, who stood with an expression too sober for her years, warming her hands.

"You live near here, don't you, Susy?"

"I live just round the corner, in the little brown house."

"With your mother?"

"No; I haven't any mother." She still stood with her unsmiling face turned toward the stove, speaking with a forlorn tone, which moved all the young girl's sympathies.

For her heart was very tender with the touch of a new influence which had come to her—the touch which transforms the life, turning it from absorption in self and filling it with the spirit of the Master's loving thought for others. It was so new to her that she felt shy and backward about speaking, but was warm with the desire to pass on, even with a slight and feeble way, the blessing which had come to her.

But what could she say? Was it always going to be difficult to speak, even to a little child, of the love of Jesus!

"Is this one of my opportunities?"

The word was to her full of significance. She had lately read an article in which lovingly and strongly had been urged the duty of seizing on such small chances as may come in our way. "It may be wondered if among all sounds of

woe in the future the wail which goes up over lost opportunity—the word which was not spoken—the act not performed—may not be the saddest, most despairing."

The words touched her deeply. She turned to the child. It was not whether to speak, but how to begin.

"If you have no mother, you need all the more someone to love you and care for you."

"But there isn't nobody," said the child, "except my aunt, and she doesn't care much."

"I care for you, little one."

"I like that," turning toward her with a smile breaking through the soberness.

"But—there's some one better than I who watches over you all the time, and who will love you all your life. He will keep close beside you—and—I mean Jesus, God's Son. You know about Him, don't you?"

"Yes, but He is so far off."

"No, dear; He is near you. He loves you—more than your mother loved you. He wants you to love Him." The child's eyes were fixed upon her.

"I'd like to," wistfully.

"Would you? I'm very glad. Then you must try to be good, because He loves you and you love Him. You will be His own little child, and never say bad words, or take anything that is not yours, or tell what is not true. Will you think of it, Susy?"

Hastily, half breathlessly, she finished, for steps were coming near. Nora was coming in, but that was not the worst, for her mischievous brother Jack stood near the door, wearing the most teasing expression.

"Preaching, Aggy?" he said, as Susy passed out. "You do it well. But now, do you really think it will do any good? Don't you suppose that poor little morsel is so surrounded with all sorts of ill doing that it's just as natural for her to steal and lie, as it is for her to breathe?"

"If she is, isn't that the best reason for trying to teach her something else?"

"Oh, yes, if you can. Go on. It will do you good, I'm sure; even if it does no other good."

He was most provoking, but Agnes stood bravely by her colours.

"I'm not the one who is to insure its doing any good."

"Bravo, Aggy. You've got it all at your tongue's end, haven't you?"

Two or three days later Agnes stood at a window as twilight was closing in. The street outside was brilliant with electric light and lively with passers-by.

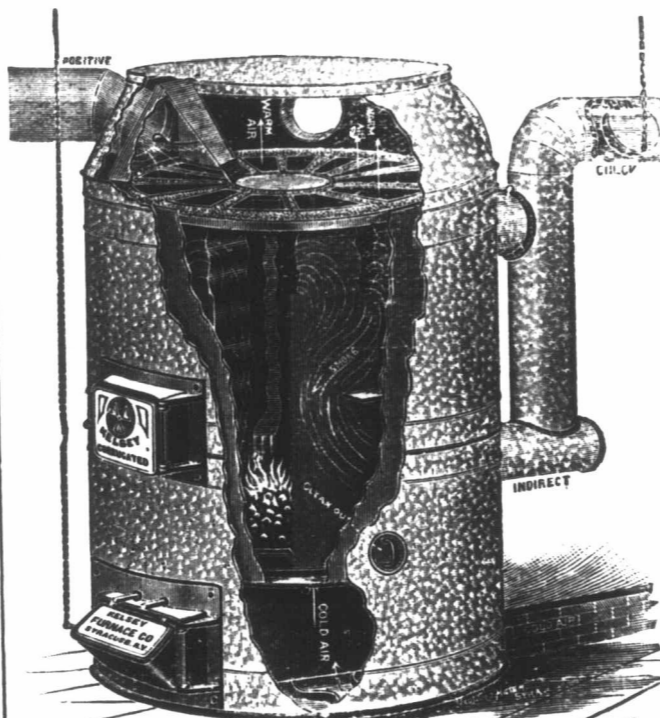
The young girl watched as a small boy waited for the passing of a cable car in order to cross the street. He did not see the one coming the other way, and Agnes' heart beat violently as she saw him going on without heeding the danger.

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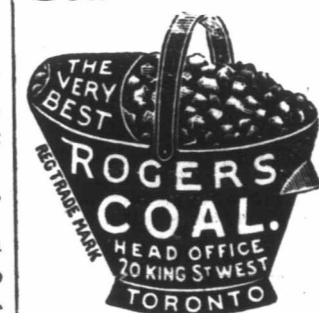
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"Oh, I am not at all sure of that," said Agnes. But there was a glow of happiness in her heart that she had not let her small opportunity slip.—Sidney Dayre, in S. S. Visitor.