

It was the drink that made the mischief, and drink is always making mischief. It begins with a little for medicine, and it ends with wretchedness, madness, misery, and death. Many a fair, bright young girl has tasted of this poisoned cup, and has never stopped until she reached the depths of sorrow and despair.

☞ "Look not upon the wine when it is red. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."—*Massachusetts Good Templar.*

For Girls and Boys.

LEARN A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

Would you hold the key of knowledge,
And unlock its treasures rare?
Are you thirsting for true wisdom,
With its wealth of truth so fair?
You may win the prize you're seeking,
In a fair and honest way.
You must conquer if you simply
LEARN A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

Starting first from small beginnings,
'Tis the STEADY GROWTH that wins,
In life's battles here, no matter
Where our "step by step" begins.
If we yield our hearts to Satan
Step by step we're led astray,—
All, while here, in good or evil,
LEARN A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

Every day is fraught with lessons—
Youthful minds find daily food
In the teachings of surroundings—
Parents, are their teachings good?
"There's no royal road to learning."
But there is a better way,
Simply this: In truth and goodness,
LEARN A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

—*Pupil's Companion.*

OLD SIMON'S YARN.

The scene was as fair and picturesque as could be seen anywhere around our coasts. The little fishing-village of Lyncombe, nestling amongst the cliffs, was flooded with the brilliant sunlight of a hot July afternoon. The waters of the bay lay blue and almost motionless; scarcely a breath of air was stirring. You could hear just a faint lap, lap below the cliffs on the shingle, made by the receding tide, which, instead of marring the slumberous quiet of the time and place, seemed rather to intensify it.

It was a Monday afternoon, and only a short time before the little strand was all alive and noisy with the fleet of herring-boats making ready to start. Now they had cleared off and were out in the offing, looking motionless in the distance, like "painted ships upon a painted ocean," save that now and then there was a twinkle of the sails in the sunlight as they tacked.

Old Simon Thwaites had been leaning over the cliff above the jetty watching the departure, and he remained gazing out till the boats were mere specks on the horizon. He had an interest in two of the boats, though he rarely put off with them now on their fishing expeditions. He was considered a well-to-do man, having been part owner of a boat for nearly twenty years, and steady and saving all that time, blessed with prosperity, and meeting with but few losses. He had saved enough to live on, and now that old age was creeping on he felt that he could take things easy, and help others a little.

I mention the last twenty years as the period during which Simon had done well. Before that time his wife could have told a sad tale of his way of living. He was then a hard drinker, and one of the most reckless and headstrong men in the place, a terror to his family, and an evil influence amongst all the fisher folk.

Occasionally he told the story of his "turning round," as he called it; and it so happened that on this particularly fair Monday afternoon an occasion arose which called forth his tale of warning.

Three lads came lazily sauntering down to where old Simon was basking in the sunshine, at a favorite spot on the cliffs, beside a big, disused cannon, which had lain there from old past times. He was still gazing out over the glittering sea, and thought he recognised the voices of the brothers, Jack and Tom Sykes, and their companion, Arthur Darrel, he did not turn round. They came down beside the cannon, making much clatter with their stout boots, and then they sat down to rest a minute.

Arthur Darrel looked hot and lazy as he perched himself on one of the wheels, pulled off his cap, and settled himself for a rest.

"Old Mother Peck gave me a drink this afternoon," he said, "for minding a horse belonging to a fellow as was drinking at her bar. If I'd got a penny I'd go and get another. A good drink 'o beer is just the go for a hot day like this."

Old Simon did not stir, but he pricked up his ears at this.

Tom Sykes carried three fine fish dangling from a string—the boys had been doing a little fishing on their own account. He had intended taking them home to his mother; but Arthur's words suggested to him that, though all three of them were moneyless, the fish was stock-in-trade and represented money.

Only for a brief moment he thought of the pleasure of taking the fish home to his mother; the very next he shouted out, "Let's go down to Mother Peck's and get a jolly good drink. She'd give us a quart o' the best for these three grand 'uns—they're worth ten cents if they're worth a cent!"

At this Simon turned sharp around and bore down upon them.

"Listen to me for two minutes, you youngsters!" he said, in a ringing, cheery voice. "If you want to keep clear of shipwreck, ay, and shipwreck of the worst kind, too, stand well out to sea when you see the wreckers' red light on the shore!"

The boys looked up into the wrinkled sun-browned old face. "What is it now, Simon?" asked Jack Sykes, merrily.

"What is it, when I hear bits of lads like you talking about going for a 'jolly good drink'?—what is it but that I see ye drifting to destruction, falling foul of them wreckers that are lying in wait for ye in every public-house ye come against? Keep on the outside of 'em, lads; and don't spend your money on that that isn't bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not. You'd go, Tom, and barter them good fish away for a drink that's worse than poison to you—stuff that'll ruin you body and soul if you come under the power of it, unless God's mercy save ye, as it did me."

"I daresay you thought it was good stuff when you were as old as we," answered Tom Sykes, saucily, as he stood a little behind his brother, and peered over his shoulder curiously at Simon.

"Ay, that I did, young ready-tongue!" shouted Simon. "But I had to learn better than that, and I learnt it in a way that left me twenty years of bitter remorse and suffering that you know nothing about, and God grant you never may! If I live to be a hundred, the remorse'll bide with me all that time, though God in his mercy have forgiven my sin, through Christ. And I'd just like to save you lads from ever knowing such-like suffering, so I say to you, don't touch the drink! Keep from it now while you're young—now while it's easy to keep from it—and then you'll never have to mourn over bringing those you love to their graves before their time, as I've had to do."

The eyes of the three boys grew wide open with interest, and saucy Tom Sykes said, "Have ye killed anybody, Simon?"

"No; nobody can call me a murderer, though I felt like one for many a long day," answered Simon, gravely. "It was the drink in me that did the mischief; and that has made many a loving, tender-hearted man a murderer. Shun it, boys, dread it, hate it as you would a venomous serpent that threatened your life! You think it a 'jolly good drink on this hot summer's day,' but at the last it stingeth like an adder, as it stung me, and that means despair and death—only, as I said, God in His mercy saved me from that. But I'll tell ye my little story if you'll bide a minute. Twenty years ago I was out with a herring fleet in the North Sea, and my youngest lad was in the same boat with me; he was thirteen, and a well-grown lad of his age, the pride and joy of his mother's heart for he was a rare good 'un, and she used to boast as he'd never cost her an hour's sorrow.

"We'd started to be out for some weeks, trawling, and you must know that a steamer 'ud come out to us to take the fish back to market. Well, my missis let me take our Jack out with me on the condition that I'd send him back by the first steamer or smack that came out to us.