

## DOWNRIGHT HONESTY.

"What this age wants is a revival of downright honesty," says Moody. It is the adjective that makes this statement remarkable. It intimates, we think, that though most people would consider themselves honest in the main, there are times and circumstances when deviations from the straight course and the candid statement of the matter might be tolerated.

There is in the minds of many people, though there ought not to be, a difference between honesty and "downright" honesty. A man who would not take another's silver dollar might deceive "a little" for the sake of selling a bill of goods. A person who would not confess to a deliberate lie might deceive in being "not at home" or "so glad to see you!" as a matter of social convenience.

The difference between honesty and "downright" honesty is not visible; the tender conscience recognizes no difference. Men in business, in society, in sports, in religious work, can find no degrees of honesty, because God provides for no such thing.—*Young Men's Era.*

## THE RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER.

For illustration of the economy and value of the weekly church paper, take the 52 numbers of the year and estimate the amount of reading. It will be found to equal that contained in eight volumes of 300 pages each, exclusive of advertisements. All this for all the members of the family weekly, for three or four cents. Surely you must be very poor indeed, or this information on religious and literary things must be of very little interest and profit to you, if you cannot afford to pay for it three or four cents a week. Surely it is not very much of a compliment to the tastes, and literary and religious wants of a man's family, for him to say he cannot afford four cents a week to put them in possession of such literature. There probably are families in such extreme poverty that they cannot, without actual suffering, spend three or four cents a week for food for the mind. But we are not much afraid to make a good round guess that nine-tenths of the families who are depriving themselves of a weekly religious newspaper spend from five to twenty-five dollars a year for things not half so necessary to their happiness as a weekly religious newspaper. They may not think so. But a careful and candid investigation of the matter would probably convince them of the truth of our supposition. Four cents a week would make very little difference in the setting of your table, my news-hungry brother. Four cents a week would make very little difference in the wardrobe of your family. You must dress very economically indeed, if, for the sake of bringing more than 7,500 ordinary book pages of good literary and religious reading matter into your family during the year, you could not, without bad results, cut down the expenses of the family wardrobe four cents a week. Now once more, just let us whisper in your ear (too low for even your family to hear) and ask you if you have not some personal expenses which you could diminish at the rate of three or four cents a week, without curtailing the comforts of your family any, so that you could give them the advantage of a good religious newspaper?

## Our Young Folks.

## LITTLE THINGS.

It was only a little thing for Nell  
To brighten the kitchen fire,  
To spread the cloth, to draw the tea,  
As her mother might desire—  
A little thing; but her mother smiled,  
And banished all her care,  
And a day that was sad  
Closed bright and glad,  
With a song of praise and prayer.

'Twas only a little thing to do  
For a sturdy lad like Ned  
To groom the horse, to milk the cow,  
And bring the wood from the shed;  
But his father was glad to find at night  
The chores were all well done.  
"I am thankful," said he,  
"As I can be,  
For the gift of such a son."

Only small things, but they brighten life.  
Or shadow it with care,  
But little things, yet they mold a life  
For joy or sad despair;  
But little things, yet life's best prize,  
The reward which labor brings.  
Comes to him who uses,  
And not abuses.  
The power of little things.  
—Mrs. Mary Fenton, in *Restitution.*

## A CHRISTMAS STORY OF TWO MADGES.

"I say, Madge, there's a jolly little fir-tree over here—just the thing for your Christmas tree," said Tom Granby, a lad of ten, as, boy-like, he scrambled up a bank and looked over a hedge into a plantation of fir, spruce and the like.

Then he lifted up his five-year-old sister to take a peep—Harry, his younger brother, mounting up after.

"There it is," said he, pointing it out; "just the thing; and we might have it, perhaps, for the asking. 'Twould save money to have one given us, eh, Harry? 'Twould make the fruit finer. I'd ask Mr. Crosby if he wasn't such a cross-patch."

"It's a beauty!" said five-year-old Madge admiringly, and then—

"I say, here he comes," spoke Tom, under his breath. "Run and ask him, Madge, if he will please give it you; he'd not say 'No' to such a teeny-weeny as you," said he, setting the mite down on her feet, and putting her forward.

And she, with the innocent boldness of a child who had seldom been denied any babyish request, tripped off to meet the gentleman coming up the country lane in the sunshine. He was a tall, stern, unhappy-looking, middle-aged man, with a stick.

"Please, sir, will you give me a Christmas-tree for my merry Chismas? Tom says there's one over there, just the thing," lisped wee Madge, stopping before him and looking up into his face.

"Ah; and what may your name be, little lady?" asked Mr. Crosby, peering down at her.

"Madge. Tom calls me Teeny-weeny, oh, so often! but, of course, that isn't my name," was the answer, giving her head a little jerk, which set all her pretty brown curls dancing.

Madge! He had a sister Madge once upon a time, long ago, who used to call him Bob, and followed him about everywhere, like this little one did those brothers of hers spying at her up the lane—he and Harry. Now, Harry was sleeping, a brave young soldier, in a foreign grave; and Madge was—. Mr. Crosby came back from his faded dream, and asked of the child, scanning him silently, with pretty brown eyes, "And so Bob thinks he can see a tree just the thing in the plantation?"

"Oh! not Bob; I said Tom—that's my big brother, and Harry is the other," answered Madge, glancing away up the lane at the two lads slyly laughing down at her.

"Tom and Harry—it sounds very like Bob and Harry," said Mr. Crosby, half to himself. To his wee companion he said—"Well, now, suppose you were to come to-morrow morning at any time, and see my gardener about it? Choose any tree you like, and he will plant it for you just ready. What do you say, little Madge?" And the name sounded like music on his lips, because of that other little Madge of long ago.

"Oh, thank you, sir! it will be just nice."

She gave a pleased little jig, and tripped away to the two waiting for her.

Mr. Crosby, with a sort of mistiness in his eyes, turned in at a side gate into the plantation. The prattle of a child, very like the chime of silver bells, fell on his ear as he walked and mused, and out of it rang the words, soft and clear—

"He wasn't a bit cross."

He knit his brows, but it did him no good to know that the children did not think him what the village people said he was—cross by name and nature too. Then he wandered back to his lonely house, a wee shadow Madge, as it seemed to him, trotting by his side all the way.

"So, little lady, you've come for your tree," said he the next morning, crossing the lawn, as Madge and her brothers, led a round-about way from the plantation by the gardener, appeared at the front of Crosby Hall, as Mr. Crosby's place was called. The gardener carried a mite of a fir-tree, planted in a by no means large tubful of earth. "What made you choose that bit of a thing?" asked Mr. Crosby, pointing at it with his stick.

Madge flushed, as over a fault.

"Well, you see, sir," said Tom, answering for her, "She's only a teeny-weeny, so she ought to have a teeny-weeny tree," with a mischievous glance at Madge; "and besides"—here he stopped.

"Yes, my boy, and besides? Finish; I don't like half-speeches."

"Well, we haven't got money enough to buy things for a very large tree."

"Tom's only got sixpence, and I three pence," blurted out Harry, before Tom could screw his face into a frown and stop him.

"'Tisn't much, but I think we can do it pretty grandly with such a jolly tree for nothing," observed Tom then, as next best to stopping him.

"And I shall have my Christmas tree and my merry Chismas in two more days. When will you have your Christmas tree and merry Chismas?" repeating the magic words as if she loved to speak them, said Madge, glancing up at Mr. Crosby, who stood toying with her brown curls.

"I shall have no merry Christmas, much less a Christmas tree," was the almost stern reply.

"Oh!" Madge looked first at her brothers and then at her tree admiringly. "Come and have part of mine," spoke the mite, flashing up her baby glances coaxingly at him, "He may, mayn't he?" said she, with a look at Tom.

"You shouldn't say 'he'; you should say 'Mr. Crosby,'" corrected Tom.

"Yes, sir, come; 'twill be a babyish affair; still, mother says Christmas is a time of give and take, you know, because

of the first Christmas;" and Tom gave a confidential nod. "Well, you're giving us the tree, and we'd like you to come and share our fun;" and Tom drew himself up as if he'd made a fine speech.

"But who are you? I don't even know where you live."

"Father's a solicitor in Hilton, only we live out here because rent is cheaper. You see, we aren't rich in anything but, but—"

"Children?" suggested Mr. Crosby. "Yes, we've got six younger than me—I'm the seventh; but father says the more the merrier, because of the love."

"Love makes Chismas," piped Madge. "Have you got any at your home?"

"No"—a very blank, "No," to such a question.

"Then, come to my home; we have, oh! so much there for everybody."

"Thanks, dear; we shall see;" so he dismissed the happy young things.

"We have, oh! so much there for everybody," seemed to ring through the lonely house in childish tones, as Mr. Crosby paced his dining-room to and fro, where his sister Madge's step and voice had not made music since she offended him and went out to the home of another. Now, that other was dead, and only the home left to her and some children.

"A little boy to see you, sir," said a servant, peeping in upon him.

"Ah! show him in."

"Mamma sent you this, sir." This was a note, which Tom put into his hand with a bow.

"Ah! yes; a note asking me to the Christmas tree party," said he, after reading it.

"Thank you; I will come;" so he accepted his invitation.

What a dream of peace—or, rather, of longing for peace—was that party to him, laughing with the children over the crackers, wondering over the many farthing articles it takes to deck a Christmas tree, and how tiny tapers will persist in going out again and again, even on a Christmas tree; and, last of all, guessing, or pretending to guess—for he knew the secret well enough—who could have sent them each a present packed in paper from Hilton, which the servant brought in just as he was leaving.

This was Christmas Eve, and on Christmas Day followed the return visit of Madge and her two brothers to Mr. Crosby; when that gentleman's heart was so full of that love which he thought dead and gone, and which kept crying, "Madge, come back, come back!"

"Oh! who is that pretty girl, Mr. Crosby?" asked Madge, as he and his young guests went the rounds of the dining-room, after dinner, looking at the pictures.

"That is my sister, Madge," answered Mr. Crosby.

"Where is she? Why isn't she here and her doggie, too," for the picture-child clasped a dog in her arms.

"Because—because I've never asked her here; and her doggie is dead. I'll show you his grave in the plantation some day;" and Mr. Crosby turned his head away.

"Are you crying about your Madge and her doggie?" inquired the tender little soul, slipping her hand into his. "Why don't you send for her back? She'd make you a merry Chismas, same as I do in my home."

"Ah! why?"

The picture Madge seemed to whisper the same question to him in the silent room, after his young guests were gone, and late that night, with the Christmas stars peeping in at him, he sat down and wrote—

"Come home to me, Madge; home to Crosby Hall, and bring the young ones; then we will try to live over the old life in the now—a new life and a new year."

And she came back; what is more, she and her brother gave wee Madge a third name, the sweetest of all—"The Peacemaker," which, the child herself said, was "a bit of Chismas."—*Little Folks.*