



A RED CEDAR PENCIL.

Once upon a time, in a large and smoky city, there lived a poor young artist. He had not always known what it was to be poor, for when he was a little boy he lived in a grand house, and had all the comforts that any child could want. But all that was changed now, and he was very poor. His father was dead, his mother was dead, and he had no one in the world to care for him. In all things he meant to be honest, and though he could have run up bills at different stores he did not do it, but paid for everything as he got it, and hoped for better days to come. But better days seemed so far away on that Thursday when he sat in the little room which he rented on the top floor of an old tumble-down house. It was a cheerless day; the rain drizzled against the window panes and washed one little piece of soot after another down onto the sill, from whence it dripped to the roof, and ran off in a current of dirty water to the gutter below. The room itself was nearly as comfortless as the day outside. In one corner was a cot-bed, the legs of which were tied up with string to keep them from falling apart. There was a washstand which had been good once upon a time, but looked as though it had been through two or three auction sales before it got up into the place it now occupied. A cracked jug, a basin with a large chip on the rim, and an empty cigar box which did service as a soap dish, together with a wooden table and an ordinary kitchen chair, were all the visible furnishings of the room. And it was here that our friend the artist sat with his hands in his pockets, before the table on which rested his last quarter. He had taken it from his pocket, and after having fumbled in all the others to be sure there was no more money in them, he had sat down to see what anybody's last quarter really looked like. He was thinking to himself that he never saw a quarter look quite so ridiculously small in his life before. Why, he could remember the time when he would hardly know how to spend one because he had so many things already. A glance around the room assured him that there was nothing left to sell which could bring in any more money, and he was just asking himself, "What next?" when a rap came at the door.

"Come in," cried the artist, wondering who could be calling on him. Slowly the door opened, and a feeble man, clad in blue jeans, made his appearance.

"Excuse me," said he, "a interrupting of you, but won't you kindly buy a pencil. I heard as you were an artist, and I thought as you might be a wantin' a pencil. I've bin around all day, and I haven't sold one as yet, and I'm that hungry I can hardly go another step. Me wife used to go out workin', but she kearn't do it no more; she's laid up herself, an' 'as to keep to the 'ouse now." The poor man went rambling on and on, and the story of his troubles while the artist sat back in his chair and gazed at his visitor. Here at least was one human being in a worse condition than himself. "Poor fellow," thought he, "how that asthma fiend has him in its clutches. What sunken eyes and emaciated features." At last the man made a pause, and at a nod from the artist, the quarter on the table and the pencil in the man's hand changed places. "Never mind about the change," said the artist, as the poor chap fumbled in his empty pockets. "Good-bye, and may you soon get well."

"Good-bye to you, sir," replied the man, "an' may God bless yer, and always remember that kindness brings its own reward."

The door closed, and the man and the quarter were both gone. "Too bad!" exclaimed the artist, but he wasn't thinking of his money. All he could think about was the haggard face and wheezy voice of the man who had just left him. "And I told him I hoped he'd soon get well," said the artist to himself. "Poor chap, I'm afraid he knew as well as I did that he never will."

Daylight had gone and night had shut off from view all the poverty of the room, but the artist had not stirred from his chair. He had no money to buy a supper now, so he had not bothered about it, but had fallen asleep where he sat. All of a sudden the clang of the fire alarm drowned all the usual noises of the city, and in an instant there was a scurrying of feet on the pavement below. Gradually the room began to be lit up from the reflection on the sky, and when the artist started to his feet, bewildered and dazed, it was to see thick clouds of smoke rolling up and tumbling over each other, whilst showers of sparks and wicked tongues of flame lit up the city far and west of it. Snatching up his hat and the pencil, which were both on the table, he hastened down to the street. Sparks were falling everywhere, but he rushed forward to the scene of action, guided by the thrumming of the fire engines and the shouts of the firemen. At last he was in the crowd, hustling and pushing to get a better view. When he had succeeded in getting a good position, from which he could see the crumbling buildings and the men rushing out yards of hose, and directing their streams first here, then there, he found he was next to a man who was taking notes. At once a thought struck him.

"Are you a reporter?" asked he. "Yes," replied the man, giving the name of the largest paper in the city. "Do you think I could get some sketches taken, and if I were to do them now?" asked the artist. "I think you could," said the man; "both our own artists are away on a railroad wreck, which occurred this afternoon, and they can't possibly get back for two hours."

On paper procured from the reporter our friend began to work. At first he was doubtful as to the success he would have with an ordinary pencil bought from a poor peddler, but there was no time to go back even if there had been a chance, so he made the best of it and began. The pencil proved more than a success. Never in his life had he been able to get effects so quickly and so well. The sketches which he dashed off were perfect, and it seemed as though all he had to do was to put the pencil-point on the paper and it would draw what he wanted. So in about half an hour he had pictures of firemen with hose and hatchet hard at work, pictures of falling buildings, and of people being caught in the net, pictures of dashing hose reels, and of policemen keeping back the crowd. He hastened back to his room and worked them up, then back to the office of the paper and delivered them.

Fifteen hours later he was sitting in his room, as he had been when the poor man left him the afternoon before; but now he had a toothpick in his mouth, and there was an unbroken ten-dollar bill in his pocket. On the table was a morning paper containing some remarkably good sketches of a fire, and on the paper lay a common red cedar pencil with a rubber tip. The artist leaned forward and picked it up to examine it, saying as he did so something about "kindness bringing its own reward."—Dermot McEvoy.

Why the Oat Crop is a Failure.

Farmer Hardacre—"Fate is always agin the farmer."

Mr. Cittiman—"What is the matter, Mr. Hardacre?"

Farmer Hardacre—"Why, I've got a bustin' big crop of oats for the first time in four years, and there's nuthin' to feed 'em to any more but bicycles and trolley cars."

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

A "Proverb-Hunt" will now begin this column. A prize is offered for correct solutions of the first three pictures. Only children of subscribers may compete, and competitors must be under sixteen years of age. Answers should be sent in for each group, e. g., 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, etc. A prize is offered for each group of three pictures, and a better one at the end of the year for the largest number of correct answers. Letters marked "Proverb-Hunt" will not be opened until ten days after the third picture of each group is issued. The first letter opened, containing correct answers, will be prize winner; all others will receive honorable mention. Address your letters to Cousin Dorothy, FARMER'S ADVOCATE, London, Ont., and mark them "Proverb-Hunt"—outside the envelope.



HIDDEN PROVERB—NO. 16.

MY DEAR CHILDREN—

I want to thank you for the nice letters which are constantly coming in from all parts of the country. John Sheehan's proverbs were correct as usual; and although they arrived too late for the prize, deserve honorable mention. Two of Bert Hodgins' proverbs are correct. J. S. writes: "I thank you very much for the nice prize I received from you. I have not had time to read very much of it, but I think it is a very good story."

I will start two new competitions at once. For the girls I offer a prize for the best paper doll with three tissue paper dresses—removable, of course. The doll must be home-made; cut out of a paper and pasted to very thin cardboard, or painted directly on the cardboard.

For the boys, a prize is offered for the best home-manufactured text, to be painted in water colors on paper—card-board not accepted—twelve inches long and six inches wide. These must reach me not later than October 15th—vacation work for you all—and will be sent, after being judged, to the Children's Hospital in Toronto. Any one who does not get a prize may feel quite certain that the work spent on doll or text is not thrown away, for it will make some little invalid happier. Do you remember who has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done unto the least of these My servants ye have done unto Me." Read "The Quiet Hour" in this issue and you will find out the surest way of having a happy summer.

Your loving friend, COUSIN DOROTHY.

"Do Something for Somebody Quick."

Are you almost disgusted with life, little man?
I will tell you a wonderful trick
That will bring you contentment if anything can—
Do something for somebody quick!

Though it rains like the rain of a flood, little man,
And the clouds are forbidding and thick,
You can make the sun shine in your soul, little man—
Do something for somebody quick!

Though the skies are like brass overhead, little man,
And the wall like a well-heated brick;
And all earthly affairs in a terrible whirl—
Do something for somebody quick!

Little Buttercup -- A True Story.

I am a cat. My name is Little Buttercup. I am yellow and white. I'm not very pretty—my little mistress says so—but I'm the cleverest cat in all the world.

I am a very dainty cat. I always have my meals in the dining-room with the family. For a table I have a square of oilcloth covered with a white napkin. My meat is cut into small pieces and put upon a china plate. My milk is put into a silver cup. If my food is given to me in any other way, I stick up my nose. That is what my little mistress does when she doesn't like her food, but it doesn't look pretty in her. I eat my meat with my own little fork. It is a pretty fork. The handle is covered with velvet and the prongs are covered with mother-of-pearl. My little mistress calls it my paw, but I am sure it was made for a fork, and so I use it. I stick the sharp points into my meat, and thus carry it to my mouth.

I drink my milk in the same way. I mean, I dip my paw into the cup, and when it is covered with milk I draw it out again and lap the milk from it.

My little mistress puts her nose into her cup every time she drinks—but she has not the advantage of being a cat. Our cook doesn't like me. I am sure I don't know why; I am very fond of her, and I want to make her like me, because she always has nice things to eat. I thought, perhaps, she would like me better if she could see some of my cunning tricks; so one morning, when she was ringing the breakfast bell, I jumped upon the table and dipped my paw into the cream-pitcher. I had just begun to lap it off nicely when the cook came in. Now, when my little mistress sees me do that she always says, "Oh, you darling little cat!" I expected cook would say it, too, but she didn't; she said, "Aw, you spalpeen of a cat!" and she slapped me five or six times, and put me down cellar. I didn't stay there long, though, for my little mistress brought me back. I had cream instead of milk for my breakfast, so I knew that she thought I was clever. I do wish I knew what to do to make cook like me. But some people are always so ill-natured!

THE QUIET HOUR.

Growing.

Unto him that hath, Thou givest
Ever "more abundantly."

Lord, I live because Thou livest,—
Therefore give more life to me;
Therefore speed me in the race;
Therefore let me grow in grace.

Deepen all Thy work, O Master,
Strengthen every downward root,
Only do Thou ripen faster,
More and more, Thy pleasant fruit.
Purge me, prune me, self-abase,
Only let me grow in grace.

Let me grow by sun and shower,
Every moment water me;
Make me really, hour by hour,
More and more conformed to Thee,
That Thy loving eye may trace,
Day by day, my growth in grace.

—F. R. H.

How Fruits Grow.

Where does joy come from? I knew a Sunday scholar whose conception of joy was that it was a thing made in lumps and kept somewhere in heaven, and that when people prayed for it, pieces were somehow let down and fitted into their souls. I am not sure that views as gross and material are not often held by people who ought to be wiser. In reality, joy is as much a matter of cause and effect as pain. No one can get joy by merely asking for it. It is one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life, and, like all fruits, must be grown. There is a very clever trick in India called the mango trick. A seed is put in the ground and covered up, and after divers incantations a full-blown mango bush appears within five minutes. I never met any one who knew how the thing was done; but I never met any one who believed it to be anything else than a conjuring trick. The world is pretty unanimous now in its belief in the orderliness of Nature. Men may not know how fruits grow, but they do know that they cannot grow in five minutes. Some lives have not even a stalk on which fruits could hang, even if they did grow in five minutes. Some have never planted one sound seed of joy in all their lives; and others who may have planted a germ or two have lived so little in sunshine that they never could come to maturity.

Whence, then, is joy? Christ put His teaching upon this subject into one of the most exquisite of His parables. It is the parable of the Vine. Did you ever think why Christ spoke that parable? Afterwards He turned to the disciples and said He would tell them why He had spoken it. It was to tell them how to get joy. "These things have I spoken unto you," He said, "that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." It was a purposeful and deliberate communication of His secret of happiness. Go back over these verses and you will find the causes of this effect—the spring, and the only spring, out of which true happiness comes. Remember, in the first place, that the Vine was the Easter symbol of joy. Christ is "the true Vine." Here, then, is the ultimate source of joy. Through whatever media it reaches us, all true joy and gladness find their source in Christ. His people share His life, and therefore share its consequences, and one of these is joy. His method of living is one that in the nature of things produces joy. The medium through which it comes is also explained: "He that abideth in Me, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Fruit first, joy next—the one the cause of the other. Fruit-bearing is the necessary antecedent—joy the necessary consequent. It lay partly in the bearing fruit, partly in the fellowship which made that possible. Partly, that is to say, joy lay in mere constant living in Christ's presence; partly in the influence of that Life upon mind, character, and will; and partly in the inspiration to live and work for others, with all that that brings of self-ridance and joy in others' gain. These are sources of pure happiness. Even the simplest of them—to do good to other people—is an instant and infallible specific. There is no mystery about happiness whatever. Put in the right ingredients and it must come out. He that abideth in Him will bring forth much fruit; and bringing forth much fruit is happiness. The infallible recipe for happiness, then, is to do good; and the infallible recipe for doing good is to abide in Christ. The surest proof that all this is a plain matter of cause and effect is that men may try every other conceivable way of finding happiness, and they will fail. All fruits grow, but no man can make things grow. He can arrange circumstances and fulfill conditions, but the growing is done by God—"The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace," etc.

What more need I add but this—test the method by experiment. Do not imagine that you have got these things because you know how to get them. As well try to feed upon a cookery book. Spend the time you have spent in sighing for fruits in fulfilling the conditions of their growth. The fruits will come—must come. We have hitherto paid immense attention to effects—to the mere experiences themselves; we have described them, advised them, prayed for them—done everything except find out what caused them. About every other method of living the Christian life there is an uncertainty. But so far as this method is the way of Nature it cannot fail. Its guarantee is the laws of the universe, and these are "the Hands of the Living God."

—From "Pax Vobiscum."