'Tis the Little Things That Count.

BY FLORENCE A. JONES.

Just a little here and there, boys,
Such a trifling thing, you think,
Once reading a yellow novel,
Just taking, for fun, a drink,
An hour or two spent in the card-room,
The smoking of a cigar—
But, oh, do you ever think boys
The little things make or mar?

Just a little time on the street, boys
And lo, your unwary feet
Are lured into sin-stained bypaths
That lead you to Ruin's Street
'Tis just the first wrong thought, boys,
Just a few vile words, ah, me!
And your current of life is changing—
You are drifting out to sea.

It is strown with the wrecks of manhood—
Rudderless, storm-tossed, lost!
Don't you think these boasted pleasures
Are bought at a fearful cost?
'Tis the little things that count, boys,
That make up the mighty whole,
'Tis Folly's empty pleasures,
In balance against your soul!

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 13, 1900

A WISE PRECAUTION.

BY MARY WHITING ADAMS.

In the neighbourhood where I live, where some of the largest powder mills in the world are situated, there was lately a terrific explosion. It shook the earth for miles round like an earthquake, and up and down the valley of the busy little stream that turns the wheels of many other mills there was especial damage done. The nearest of these to the powder works—a large cloth mill, employing many hundred hands—was left without a whole window pane in its long front, every window having been shattered and driven in by the explosion. No other damage was done, the walls being strong and sound, but the owner immediately stopped his looms, shut down his dynamos, and set his men to work taking apart every machine in the building, and examining every inch of floor and every bale and yard of material. It took two or three weeks' time, and the powder mill owners had to pay the cost of doing it, too.

Why did it have to be done? The reason was simple enough. Thousands of bits of broken glass, sharp edged as razors, had been driven back into the rooms of the mill. The owner knew how delicate and costly was the fine machinery of loom and spindle and carder. If but one single splinter of glass had lodged anywhere among its wires and wheels, it might cut and tear them into absolute ruin in five minutes. If the tiniest bits of glass had fallen among the materials ready to be woven, they might carry it on to the machines and effect the same result. Not until every particle of glass had been removed from that mill was it safe, for a moment, to start the looms or feed in the materials.

It was a practical acknowledgment of the tremendous power of little things. There is nothing more common than window-glass, and a broken pane is no unusual happening. But the possibilities of a sharp-edged fragment of glass in the wrong place are almost beyond computation. Suppose that the cloth mill owner had thought so much precaution useless and foolish and let the matter go with only sweeping up the scattered glass on the floor. First, a costly machine might have been ruined, every yard of material that had gone through that machine would be badly woven in consequence, good customers might be lost by selling such ill-woven material to them, orders would be delayed by the necessity of getting a new machine and putting it in, which often takes a long time and so on. You see, girls, that a small thing may have very large consequences, and the wise man, like the wise mill owner, knows this, and does not despise what a foolish person calls trifles.

It is worth while for us, then, if we know that there are certain small things in our lives that are not quite right, to pay immediate attention to getting rid of them. They are so small, perhaps, that it seems to us as if we ought to give thought rather to larger things, but that is a great mistake. One little act of disobedience may cut its destructive way through the fibre of a whole life. One bit of careless rudeness may cost a young person his or her best chance of advancement in the world. One evil thought may open the way for the ruin of a soul. Tendencies and desires so small and secret that no one knows of them but ourselves may yet be as dangerous as the razor-edged silver of glass, hid away in the recesses of the machine—unseen, unsuspected, but, in the end, most fatal.

The best thing is to have our lives carefully freed from such dangerous invaders. It certainly took trouble to clean out the mill, but then how secure the owner felt, when it was all done, and he knew that each machine could do its work safely, and each yard of cloth be kept up to the standard in its weaving and finish! It costs—nobody can deny that—to be neat, punctual, polite, obedient, considerate, careful, thoroughly conscientious about our inner selves; but such a clean, safe life is a continual reward to the one who lives it. It will pay us to stop the wheels if we suspect something is not as it should be, and examine every tendency and habit and desire within us until we have gotten rid of even the smallest harmful thing that has crept in.—S. S. Visitor

THE STORK'S MESSAGE.

BY MARY GORGES.

Far away in Norway, there is a quiet little village where the figure of a stork appears, carved on the church and over many of the houses. All children in that village know the history of that stork, and how in return for kindness he saved the boy, Conrad, from hopeless misery.

Conrad and his mother once lived in this village. She was a widow, and this little lad was all she had to love in the world. God had implanted tenderness in the boy's heart for bird and beast, and he grew to love a stork which every summer built its nest on the house top.

When Conrad was grown to be a young man he went as a sailor, and set out for a distant land.

At first all went well with the sailor, but one day, when they were near to the coast of Africa, a number of pirates took the ship, and put the crew in irons, and on reaching port, sold them as slaves.

Conrad years after was toiling by himself one day in some lonely place, when a stork came flying close and wheeled about him. In a moment he thought of the days of his boyhood, of his home, his mother, and their yearly visitor.

He whistled as he used to do to call the bird long ago, and to his joy the stork came to him, as if to be fed.

At that moment Conrad's heart was full of tears and thanksgiving. It was as though a dear old friend had found him.

But Conrad's heart grew sad again as the time came for the bird to fly away to the North. Was it going to his mother's cottage? Was there any one to welcome it now and to feed it?

Suddenly a thought came to him. He might find help in the stork, and yet get away from his slavery. He managed to write a line or two on a scrap of paper, telling where he was and that he was a slave. This he tied firmly round the bird's leg, and committed his message to God's care.

Spring came again to the cold north lands, and with spring came the stork to seek its old nest. The widow's eyes grew bright at sight of the bird which reminded her of her lost boy, and she welcomed and fed it tenderly. As it took the food from her hand, she caught sight of the paper tied to its leg, and with some curiosity removed it. What was her joy to find it a message from her son?

She could scarcely believe her eyes as she read it. She ran hastily to the minister of the little parish to show the precious letter. The news spread through the village, and a cry went forth from every house, "We must send and redeem Conrad!"

They meant it, too. The next Sunday morning, they brought their money to the church, and each gave what he could for the widow's son. Then they chose one of their number to go to the king to lay the case before him, and get him to send a ship of war to the help of Conrad, such a one as no pirate dare touch.

It was done. To the simple faith of those times, it would have seemed disobeying the will of God had such a sign been neglected. The warship made good speed, and she was given good success, for the stork had not flown, on the autumn day when the bells of the church rang out, and all the people rejoiced with great joy, for the widow's son was redeemed, and was safely at home again in his mother's cottage.

Such is the story of the stork told in the quiet Norway village to this day—The Children's Friend.

FACING THE FOE.

BY ANNA F. BURNHAM.

"Oh, please let me do that?" begged Rhoda. "I hate cutting out dress skirts!"

Aunt Ruth dropped her shears on the cutting table and straightened her bent back, to give a sharp look at the eager face coaxing her.

"First time I ever heard hatin' to do a thing brought forrard as a reason for doing it!" she remarked, looking the girl over shrewdly.

"Oh, yes, Aunt Ruth," said Rhoda, "mother says that's the very reason. Face the foe! That's her motto that she's always brought us up on. If you don't, she says you go on dreading and dreading it for ever, and worse and worse as you put off trying it, and by and by you are incapable. She always makes us try to do everything we hate to do, and keep at it till we like it."

"Your mother's a master sensible woman," was Aunt Ruth's comment. "Here, take the shears, then. I was goin' to let you look on and see me do it. But you might as well make your mistakes and profit by 'em."

"There, sir," said Rhoda in triumph, fifteen minutes later. "That bugbear never will block my way again."

"Plecky way of doing," muttered Robert to himself, coming out of the window seat where he had been lounging over a Harper's Weekly instead of doing what he called "tackling" his debating club essay. "'Face the foe!' Did it too, like a soldier. Wonder how that rule would work on some of my 'bugbears'? There's that Christian Endeavour meeting to-night. Dick wanted I should lead it for him. I sneaked out of it by telling him I never did such a thing in my life. Believe in my heart I'll go and try it, Rhoda-fashion! Wouldn't she be surprised if she knew what she made me do with her old dressmaking lesson?"

A BOY WHO IS SUCCEEDING.

Every boy wishes to succeed, but few men are able to look upon a successful life. Why some boys are promoted more rapidly than some others is suggested by this story:

"A new boy came into our office today," said a wholesale grocery merchant to his wife at the supper table. "He was hired by the firm at the request of the senior member, who thought the boy gave promise of good things. But I feel sure that boy will be out of the office in less than a week."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because the first thing he wanted to know was just exactly how much he was expected to do."

"Perhaps you will change your mind about him."

"Perhaps I shall, but I don't think so."

Three days later the business man said to his wife: "About that boy you remember I mentioned three or four days ago. Well, he is the best boy that ever entered the store."

"How did you find that out?"

"In the easiest way in the world. The first morning after he began work he performed very faithfully and systematically the exact duties assigned, which he had been so careful to have explained to him. When he had finished he came to me and said, 'Mr. H., I have finished all that work. Now, what can I do?'

"I was greatly surprised, but I gave him a little job of work, and forgot all about him until he came into my room with the question, 'What next?' That settled it for me. I predict a successful career for that boy as a business man."

THE NEW GAME.

I think Charlie Keen will be a great inventor when he becomes a man, that is if he shows as much ingenuity in inventing useful things as he now shows in inventing games for the amusement of himself and his young brother and sister.

Mrs. Keen is a poor woman, and has never had much money to spend in buying her children toys. This is no drawback to their enjoyment. Toys they consider are rather a hindrance to play than otherwise.

Mrs. Keen takes in washing, and one day, when hanging her clothes out in the sweet country air, she looked up and saw Charlie crawling about on the green in front of the house with a clothes basket inverted on his back. Bobby and Alice were proceeding to follow his example. Peals of laughter reached her if by an awkward jerk the baskets rolled off the children's backs. She hastened to rescue her baskets, fearing that the children would dirty them. "We are playing at tortoises, mother," said Charlie.

"Yes, that is all very well, but if you dirty my baskets I shall have all my work to do over again." Charlie looked sorry, and carefully examined the baskets to see if there were any specks of dirt on them. He dearly loved his mother, and never gave her any trouble except by thoughtlessness, of which he always bitterly repented afterwards.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON TEMPERANCE.

Turn now to the temperance revolution. In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a vilier slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed—in it, more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it, no orphans starving, no widows weeping; by it, none wounded in feeling, none injured in interest. Even the dram-maker and dram-seller will have glided into other occupations so gradually as never to have felt the change, and will stand ready to join all others in the universal song of gladness. Happy day, when all appetites controlled, all passions subdued, all matter subjugated; mind, all-conquering mind, shall live and move the monarch of the world. Glorious consummation! Hail, fall of fury! Reign of reason, all hail!

And when the victory shall be complete—when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on earth—how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in that victory!

Gray Coat and Blue Eyes.

BY M. WINCHESTER ADAMS.

"Jack Frost has helped me, I knew he would,"
Said a squirrel with coat of gray;
"He has opened the burrs, the little nuts' furs,
In a most astonishing way."

And while he talked a wonderful breeze,
Scattered nuts on every side;
And he said: "Very soon, perhaps by noon,
My winter's store I can safely hide."

He worked away, this little Gray Coat,
As happy as happy could be,
Till he hid for his store a quart or more
In a hole at the foot of a tree.

He had covered them up with leaves of brown,
When some children, out nutting, too,
Came bounding along, with shout and with song,
Swinging their baskets bright and new.

And one little Blue Eyes found the nuts
Little Gray Coat had stored away,
"And she took them all, the large and the small,"
I think I hear somebody say.

Ah! no, she didn't, she left them there,
For my little Blue Eyes was good,
Now, which do you say, out nutting that day,
Was the happiest one in the wood?

"Be noble! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."
—Lowell.