

**Work and Play.**

THE boys were waiting in the road  
For Joe to come and play;  
"We'd like to know what keeps you so,"  
Impatiently cried they;  
"We've waited nearly half an hour;  
Do hurry, Joe!" they cried.  
"I'll be there when my work is done;  
Not till then," he replied.

"Come on! come on! the work can wait,"  
They urged, "till by and by."  
"It might, of course, but I don't think  
It well," was his reply;  
"When I've a task to do, I like  
To do it right away;  
Work first, my father says, then fun;  
And what he says I say."

Hurrah for Joe! Such talk as that  
Is what I like to hear;  
But many boys will not agree  
With Joe and me, I fear.  
Play first and last and all the time  
Would suit most boys, I know;  
But that, I'm very glad to say,  
Is not the way with Joe.

When you've a task to do, my boys,  
Don't put it off and say  
You'll do it when you've had your fun,  
But do it right away.  
This "putting off" soon forms, my lads,  
A habit to deplore;  
Who promptly does his work enjoys  
His pleasure all the more.

—Golden Days.

**OUR PAPER.**

THERE is nothing that children like better than to have a paper of their "very own." How the eyes of these little folk sparkle as they unfold their own paper, and with what delight they read it and look at the pictures together. We hope the young readers of the PLEASANT HOURS will enjoy it as much as these young folk are doing.

**NO!**

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

**CHAPTER XI.**

IT IS THE UNFORESEEN THAT HAPPENS.

"COME in here, then," said Mr. Gray, leading him into the directors' room, where a single cabinet-bed stood against the wall. "Here is where you will sleep. Come whenever you are ready. I have had a ventilator put in, as I dare not have the window up, and you must be sure to put up the shutters and bars every night; but leave your door open into the bank. Then, here is a spring in the floor. By treading on this heavily, you will touch a wire that rings a loud bell in the telegraph office next door. We have arranged with the night clerk to send for the police at once, if he hears that ring, and then come to your help himself. Here is your revolver and the box of cartridges, and to-night, after your supper, come to my house and I will show you how to use it."

So at night Jack took his first lesson in the use of a pistol. He had often fired a fowling-piece of his uncle's when Will and he were boys, but never had hit anything, much to Will's scorn. But he had been so little in the habit of hunting that this was not

strange. Now he set himself diligently to learn, and when this lesson was over went to the bank, let himself in at the door, secured the shutters, let down his bed, and though the dark solitude was a little eerie and oppressive he soon fell asleep, and had a long night of that dreamless rest so peculiar to youth and health. This continued his habit for a year, during which no alarm came near him. Every night he set the spring in the floor, and every day unfastened it, with a punctual persistence that was the effect of early training, for his mother had always given him some duty to attend to about the house ever since he was old enough. At first it was merely to pick up a small basket of brush or chips or bits of refuse wood to light Mimy's fire, but it was to be done every day, at the same hour, and when more important things were in question the same promptness and punctuality were always demanded, for Manice understood, what so few people do understand, that a habit cannot be taught too early, and that to insure constant obedience it must begin to be enforced even with the infant in arms.

But all this time Jack practiced with his revolver at every opportunity, and became a very good shot. It did not occur to him that there is a great difference between aiming at a plank and at a living man. He did not distrust at all the steadiness of his own hand in any emergency, but he always recalled the passage in his mother's letter about taking a sinful life away so suddenly, and had made a plan of resistance in a case of attack, resolving to shoot a burglar in the arm or leg, and then call the police to his aid.

But it is the unexpected that always happens. Jack woke up one night to find a man at his side and his own pistol pointed at his head.

"Get up!" said the burglar.

Jack turned his head, but before, in his surprise and terror, he could give the yell he meant to give, another man deftly inserted a gag in his mouth and quietly fastened it there.

Jack's fine plans were all defeated! With that revolver he was so familiar with close at his temple he was forced to rise, partially dress and walk out to the door of the vault. This was easily opened by the men, who had both tools and skill; but Jack knew that the safe inside was impregnable, and had a combination lock. This the burglars knew also.

"Now, young fellar!" said one of them, "do you know that combination?"

Jack could not speak and would not nod his head.

"Take that gag out, Jimmy," said his interlocutor, "this yer pistol is jest as good. It'll go off mighty quick if he don't tell! Now then!" as the gag was removed. "Do you know it?"

"Yes," said Jack who had recovered his self-possession, and oddly enough was roused by the pain the gag had

given him to a certain anger that cleared his brain and made his thoughts arrange themselves with alacrity.

"Tell it, then!"

"No," said Jack, coolly and sturdily.

"Tell it!" repeated the man, with a frightful oath, pressing the pistol a little closer to Jack's throbbing temple.

"I won't!" said Jack.

At that moment the slighter man dropped the gag, the burglar who held the pistol swore at him, and as the gag holder stooped and turned the glow of the dark lantern he held toward the floor it flashed across the back of his empty hand, and Jack saw a long white scar shine from the root of the thumb to the wrist. Where had he seen that scar before? He could not stop to remember, now was his time to fight. He dashed his right hand up against the pistol and knocked it out of the burglar's hand. It flew into the man's face and went off, but only for a moment stunned him. Jack leaped over the man with the lantern who had stooped to look for the gag, and rushed for the spring on the floor, gave it one powerful blow, and then another, before the pursuing burglar could get him in hand again. The gong in the next house rang out in the midnight stillness, and the door opened suddenly.

"We're done for, Jim; take that, you young rascal!" shouted the burglar, firing his pistol at Jack. The room was too dark for a sure aim, but a streak of fire seemed to hit Jack's shoulder. He felt very queer, and when he next opened his eyes two policemen and the telegraph clerk were standing over him as he lay on his bed, and the cold air from his wide-open window was pouring in on his face.

"Are they gone?" he asked, wondering why he could not speak louder.

"Bad luck to 'em; it's gone they are! an' entirely," answered one of the policemen. "Here, dhrink this, me lad, it'll give ye a bit o' life to tell about it."

"No!" said Jack, turning his head away from the offered flask; "give me some water out of that faucet. I feel queer enough; I don't want to be muddled any more."

"Bedad, then, an' bein' riddled in the shouldther's enough to muddle ye. A sup o' the whisky'll clear yer head; take a bit."

"No!" said Jack, with a face of disgust, eagerly drinking the cup of water the clerk brought him.

"Now, what is it?"

And in answer to their questions he told the short story of his encounter.

"Well, you're plucky," said the admiring clerk.

"Ye'd be a credit to the p'lice yer sel'," laughed Pat; but it's time we'd a doctor here; G'arge, run for the next wan; I believe the lad's swoandin' foreninst us!"

And so he was. There was a warm trickle down his arm, the gas danced as if the wind blew it, things seemed

to withdraw from before him, and a strange feeble calm to possess all his faculties. By the time Doctor Burns got there Jack was in a dead faint.

The doctor found on examination that the pistol ball had gone through the boy's shoulder, just grazing the bone; but he had bled a good deal and it had weakened him, though it was only a flesh wound and not dangerous, if no complications set in.

Jack smiled rather feebly in Mr. Gray's face the next morning when that gentleman came at an early hour to investigate matters.

"It's funny, isn't it?" he said; "that's just where I'd planned to shoot him. I didn't mean to kill him, and I had made up my mind to hit his shoulder, but he turned the tables on me."

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men,  
Gang aft a-gley,"

quoted Mr. Gray; "and I don't know why yours shouldn't, Jack; but you're a brave fellow, and you must not talk. Those two things are fixed facts. Doctor Burns is coming to-night in the carriage to fetch you to my house, and you'll find your mother there to nurse you, so now go to sleep," and with a friendly nod Mr. Gray left him.

But he did not sleep long, sweet and soothing as was the thought of his mother's care and love. There were people coming and going all day in the bank, and the chief of police had to come in and ask him a few questions.

These Jack answered as briefly as might be. He had not seen either man's face; each had spoken in a hoarse, low voice, evidently assumed; the pistol was his own, which he always had ready on a chair by his bed.

"Had he ever told any one where he kept his pistol?"

Not that he could remember. Mr. Gray had advised him not to talk about his resources or his precautions, and he could not recollect having done so.

Neither could he tell the height nor figure of his assailants; the man who held the pistol at his temple must have been, he thought, taller than he was, but he could not, in the uncertain gleam of the dark lantern, judge of his size at all.

Afterward, as he lay in Mr. Gray's house, and in the days of a recovery that seemed very tedious though really it was brief thought over all this adventure, he remembered the peculiar scar on the hand of the man who had gagged him; but though he became very sure in the reiterated recollection that he had seen that marked hand before, he could not tell to whom it belonged.

After a few weeks he resumed his place in the bank. The window of the room where he slept had been fortified with iron sash and shutters and a burglar-proof fastening, the warning spring removed to the floor by his bedside, and a strong leather case fastened to the side of his bed where