

Sunday School Advocate.

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LITTLE NITA AND HER COMPANIONS.

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For the Sunday School Advocate.



WHEN Nita was very little, she had a foolish and dangerous habit of pulling cups and jugs and basins over to her to see what was in them. Her Mamma determined to cure her of this: so, one winter night she said to the maid, "Pray leave a bowl of cold water on the dressing table, pretty near the edge, so that when Nita gets out of bed, she can reach to the bowl." Well, the moment Nita opened her eyes in the morning, she jumped out of her little bed, ran to the table, and, as usual, pulled over the vessel. Oh, dear! down came dashing the icy water over Nita's head and shoulders; and, of course, she had no clothing on except her tiny night dress! Poor Nita gasped and sobbed and trembled with the shock. Her Mamma had a dry night gown quite ready for her, and she requested the maid to remove the wet one, rub the frightened child very well, and put her back to bed for half an hour.

So ever after, Nita dreaded pulling vessels over to her, and she waited until she was served, or if the cup or bowl was not for her, she learned to walk away and not ask any questions about it.

Some time after, Nita was glad that she had been cured of her bad habits, when she heard of little Sophy having pulled a cup of boiling coffee over her neck, and having died of inflammation.

Nita had another bad habit: she was restless and fidgetty!—did not like to sit still for many minutes; and there are times when children ought to sit still; for instance, when the Bible is being read before family prayer, or when attending Divine worship. But Nita liked to be tying and untying her bonnet, or taking off and putting on her gloves, or nipping the hem of her little pocket-handkerchief, or counting the tucks on her frock, or moving about on her seat! Her Grandmamma took great pains to quiet this fidgetty child; she used to make her sit for half an hour on a little white marble stool at her feet, placing Nita's hands before her! The dear old lady used to have one of her own feet on this stool, while she sewed or while she read the Bible. I am sorry to say, that after all her pains, to make her little name-sake "sit pretty," one of Nita's hands would soon be found picking at the gold spangles on Grannie's velvet shoe, or scratching the high white ivory heel of it with a pin!! So the old lady thought it would be best to employ Nita's restless fingers usefully; and she taught her to knit, first garters and then stockings; and Mamma taught her to sew very neatly, and gave her bits of calico and silk to make doll's clothes, and Nita was very happy to be employed; she liked it far better than sitting "pretty."

Her Mamma took her to church one Sunday, and Nita happened to have a new silk tippet or pelerine, with broad ribbon strings. She amused herself, during the sermon, tying and untying these strings, and rolling and unrolling them. How very wrong this, was! Well, what do you think? Nita was just opposite to the minister, and when she looked up at him, he made an awful pause in his sermon, looked restless Nita full in the face, and shook his long finger at her! The tears came in her eyes, and she dropped the strings. Indeed, I believe, she put her two hands under her, for fear she should be tempted to fidget any more. But her punishment was not

yet at an end, for the tall minister came up to her after service, and shook his dreadful long finger at her again, before the people! Oh! was it not frightful! Nita cried sadly, and went home in disgrace.

Another time, she was on a visit at her uncle's house, which was situated near a large lake. Nita was very happy here; there were rabbits and flowers and fruit, and a fine large green lawn, and there were plenty of little story books. Nita does not remember a time that she could not read, her Mamma taught her so very young; so Nita was delighted to spend a month at her uncle's pleasant house. One day she was walking along the edge of the lake and there stood an empty tub left by the servant. Foolish Nita thought she should like to play at sailing! so she got into the tub and contrived to push it out from the shore a great piece! of course, she did not sit still, and the tub went to one side, and Nita would have been drowned, if a grown up cousin, who was returning from fowling or fishing, had not seen the child, and plunged in to rescue her. She got a good fright that time, I can tell you.

Well, a good while after this, when Nita returned to her own home, her Papa said to her one day, "I have some good news for you, my dear little girl; your Mamma and I are invited to spend next Wednesday at Rose Hill, and Mrs. T. has desired us to bring you; so if I get a good report of you at school, you shall go with us." Well, Nita's Papa did get a good report of her from her teacher, (for Nita always learned her lessons well) and when Wednesday came, she was the happiest child to be found anywhere.

The sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing, school books were hidden away for the day, and there were all Nita's nice clean clothes laid out for her; her clean, white frock, with the forty-eight little tucks; her nice petticoats, Spencer and bonnet; her new stockings, with the silk spots, and glory of glories; her new olive-coloured kid shoes. Her Mamma came to wash and dress her, and while so doing, she gave Nita many injunctions as to her behaviour during the day. Of course the happy child made all sorts of promises, and she intended to keep them too. Nita said her prayer, and went down to breakfast; she saw the car at the door, and she saw nurse and baby dressed. Well, I fear that during family prayer, Nita's thoughts ran too much on the dog-berry necklace, and the rush cap that she intended to make at Rose Hill—not to speak of the blackberries which she meant to gather. It was autumn, Nita had spent a day at this house before this time, and she knew all its attractions.

At last Papa, and Nurse, and baby were placed on one side of the car, and Mamma and Miss Fidget on the other. When near Rose Hill she began to move about, and her Mamma said, "Sit still, child." Nita did as she was desired immediately, but the next minute her joy made her forget again, and she clapped her hands and danced her feet up and down! Papa was obliged to drive through a swollen stream, a little river, and just as the car was in the deepest part, my little lady gave a hitch, and away she went up to the waist in muddy water! Her Papa could not give up the reins to come round to her, and she was obliged to scramble up as well as she could with her Mamma's assistance, and sit dripping and shivering until the party reached Rose Hill. The moment Nita arrived she was undressed and put to bed for the day, while her clothes were washed and dried. This was not accomplished until after tea, when it was time to return home. Oh, how broken-hearted was poor Nita! No roses, no black-berries, no dog-berry necklace, no rush cap, no racing about, no run to Fairy Hill; and what vexed her still more, was to hear the lady of the house, in the next room, tell-

ing all the pleasures Nita *might have had*. This accident proved to be a sad, though an useful lesson to this restless child, and I am happy to say she really got cured of her faults, and did her very best to remain quiet at proper times.

One story more, and that is all for the present. One summer day, Nita was going to school; she had a long way to walk, and the sun was hot and the flags were hot also. Nita lived in a large city. She overtook three other little girls going to the same school, and she joined them. Mary and Sophy were sisters, Theodosia was no relation to any of the party; she was a class-mate of Nita's, and just the same age—seven.

The four children passed a large stall or standing where were cakes, sweets, and tempting oranges. Mary and Sophy said they had pennies, and that they would buy each a nice cooling orange, as they were so warm and so tired. Theodosia said she had no penny, but that she would just stop to look at the oranges. This was very foolish, indeed. Nita knew that she had no penny either, and she thought it would be better not to stop and look at the oranges; she remembered the story of Eve; so she went on to the school alone. She was very glad she did go on, for you shall hear a sad tale.

While Mary and Sophy were choosing their oranges, the Devil tempted Theodosia to stoop and smell the large one, that lay just before her on the stall. She did what the wicked one whispered her to do. Then he tempted her to touch it, and feel how soft it was. She again obeyed the Devil; and then he whispered her to take it—that is, steal it! She thought to herself, "perhaps the orange woman will see me." The wicked one suggested, "open your little satchel and just give the orange the slightest tip, and in it goes, and then you can draw the string tightly." Unfortunate Theodosia did all this, and thought no one had seen her theft, forgetting that God's eye was upon her. And although the orange woman did not see her, Sophy saw her. A quarrel took place that day in school, and Sophy disclosed the whole affair. Oh, dear! what an awful business that was! and how glad little Nita was that she had not been led "into temptation" that morning.

When such dreadful things took place in this school, the bell was rung; orders were given to suspend business; sixty young ladies, aged from six to twenty, were obliged to stand during the trial. Every governess stood at the head of her own class, to maintain profound silence! The culprit was brought out, the witnesses were examined, and then followed the awful punishments, too dreadful to mention! Let every little child pray to God to keep her from sin!

"EVIL COMMUNICATIONS CORRUPT GOOD MANNERS."—"Ah! my son, my son, I am very sorry to see you in such company. You may think it very manly to lounge on the corner of the street, and puff away at a cigar, with that swaggering young loafer, who has long since grown too manly to go to church and Sabbath-school. I am very sorry to see you prefer the verandah of that pest to the village, the drinking saloon, to the quiet pew in the village church. Alas, my boy, you are on the highway to ruin; all that fine talk of Fred's about 'jolly times,' means the theatre, the gambling house, the race-course and his master's till! Don't you see that policeman looking at you round the corner? ay, he is saying to himself, 'Fast boys will need my services soon.' 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.'"

To teach well is a higher attainment than to rule well.