

A Case of Deafness Cured.

(By S. Jennie Smith.)

'Harry, dear, bring mamma that paper, will you?'

Harry turned slowly from the window, out of which he had been looking, with wistful eyes, and answered, 'Ma'am?'

Mrs. Wright repeated her request. 'Ma'am?'

In a louder and more emphatic tone the mother said, 'I asked you to bring me that paper that is near you.'

'Oh!' and the little fellow cheerfully complied.

'Are we going out soon, mamma?' he inquired.

'Yes, when I finish your jacket.'

'Ma'am?'

Mrs. Wright answered again, this time impatiently.

'Oh!'

Then Harry returned to his position by the window.

Mr. Wright, who was sitting near his wife, looked up from the morning newspaper, and remarked, 'Stella, I really believe that boy is getting deaf.'

'I do, too. In fact, he seems to grow more so every day.'

'Then he must be attended to at once. Suppose while you are out this morning you just stop in Dr. Reynolds's with him.'

'That would be a good idea, and I am going that way.'

Thus it happened that an hour later found Mrs. Wright and Harry in Dr. Reynolds's office. The good old man looked curiously at the rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed boy, and said, 'It can't be possible that there's anything the matter with this little fellow.'

'Not as regards his health, Doctor; but he's getting very deaf. I have to speak to him two or three times before he hears me. His teacher complains of it, too. He never seems to hear what she says.'

'That's serious. Are you compelled to speak in a very loud tone?'

'I'll let you see for yourself,' said Mrs. Wright. Then turning to Harry, who was engrossed in a study of some pictures on the wall and was apparently paying no attention to this conversation, she asked, 'Do you like those pictures, dear?'

'Ma'am?'

The question was repeated, with the same result.

Then Mrs. Wright asked in a decidedly loud tone, 'Do you like those pictures?' and Harry replied, 'Yes, ma'am; they're very pretty.'

When the mother looked again at Dr. Reynolds she was surprised to see an expression of doubt on his countenance. 'Don't you think he is very deaf, doctor?' she inquired.

'I have yet to discover that fact, Mrs. Wright.'

Taking a child's photograph from the mantel he showed it to Harry, and said, in an ordinary tone, 'This is a picture of my little girl.'

'Sir?'

'You heard what I said,' the doctor quietly remarked.

'Yes; and have you got any pictures of your little boys?'

'No; but you run over by the window and look out. Perhaps you will see them playing on the street.'

'Sir?'

'Do as I tell you.'

Harry instantly obeyed.

'Now, Mrs. Wright,' said the old man, turning with a smile to the astonished mother, 'you see his deafness is merely inat-

tention and a habit he has contracted of saying "Ma'am" or "Sir" every time he is spoken to. And you have helped him along by falling into the habit of repeating your questions. Just speak to him once and make him understand that once must suffice.'

'I see I was mistaken, and yet I have an idea that he wouldn't hear me as readily as he did you.'

'Speak to him now and find out.'

Calling Harry to her, Mrs. Wright told him to get his hat. She spoke in a lower tone than she generally used, and was answered with the usual 'Ma'am?'

Warned by the doctor's glance, she refrained from repeating her command.

'Oh! are we going now?' the child asked, after a slight pause.

'I see you are thoroughly convinced,' said the doctor, as Mrs. Wright arose to go, 'and it remains for you to break yourself and him of these habits you have formed. I assure you that many a case of deafness could be cured in this way. Not only children, but grown people, constantly cause unnecessary repetition of remarks or questions. The habit is more common than you would imagine. I advise you to inform Harry's teacher of this mistake, and she will no doubt aid you in breaking him of the habit. It will save you both considerable annoyance, and benefit the child, too.'

Of course, Mrs. Wright acted on the doctor's suggestion, and now Harry replies when he is spoken to the first time.—'Advocate and Guardian.'

The Three Paths.

A DAY DREAM

I thought I was one of a large party of tourists journeying to some far-off region. We were halting at an hotel and arranging together for our journey on the morrow. There seemed to be three different ways of reaching our destination, and we were discussing which would prove most pleasant, safe, and expeditious.

An elderly gentleman spoke first.

'No one here, I suppose, would think of taking the lower path to the left?'

'Why not?' said a young man. 'It looks pleasant enough, and seems easy walking.'

'My dear fellow,' said the old gentleman, 'you would soon find the walking a great deal too easy, in fact. You slide nearly all the way, and the ravines and fearful precipices are said to be appalling. No one who values his neck would venture far on that road; besides which, you would meet none but low, vulgar travellers. All sensible people, which, of course, includes the present company'—here the old gentleman smiled and bowed—'will, I am sure, choose the middle path, with its easy footway, clear air, and most charming views. I think we are all agreed on that point?'

Then a timid-looking lady mildly suggested, 'I think I have been told that this middle path is not free from dangers, and that travellers have sometimes lost their way and fallen into those terrible ravines you spoke of before. Is it so?'

'My dear lady,' said the old gentleman, smiling cheerily, 'that is only a scare for the weak-minded and timid, with little or no foundation, I assure you. Year after year thousands pass that way quite safely if they are fairly careful, and keep their wits about them. Now and then an unwary one has an awkward tumble, but if you keep well to the middle of the path you are safe as in church.'

'Are these the only paths?' still asked the lady anxiously.

'No, madam; there is a third which I should advise all to take,' answered a young man who had not yet spoken. 'The high path to the right is perfectly safe, and, when you have got over a little uneven ground at starting, extremely pleasant. The youngest child may pass that way in safety.'

'Yes,' sneered the young man who spoke first, 'it is only fit for children and old women. No man of the least pluck would take that path.'

'Excuse me,' returned the other, 'I have traversed that path often, and I do not consider myself devoid of the quality you mention—but I think, sir,' turning to the elderly speaker, 'you are hardly aware of the dangers of the middle path. The scenery is certainly lovely, and the air, as you say, is very fine, and thousands pass tolerably safely along it; but what of the many who, tempted by the flowers and ferns growing at the side, find the earth gradually crumble under their feet, and are dashed from rock to rock below? I speak from bitter experience, for my only brother was one of the many victims whom I have known and loved.'

There was some little silence at this. Then the old gentleman spoke again.

'Of course this is very sad, and anyone who feels at all timid about it had better take the safe route, but I must still adhere to my first notion that the path is safe enough for careful people. There are many beautiful little by-paths, too, which, I am told, are very inviting and easy.'

'Let me warn you, sir,' said the young man, earnestly, 'against those pleasant-looking by-paths. They one and all lead down to the fearful ravines which are the terror of the lower path, and anyone following their deceitful windings must lose either his way or his life. I beg of you all to do as I intend to do—take the safe path to the right, and by so doing ensure a safe journey for ourselves and set a good example to our fellow-tourists at the same time.'

'I shall certainly go your way,' said the lady, 'for I have my two little children with me, and therefore must run no risks.'

So the party divided; no one started for the dangerous lower road, but the elderly gentleman, with by far the greater number, took the middle path, while the lady with her children and a few young men and ladies followed their escort to the higher road.

Then, strangely enough, I seemed to see my travellers arrive at the end of their journey. Ah! but not all as they set out. Of those who chose the middle path some few had walked warily, and beyond a little dust and heat were apparently none the worse for their journey, but all the rest of the party had suffered more or less. Some, in spite of the warning, had wandered down the by-paths, which looked so inviting, and it was feared had slipped down to the treacherous lower path, being quite lost to the view of their anxious friends, while several were torn and bleeding by the briars and thorns, and bruised and wearied with frequent stumbles on the uneven ground. Among them was the old gentleman, his clothes soiled with the dust and his legs shaking with fatigue, but still holding obstinately to his old notion that it was the proper path to take. Meanwhile the party from the higher path came in sight, fresh, bright, and happy as when they started, the children skipping along laden with flowers, ferns, and wild fruits, and all loud in the praise of their enjoyable journey. Then I awoke, and pondered the meaning of my dream.

Three paths lie before each of us. Which are we taking? Few, if any, set out for the drunkard's path—the lowest and worst; but how many, taking the popular middle course of moderation, drift down the by-paths, and at last find themselves sliding into a drunkard's grave, while others escape with weakened constitutions, impaired intellect, and broken fortunes. But the high path of total abstinence is safe, right, and pleasant for all of us—for those who are weak and tempted the only path. But those of us who are strong, let us fulfil the great Apostle's injunction to 'bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.' Let us join the ranks of earnest men and women and the thousands of little children who, with faces heavenward, are thronging the higher, holier path that leads to purity and peace.—T. W. in the 'Cardiff Abstinence.'