

north side; but the question was, how was it to be shown on the south side?

This was the puzzle.

"I'll do it," said Victor in a whisper.

The two gentlemen uttered exclamations of surprise, and asked Victor if he had heard all.

"Yes," said Victor, "I have, and I know just what to do. My father's house is just outside of the south gate, and it has a dormer-window in the garret that is very high. I can go there and make the signal, and no one will be the wiser."

"But the guards?" said the mayor.

"Oh! I can get past them," said Victor.

"I can be sly when I choose."

"And it will be dangerous."

"I don't mind that. All that I want to know is, when is the light to be shown?"

"Directly," responded the mayor; "as soon as possible. The light on the northern side is already shining. I suppose the soldiers are marching now."

Then he began to whisper to his friend.

They quickly agreed that it would be wrong to trust such an errand to a child, and they both arose, and went to the next room to find if there was any one present who was fit to undertake the task. They closed the door.

"They won't let me go," said Victor.

"They think I am too small. We'll see about that."

He crept out of his chair, and noiselessly took his crutches and his cap, and crossed the room.

He got to the entry. He opened the front door, and peered out. It was very dark. He saw no one. He emerged carefully upon the step, closed the door, and hobbled cautiously away.

Victor made his way very cautiously. He knew if he was caught he would be detained as a prisoner at once. Now he hid behind a flight of steps, now behind a statue, now behind a cart, and a barber's pole. He dodged here and there, always with his eyes open.

He came to the gate. There were three sentinels here. There was one on each side, and one in the very centre. The gate was open. Here was a perplexity. How could he pass these guards? He reflected. If he could only get them all on one side, then he might succeed in escaping. How was he to do this?

He suddenly hit upon an idea. He felt around on the ground for a stone. He found one. He then silently stood up, and threw it up with all his force against a window in a grocer's shop on the other side of the street.

There was a great crash. Instantly the three soldiers cocked their muskets, and ran thither.

The coast was clear. Victor sprang along with his crutches, passed the critical spot, and in another moment he was before his own house.

He had been given the key by his father when they had left the place in the afternoon, and he now drew it from his pocket and entered the little door.

He stopped a moment to smell the sweet air, and then went in and locked the door behind him. Then he breathed freely.

He felt his way to the cupboards, and took from them four candlesticks.

Then he went up the first flight of stairs. These stairs had a door at the top, and Victor, with great difficulty, pushed several pieces of furniture against it, so that it could not be opened. Then he proceeded to the garret. He barricaded this door also.

He was now alone in the top of the house. Far, far above him was the roof, which came to a point forty feet overhead. Seventy feet over his head was the dormer-window he had told the mayor of. Anyone could reach this window by getting up a ladder. Victor laid his crutches down, and began to work himself up this awkward pair of steps.

He had to toil, for his weak limbs could scarcely support him; but he finally succeeded, and rested on the platform beside the window.

He produced his tallow candles and the candlesticks and a box of lucifer matches. He arranged the candles in a row. Then he thought he would look out of the window before he lit them. He cautiously raised the sash. The air was cool. In the daytime one could see from here a most beautiful valley filled with villages, and watered with beautiful

streams, but now Victor could see nothing. He heard, however, many things. First, the sound of voices in the street, then the sound of rattling waggons, then the trampling of horses and the calls of the drivers. Now and then there would come a drum beat, and now and then the ring of some musket butt, as it came down upon the pavement.

"Ah," said Victor, "these Germans are away out there, are they? I shouldn't wonder if they fired at me." He looked around. No, not a light was to be seen. It was a critical moment. Victor might well have quailed. When he lighted the candles the soldiers would rush into the house (if they could) and he would be terribly treated. Perhaps they would shoot him.

Still he trembled. He felt a cold perspiration came out of his skin. He shut down the window. Then he took a match in his shaking hand, and tried to strike it. It broke. Then he tried another, but it went out. He tried a third. It burned well.

He lit the first candle, then the second, then the third. He could not light the fourth, because the wick was cut off close. There was now a bright glare of light streaming out of the window. Victor heard his heart go thump! thump! He drew back as far as he could. He was waiting. All was silent.

A few seconds passed. Then the light was discovered. A crash of the glass in the window took place, and this was followed by the report of a musket.

"They have fired at me," said Victor; and he calmly proceeded to light one of the three candles that had been blown out. Then the fierce shouts arose from the street; but Victor did not understand them. Then there was another shot and another.

"They don't like it," said Victor.

One shot struck a rafter, another broke a second pane. All at once a roar filled the air, and the next instant a cannon-ball from a field-piece struck the roof and knocked over a part of the chimney. At the same moment Victor heard loud blows upon the doors below him, and a multitude of voices full of anger and fury.

The shots flew thick and fast. The cannon boomed for the second time, and another ball penetrated the garret. One of the candles was knocked over.

"I suppose my turn will come pretty soon," said Victor.

And it did.

From some musket there travelled a swift bullet that burst through the thin boarding and struck the boy's shoulder. He cried out, but he did not fall. He saw one of the candles totter; he seized it, lighted it by the next, and set it up again, and then sank down with his white face upon the rough boards, and knew no more.

An hour after, there was a fierce battle in the very streets, for the French came up from the north and south, and the Germans found themselves surrounded, and they surrendered after a desperate struggle.

They discovered Victor after it was all over. The mayor took him to his own house, and every day, until he was able to go out again, a crowd of people waited in front of the mansion to see the pale and wasted child when he was wheeled up to the window at noon.

"Long live Victor!" they cried, and he would smile and raise his hand gently, and then they would wheel him away again.

But it was when he got back among his roses and marigolds, that he was happiest, and never did boy have more friends than he.

LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME.

A few months ago, during one of the severe storms that visited Colorado, a young man perished in sight of home. In his bewilderment he passed and re-passed his own cottage, to lie down and die almost in range with the "light in the window" which his young wife had placed there to guide him home.

All alone she watched the long night through, listening in vain for the footsteps that would come no more; for, long before the morning dawned, the icy touch of death had forever stilled that warm, loving heart. The sad death was

made still sadder by the fact that he was lost in sight of home, lost when he had almost reached the haven of safety and rest.

How many wanderers from the Father's house are lost in sight of home, in the full glare of the Gospel light! They have the open Bible overflowing with its calls and promises, the faithful warnings from the sacred desk, the manifestations of Providence, all tending to direct their steps heavenward; and yet they turn away, waiting for the more convenient season, and are lost at last in sight of the many mansions.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, APRIL 25, 1896.

THE FOX UNDER THE CLOAK.

BY JOHN YOUNG.

There is an old fable story which tells of a Spartan boy, who had a little fox that he was very fond of. He used to carry it about under his cloak, and it was always with him. But a fox is not a good thing to make a friend of. It has no affection for man, and is not to be trusted. "There is a hole in my vest," the boy said to his mother. "Will you please mend it?" "Yes," the mother said, "leave it with me when you go to bed, and it shall be right for you in the morning." And so it was. But the next night the boy said, "Mother, that hole has come into my vest again." "That is strange," the mother answered, "for I thought I mended it well, but let me have it, and I will try again." And she put an extra strong patch on. The next night the boy said, "That hole has come in again." Suspecting something wrong, the mother said, "Holes don't come in, they are worn or made in. What is that you are always carrying under your cloak?" "Nothing, mother, only my little fox, that is all." "Oh, I see," the mother replied, "it is that fox that is doing all the mischief. You must not carry it about any more." The boy was astonished to hear that, and took the fox in his arms and kissed and cuddled it, and said, "Dear little thing, I am sure you would not bite a hole in my vest now, would you?" Again the hole was mended, and again and again it came; and the mother scolded the boy for carrying the fox under his cloak, but he only kissed and hugged it more, until at last she said, "I shall mend that hole no more." After a while the boy went home in pain, and said, "Mother, something does hurt me here," placing his hand on his breast. "Take your things off and let me see what it is." And he took them off. "Ah, it is that fox again, you foolish boy. It has eaten right through your clothes until it has got to your body, and if you don't cease carrying it under your cloak it will kill you." But the boy gave it an extra squeeze and covered its

face with kisses, and said, "Dear little thing, I am sure you would not hurt me now would you?" And the story goes on to say that the fox continued to eat its way through the body until it got to the heart; and the poor foolish boy died.

It is only a fable story, but it has lessons. Secret sins, like the fox under the cloak, do great mischief. Yet how many people, young and old, indulge in them. It is not necessary that I name the sins, they are known well enough to those that cherish them; but I want to warn my young readers against them. They are terrible things. They grieve God, destroy peace, depress and worry the mind; they impair the spiritual appetite, and take away the desire for good things; they weaken the moral character, and lower the tone of the Christian life; they made us less manly, less noble, less Christ-like, and in the end completely ruin the soul, for "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

Perhaps nobody knows what the secret sin is that you are cherishing. You would blush, be frightened, and very much ashamed if you thought your father or mother knew, or your brothers or sisters, or even your companions. Keep it under your cloak, but it is working its deadly mischief all the same, and it is sure to come out in some way or another. But if it never should come out, and if nobody on earth should ever know about it, God knows. He sees under the cloak. The Psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

It were well for us all to give attention to this matter, and see if there be any fox under our cloak, any secret sin marring our life, and if so offer the prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MAY 3, 1896.

A Citizen of Zion.—Psalm 15. 1-3.

The site of the temple was known as Mount Zion, in consequence of which the temple service was often spoken of by the same name. The word Zion is often typically used of the Church on earth and in heaven. The text describes those whose worship in the sanctuary is acceptable to God.

THE UPRIGHT WALKER.

The term "walk" often means a man's whole life. Here it signifies an upright, consistent, holy deportment. There is nothing low or despicable about such a one, no act that excites disgust, or brings reproach upon the profession.

WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It is very easy to talk about religion, but talking is a small part of Christianity, though by no means an unimportant part, but holy living is what tells the tale. A light-house never makes a noise, but it always sheds light, but for which the mariner would not know how to steer his vessel.

SPEAKETH TRUTH.

Lying is abominable wherever seen, but sometimes falsehood is felt in the heart, when it is not spoken in the life. Those who intend to get to heaven must be true both inwardly and outwardly. The heart must feel exactly what the tongue utters.

NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS.

The former are the positive features, now we have the negative or opposite. There must be no backbiting, either with the tongue or in the heart. No wrong must be done to a neighbour, and no evil report must be believed until it has been proved, and even then the less said about it the better.

Come and return unto the Lord. Only acknowledge your transgressions, for it is written, "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whose confesseth and forsaketh it, shall find mercy." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" "Through his name, who soever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins."