

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

"ONLY TRIFLES."

When tempted to scorn the little duties of our calling, let us think of such sayings as the following. One day a visitor at Michael Angelo's studio remarked to that great artist, who had been describing certain little finishing "touches" lately given to a statue—"But those are only trifles." "It may be so," replied the sculptor; "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." In the same spirit the great painter Poussin accounted for his reputation in these words, "Because I have neglected nothing." It is related of a Manchester manufacturer, that, on retiring from business, he purchased an estate from a certain nobleman. The arrangement was that he should have the house with all its furniture just as it stood. On taking possession, however, he found that a cabinet which was in the inventory had been removed; and on applying to the former owner about it, the latter said: "Well, I certainly did order it to be removed; but I hardly thought you would have cared for so trifling a matter in so large a purchase." "My Lord," was the reply, "if I had not all my life attended to trifles, I should not have been able to purchase this estate; and, excuse me for saying so, perhaps if your lordship had cared more about trifles, you might not have had occasion to sell it."

Galileo's discovery of the pendulum was suggested to his observant eye by a lamp swinging from the ceiling of Pisa cathedral. A spider's net suspended across the path of Sir Samuel Brown, as he walked one dewy morning in his garden, was the prompter that gave to him the idea of his suspension bridge across the Tweed. So trifling a matter as the sight of seaweed floating past his ship, enabled Columbus to quell the mutiny which arose amongst his sailors at not discovering land, and to assure them that the eagerly sought New World was not far off. Galvani observed that a frog's leg twitched when placed in contact with different metals, and it was this apparently insignificant fact that led to the invention of the electric telegraph. While a bad observer may "go through a forest and see no fire-wood," a true seer learns from the smallest things and apparently the most insignificant people. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson to a fine gentleman just returned from Italy, "some men will learn more in the Hampstead stage than others in the tour of Europe." Wellington's achievements were mainly owing to the fact that he personally attended to such minutiae as soldiers' shoes, camp-kettles, biscuits, horse fodder; and it was because Nelson attended to detail in respect of time that he was so victorious. "I owe," he said, "all my success in life to having been always a quarter of an hour before my time." "Every moment lost," said Napoleon, "gives an opportunity for misfortune." Well would it have been for himself—as his bitter end proved—had this European ruler known another fact—that every moment selfishly employed is worse than lost, and "gives an opportunity for misfortune!" However, he attributed the defeat of the Austrians to his own greater appreciation of the value of time. While they dawdled he overthrew them.

By little foxes tender grapes are destroyed, according to Solomon. Little foxes are very cunning and most difficult to catch; and so are those little temptations by which our moral natures are gradually eaten away. The tender grapes of many a Christian branch are destroyed by such little foxes as temper, discontent, avarice, vanity. Many who could resist much greater sins yield to these. There is an excitement in the very greatness of a trial of temptation which enables us to resist it; while the chase after little foxes is dull and uninteresting. No wonder that when we analyze the lives of those who have ruined themselves morally, we generally discover that

It was the little rift within the lute,
That, ever widening, slowly silenced all;
Or little pitted speck in garnered fruit,
That, rotting inward, slowly mouldered all.

How many people are almost successful, missing their aim by "Oh, such a little!" Minutiae in these cases make or mar us. "If I am building a mountain," said Confucius, "and stop before the last basketful of earth is placed on the summit, I have failed." The examination is lost by half a mark. One neck nearer and the race would have been won. The slightest additional effort would have turned the tide of war. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of

God," were solemn words, making the terrible difference between almost and altogether.—*Chambers' Journal*.

NOVEL USES OF THE TELEPHONE.

Various are the surprises which blossom out of that wonderful instrument, the telephone. In France they have applied it for marine purposes. The French war steamer "Desaix" had to tow out from Toulon the old ship "Argonaute." A conducting wire was rolled round one of the towing cables, with an end on board each vessel. The electric current was formed by the action of the sea on the copper-sheathing of the ships. A telephone was introduced in the circuit on each, and communication established between them. During the whole time of the navigation conversation could be carried on as easily between the officers of the two vessels as if they had been seated in the same cabin. The next step was to apply the telephone to the work of the diver. One of the glasses of the helmet is replaced by a copper plate, in which is inserted a telephone; so that the man has only a slight movement of the head to make in order to receive communications or report observations. The advantages of such an arrangement are obvious. Frequently at sea the necessity arises of examining the keel or bottom of a ship. The diver descends, and is able to give an account of all he sees and does and receive instructions without having to be brought to the surface to give explanations, as has hitherto been the case. By the use of the telephone a man at the bottom of the sea can remain in constant verbal communication with those at the surface. But the most singular application of the telephone comes from New South Wales, where Mr. Severn, an enthusiastic experimenter, claims that he has made the deaf to hear with it. After describing a very simple telephone which he constructed out of a tin pot, the closed end of which he opened and tied over it a piece of parchment, pass a fine string through the centre and making a knot inside, Mr. Severn says: "Make a loop in the string some three feet long, put this loop over the forehead of the listener (the deaf man), cause him to place the palms of his hands flat and hard against the ears, let the loop pass over the hands, and now this listener will hear the smallest whisper, let him be deaf or not. This fact may appear extraordinary; it is, nevertheless, true that a deaf man may thus be made to hear the voice, music, etc."—*The Tribune*.

BE KIND TO THE LIVING.

We live in a world where nothing is sure. To-day our friends are about us in the freshness and bloom of health and spirits; to-morrow we bend in anguish over their still forms; and it is well if no bitter regrets mingle with the tears we shed upon their white faces. Oh, life is insecure, and the brightest and most promising of all our treasures may, perhaps, soonest droop and fade. And when one dies, how anxious we are to do him homage! We speak of his virtues, we excuse his faults, and spread the mantle of charity over his vices, which, while he lived, we had no patience with. If we only had, we might have won him to a better life. Had we exercised toward him a little of the forbearance and kindness with which we now speak of him, he had had fewer faults. How often his heart ached and cried out for human sympathy—for our sympathy—we may never know; and if we could, it is too late to undo the past, too late to soothe and benefit him. We may not take up the broken threads of the life that is gone and weave them into a web of hope and joy; but toward those who are still left to us, who have ears to hear, and hearts to throb with pain and grief, we may be generous and just, forgiving, loving and kind.

Do not wait till the faithful, devoted wife, who has tried so hard to make your home pleasant and comfortable, is dead, to show her kindness. No funeral pomp, no costly monument with loving words inscribed thereon, will make up for past neglect. Could the fond kisses that are now imprinted on her cold lips, and the murmured words of endearment that fall unheeded upon her ear, have been hers while living, there would have been no woman in all this wide world fonder or happier than she.

Do not wait till the hands of the tired, patient mother are folded over the heart that has so often thrilled with joy, or beaten wildly with pain on your account, to do her honor. By the memory of all the loving offices which she has performed for you from

infancy all the way up to manhood or womanhood, keep your love for her deep and ardent, dutifully respect and reverence her, repay with interest the tender love and care that she has lavished upon you, and strive to make her last days restful, happy, and peaceful.

Be especially kind to the little ones. The world will deal harshly enough with them; it is a rough world at the best. Surround them with an atmosphere of love, and instil into their hearts noble feelings and principles while you may; for, sooner than you think, other and less holy influences will be brought to bear upon them.

Be kind to the sad, the sorrowful, the unfortunate, the erring, and the fallen. Kind words and kindly acts cannot hurt them, and may do them a world of good.

THE COMMUNE.

Since the scenes of last year, Communism has not flourished in Pittsburg. The working-men of that city see more clearly than those in some other places the danger of following foreign agitators. Indeed, the city is mission ground, great Communist lights from other cities being sent to it. The efforts of these visitors are not highly appreciated, if we may judge from the slim audiences they draw. The "Banner" tells of two meetings from which law-abiding people may take much encouragement, the attendance being small, as the speakers were rabid in their utterances. While most of them were satisfied with the usual claim for a division of property, no ownership in land, etc., one, Mr. McNeil, of Massachusetts, openly advised murder. The Mollie Maguires, he declared, should have shot Tom Scott, and "the first blood should be that of the capitalists." Men who urge such views are the enemies of every law-abiding citizen. We have confidence that the bone and sinew and brain of our land will not be led by such talk. Other agitators are less plain and more dangerous. They compare the wealth and luxury of the few with the poverty of the many, and urge that all should fare alike and have common ownership in property. Many who hear them do not stop to think that, under the state of things they propose, there could be no inducement to effort, no incentive to industry, but the worker and the drone would fare alike. What working-man, even though his lot be hard, is willing to yield his right to what he earns, and to give up the provision for old age or those he may leave behind? The laws of property are for the benefit of all alike, and operate against those only who would live by the sweat of other brows than their own. It is true that some workers are favored, while others are unfortunate; but this is not the fault of the laws.

The idea that a division of property would cure all ills is equally vain. It would cure nothing. For a time every man would have money; but in time there would be the same inequality. Those who work would, with some exceptions, accumulate; while those who idle would spend and be poor. A new division would be required. One man has a dollar; another has nothing. They divide. The first man works a day and earns a dollar more; the other spends his share for beer. There must be a new divide; the thing must be kept equal. Such equality is anything but equal. It is, indeed, the worst form of oppression. And yet this is practically what Communist agitators demand.

BLUNDERS.

Few attributes of character are more charming than the faculty of gracefully acknowledging one's errors. The man who makes a blunder and sticks to it is a person with whom argument or controversy becomes impossible. The trouble and time spent in attempting to convince him of the truth are completely wasted; for he will still believe that what he has advanced must be right, even in the face of actual demonstration that it is wrong. On the other hand, of the action of one who will admit with frank and ready courtesy that he has been mistaken it may be said that it "blesseth him that gives and him that takes"—it covers his own retreat with gracefulness, and gives his adversary a pleasant memory of an encounter with a generous foe.

"AN ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is as a burning fire."—Prov. xvi. 27.

"A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."—Prov. xxii. 1.