

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

THE DIAMOND BROACH.

"No," said Aunt Caroline, slowly, "it isn't very valuable."

"Oh, but it's just too sweet," cried Elsie, in a tone that blended rapture and envy. "See how it flashes! There's the flame of a thousand suns in it," she added with an attempt to be poetic.

The bauble lay on Elsie's hand. It was a brooch with a clear white diamond in the centre, surrounded by a circle of small, brilliant opals. It was just the thing to nestle in soft, filmy lace at the throat.

"I remember when I thought it as wonderful as you do now," smiled Aunt Caroline. "Your Uncle Albert and I did not have very much money in those days, and this little trifle cost him \$300. I was a bit scared by the price, but I felt as if few empresses could boast of such gems. I have a few more costly things now, but none that I prize as much."

"I wonder if I shall ever have such things," sighed Elsie, passing the bauble back.

"You are very likely to, my dear," replied Aunt Caroline, her eyes growing moist. "If you are fortunate enough to win a good, kind husband he will be very sure to get them for you if he has the money, and knows you care for such things."

"Then I think I shall be sure to take none but a rich husband," laughed Elsie.

"Hush, dear! A good husband's love is the most beautiful gem a woman can wear."

There was more than a suspicion of tears as the woman, widowed less than a year, rose and left the bauble up stairs.

"How lovely!" insisted Elsie, her mind still on the diamond and its crown of opals.

"Very pretty, indeed," assented her cousin Kate, with less enthusiasm.

"Oh, you silly goose—to pretend you care nothing for such things, Kate; you would be just as pleased as I would to have diamonds of your own."

"I would like them, certainly; but there are other things I would rather have."

"Such as—?"

"Well—"

But Kate came to a pause, blushing.

"There, you silly thing," said Elsie, laughing triumphantly. "I believe you have a secret."

Again Kate blushed, and this time more deeply.

"Oh, tell me all about it, dear!" cried Elsie, running over and putting an arm coaxingly around the other girl's neck.

But Kate only smiled confusedly, kept on blushing and shook her head.

"Now, that's what I call mean," insisted the little tease. Then, as if satisfied that she would learn nothing, Elsie sailed gaily into the yard.

The two girls were cousins, daughters of sisters, and Aunt Caroline was the third sister. Though Aunt Caroline had married a poor young man, Mr. Brewster had afterward prospered more than either Elsie's or Kate's father. Now, in her loneliness, Aunt Caroline had sent for the two girls to spend their summer vacation in her pretty home at Belmont. Elsie was sixteen, Kate a year older. The widow was already wondering how she would be able to live in the big house when these two bright, happy creatures were gone from her.

Kate's secret was one that torture could not have wrung from her—she was writing a novel! Simple, immature it doubtless was, yet to her that slowly growing pile of manuscript was a precious treasure indeed. No one but herself had seen it. No one ever would unless some day she plucked up the courage to place the finished manuscript in an editor's hands. She was highly sensitive over that darling of her brain. Hour after hour in the morning she thought of what she would write in the next few pages. In the afternoon she generally slipped away to an arbor in the back of the grounds that was little visited by any one else. Under the side of the arbor was a hole that ran almost horizontally under a hammock. In the hole was kept a box in which were hidden the precious pages.

Kate was on her way there in the afternoon, her head teeming with what she was about to write, when she encountered her cousin in the doorway.

"Do you know, Kate," began Elsie, with an air of comical confession, "I can't get that diamond and opal brooch out of my mind."

"I would, if I were you, dear," was the quiet reply.

"You know the garden party we are going to Saturday afternoon? I have been thinking how sweet the brooch would look in lace at the throat of my tulle dress. I do so want to look nice that day. Do you suppose Aunt Caroline would mind lending me the brooch for just that once?"

"I am very sure she would. You know she prizes it, for Uncle Bert's sake. Suppose it were lost?"

"But it wouldn't be."

"Auntie would be worried all the time you were gone."

"Then, suppose I were to borrow it without saying anything to her—just for once, you know."

"Oh, Elsie, don't think of such a thing."

"Where would the harm be?" asked Elsie, slowly, wistfully.

"Why, it must be almost like stealing. Don't think of it."

"Well, I won't then," said the younger girl, reluctantly, and went toward the house, while Kate, glad to be alone, hastened to the arbor.

out the box and went almost feverishly to work. It was dinner time and almost dark when she returned. She met Elsie on the veranda, and the two were chatting when Aunt Caroline came quickly down the stairs.

"Girls," she cried, excitedly, "something dreadful has happened. My brooch is gone."

"Gone?" cried Kate, in consternation, while Elsie sprang to her feet.

"Gone?"

"Yes; stolen is the word. I didn't mislay it; that I know, for after showing it to you I placed it on the top of my dressing stand in plain view. It is gone, and some one must have taken it."

In to the house again went the distressed widow.

"Well," demanded Elsie, queerly, "why are you looking at me like that?"

"Oh, Elsie, you didn't—"

"Steal it? Kate Sanford, do you take me for a thief?"

"But you were speaking, dear, of borrowing it quietly for Saturday. If you did such a thing, dear, please—"

But Elsie had flounced angrily into the house, leaving Kate one of the most shocked, doubting, wretched girls in the world.

Aunt Caroline had not been as far away as either supposed, and now Mrs. Brewster, having overheard, had a new grief that was greater than even the loss of the prized brooch. All three met at dinner, but none had much to say. In the morning Aunt Caroline took Elsie for a walk. She meant to ascertain if the girl had anything to confess. Kate decided upon a morning session with the novel. She hurried to the arbor, but found her aunt and cousin there before her.

"Why, that's a curious hole, and there seems to be a box in there, too," said Aunt Caroline, spying Kate's treasure place. She stepped over to examine, but the young writer, very much flustered and distressed, tried to detain her, faltering:

"Oh, don't—please don't!"

"Why not?" asked Aunt Caroline, a trifle sharply, as she saw the color come and go in her niece's face. Then, without a word, she thrust her hand into the hole, drawing out the box of manuscript. Her hand touched something else, and she drew that out, too—a Russian leather jewel box. Three different notes of astonishment sounded as Aunt Caroline opened the box and the diamond and opals flashed up at them.

"Oh, Kate! Kate!" sobbed Mrs. Brewster.

"I didn't do it, dear—you didn't, did you?" cried Elsie.

"I didn't," protested Kate, miserably, but she felt that neither believed her.

"My poor, dear girl," sobbed Mrs. Brewster. "Oh, what an unhappy day this is for me!"

"I didn't steal it," again insisted Kate, a flood of hot tears coming.

"Indeed, auntie, I don't know—"

"Who didn't steal it?" questioned honest, slow-minded Michael, the gardener, thrusting his head into the arbor.

"Michael," said Mrs. Brewster, severely, "leave us."

But Michael caught sight of the brooch in the box and seemed to take in the situation. He looked as if something had struck him.

"Was the stolen jew-gew in that box, ma'am?" he demanded.

Unable to speak, Mrs. Brewster nodded her head.

"Then wait just phewre yez are, leddies!" cried Michael excitedly.

"Don't shurr. Wait till I come back."

He went off at his top speed toward the house. Neither Mrs. Brewster nor her niece spoke. In almost no time Michael was back, with the little black-and-tan dog Flirt in his arms.

"Here's the thief, ma'am. Lamb-ashe her well, y'd better. Shure, yesterday evening, just after Miss Kate left here, I saw this shalpeen dog a-racin' in here. She kem from the house, too, did Flirt, and had something brown in her mouth that I know, now, was this box."

"Why, yes, that must have been so," cried Mrs. Brewster, a new light coming in her eyes. "Now I remember that just before dinner Flirt was in my room. She was holding one of the lace curtains in her mouth. The box, which was at the edge of my dressing stand, must have rested across a bit of the curtain. Flirt pulled the box to the floor. When I drove her from the room she must have snatched the jewel box up in her mouth and fled with it."

Then contritely:

"Oh, Kate! My dear, my dear! Forgive me!"

It was a very happy trio that turned toward the house, all three talking at once, or nearly so. And Michael, gazing after them, looked as proud as a detective who has won a great case.

"Elsie," said Aunt Caroline, coming out on the veranda the next afternoon, "here is something for you."

Elsie gave a happy flutter as she opened a tiny box and beheld a diamond standing in the centre of a dainty brooch.

"Kate," went on Mrs. Brewster, "I have been reading your novel. It is very, very good, dear. It will be published when you have finished. Oh, I am going to have it published myself. I am very happy, my dear girls, today. I want to see you both as happy, now and always, as I am at this moment."

Kate flew upstairs. She had something of a cry at first, then went to her manuscript and resolutely to work.

"Kate, dear," called Elsie from the next room, "the brooch looks simply lovely in white lace!"—Philadelphia Press.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

The wisdom of our forefathers condensed itself into the maxim:

"Tell me your company and I'll tell you who you are."

A man's associates are like him; if he is different from them at the start, he'll become like them.

If he's pure, high-minded, sober, refined, and ambitious, he will seek the company of the pure, the noble, the temperate, the gentle and the people on the hillside.

If he is vicious, ignoble, gluttonous, rude and degraded, he will naturally go down to associate with the impure, the base, the slaves of the stomach, the ill-bred and the hopeless.

Like seeks like, and like makes like; good company uplifts and bad associates corrupt.

On this subject a strong writer says:

Good Associates.

The importance to young men of selecting good associates cannot be too often impressed upon the minds of those who are at the threshold of their independent lives. It is not possible always to determine in advance who are good associates, but the author of "Lacon" gives one serviceable rule when he says:

"In all societies it is advisable to associate, if possible, with the highest—not that the highest are always the best, but because if disgusted there we can at any time descend, but if we begin with the lowest to ascend is impossible. In the grand theatre of human life a box ticket takes us through the house."

There is another reason for the highest or most cultivated society is in reality the best. It is true that within this society are degraded men and women, but they are conspicuous because they are exceptions to the general rule. It is quite safe for any young man or young woman to choose associates from those who are cultivated in that they have literary, or art, or scientific tastes, and whose minds are, therefore, occupied with subjects that tend toward culture and refinement rather than to seek companions among people who, being without elevating mental occupation, are fit subjects for temptation to vice. The term higher class as here used never means merely the wealthier class, though naturally the wealthy are usually cultivated in their tastes.

In the grading of society in a democratic community culture is the only true measure of distinction, and that is exhibited, not merely in manners, but in the tastes and mental occupations of the individual. There are men and women of acquired and natural culture to be found among the poor, more among the well-to-do, and still more, in proportion to numbers, among the rich, but this is due not to the direct influence of wealth, but to the adventitious circumstance that wealth provides the means and opportunity for culture; it would be a mistake to "more its influence. After the young man has obtained a fair degree of culture for himself and has experience in the world he may find congenial and improving companions in any walk of life, but previous to that time he should seek associates among those whose modes of life and opportunities give likelihood of elevated tastes and good manners. There he will be sure to meet companions who will help to occupy his leisure moments in improving amusements rather than in those which, if not degrading, serve merely to "kill time." Thus occupied, he will insensibly acquire tastes and habits protecting him from temptation to vicious courses, will acquire some degree of refinement and will equip himself to move worthily among companions of a still higher class. Culture and refinement do not take the place of moral training, but they are great aids to moral training and the young especially should seek their companions among those who have refined tastes.

Have Backbone.

The present is pre eminently in need of moral pluck. Next to faith and love, the hope of the future is in moral stamina—in men who have backbone. Because, as things go, there is a strong drift toward passing black for white, and sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet, provided a fashion to do so is set by strong leaders. It is not within our knowledge that fickle fashions of tailor cuts or social creeds or business customs, had ever a more subversive following than now. Sheep following a bell-wether, over a wall or into a bramble bush, are not meeker in resisting individuality than multitudes of men and women are in imitating "the last touch." Just let it be said, "You see everybody does it," and the result is a stampede on all sides to do the same. To say, "It isn't the fashion," is sufficient to scare some hither-to considered steadfast so that they will give up at once what is worth holding by at great cost, and what they would hold to with unyielding tenacity if only they had backbone. Have a backbone—do what you believe to be right, whether "the crowd" is with you or not!

To Avoid Blackings.

When the circumstances of life place one among those whose tastes differ in countless ways from his own, the wise man will do much to keep peace by keeping away from dangerous topics and bridling his tongue when contestable points are brought forward. If he be wise also according to the spirit, and devoted to the Sacred Heart of his Divine Master, he will offer to Him the continual sacrifices he is obliged to make, and thus "making virtue of necessity" endure much of his purgatorial fires.

Common Sense.

Not one in a multitude has it. Not one in a multitude of those who make use of the expression knows what it means. Let the reader try this moment to define it in concise language, and in a moment he will find himself "in endless mazes lost." Yet it is a correct and appropriate phrase, if we can but distinguish between the possession and the exercise; the ownership and use of our senses. The word "common" qualifies as to the amount of sense, but does not apply to its use. The exact meaning to be attached to the expression is the use of an amount of intelligence which the mass of persons possesses. Common sense is the use of experience and observation. It is the practical employment of an ordinary amount of intelligence. Most persons have it—few use it. Its possession is common—its practice uncommon; hence the literal correctness of the expression, "Very few people have common sense." It would be plainer to say, "Very few people make use of their common sense."

The mass of people know that jumping out of a vehicle when the horses are running away, is very certain to be followed with loss of limb or life; they know, too, that dropping one's self out from behind is attended with comparatively little danger, and yet nine out of ten will jump out at the side—not one in a million will spill himself out from behind. Thus every one of the million has sense enough to know the fact, yet only one in the million is found to use it, to practice his knowledge.

Anybody has sense enough to know that, if additions are daily made to any vessel, and nothing be taken from it, day after day, the vessel will soon overflow, and there will be mischief and loss; and yet there are multitudes in every community who ruin their health in early life, preparatory to a premature death or an age of suffering, by eating heartily two or three times a day, for days together, without heeding the necessity of a daily action of the bowels as a preventive of irremediable mischief. Countless numbers of literary men, students, lawyers, clergymen, lose their health, and are laid aside from usefulness and duty, by failing to recognize practically a principle so self evident, that daily addition to the contents of the body, without a proportionate outlet, must result disastrously. Thus it is we say of many great men, men of extraordinary acquirements—all their talents cannot preserve them from poverty. They have the sense but do not use it. They know better, but do not act out their knowledge. The different results from the possession and use of sense and money are striking. The sense and money are striking. The sense and money are striking. The sense and money are striking.

Vindictiveness.

The possession of the disposition to be vindictive is wholly incompatible with moral character. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" is one of the beautiful sentiments of the Lord's Prayer. The moral man is guided by that sentiment. He is merciful because he prays for mercy; he is lenient in his judgement, more desirous to reform than to punish; he forgets wrongs rather than bears malice, and has not in him the smallest element of a vindictive disposition. Where vindictiveness is shown we may be sure that there is a lack of moral sense.

It is somewhat curious to observe also that the vindictive have seldom any real wrong to revenge. They very often imagine the injury they seek to return in kind or distort the circumstances which gave rise to the injury, real or supposed.

The most vindictive people are those who have brought upon themselves the injury of which they complain. A drunkard who has exhausted the patience of his relatives during long years of indulgence, instead of remembering their innumerable kindnesses, turns upon them when they put him under restraint. His vindictiveness

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