

The Driftwood Fire

We dragged the driftwood from the shore
The sea's wife, cruel gift up ast,
And piled it by the cottage door,
Rough hull, bent spar, and shattered mast—
Strange, mournful, half-told histories
Of ocean's endless mysteries.

Ah, me; how often I recall
The burning of our driftwood fire;
The mounting shadows on the wall
That with the growing flames aspire;
The flushing heat that thrilled us so,
The rosy embers' dreamy glow.

How fast the sparkles went and came!
Brave "soldiers" on their upward march;
How swift the fingers of the flame
Made crumbling tower and tottering arch,
And all the wonder hearts desire
Could find a picture in the fire.

What splendid visions rose and shone
For Will, of lands beyond the sea;
For Allen, gold mines of his own—
And love for Annie, fame for me;
For Midge, a prince, light-haired and tall,
And last, brown ashes for us all.

Ah! time and change must have their will,
And tears be wept, and farewells said—
The hearth is cold, the home is still,
Where happy children sang and played;
And never more can shine and glow
The driftwood fire of long ago.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MAY 23, 1892.

A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER.

BY REV. W. TINDALL.

THE other day I saw a remarkable house plant I could not learn its name*. It is now about thirty-six inches high. About four o'clock in the afternoon it is covered with beautiful flowers of a delicate white. These flowers bloom all night and shed fragrance—particularly if you shake the stalk—that fills the room with an aroma that reminds you of the wild flowers of the woods when they first blossom in the spring.

The lady told me that about ten o'clock in the morning of the first day that they came out they began to wilt, as they do every day, and she thought they were dying, as in a short time they completely closed upon their petals, but when evening came, to her surprise and joy, they bloomed out in great lustre, and so have continued to the present.

Now this unique plant suggested to my mind the piety of a true Christian, which "vaunteth not itself," and shines not only in prosperity—for it is easy to be praising

*The name of the flower is Nicotina.—Ed.

God and singing when everything with us is sunshine and success—but when all is dark and gloomy around us; when the sunshine of worldly prosperity seems to have left us; when friends are few and the atmosphere is chilly, when the beautiful flowers of patience and trust bloom in a Christian life.

God has created many flowers on earth never to be seen and admired by human eye. The poet sings:

"Many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

This is not literally true, for there is no waste in the universe of God's works, for if neither human nor angel eyes behold and admire these creations of skill and wisdom, God delights in them, for the royal psalmist tells us that God rejoices in his works, but saints are his peculiar delight, especially those who are suffering in the darkness of adversity. Let no young disciple be discouraged by trials. The most precious of all graces, the grace of patience, cannot grow in the sunshine of prosperity. In the night of adversity and affliction it flourishes and its fragrance reaches to heaven.

WHAT ONE BOY DID.

BY LILY LATHBURY.

It is only a little more than twenty-five years ago that a passenger on the Grand Trunk Railroad, going through the baggage-car, noticed at one end of it a printing-press, a table covered with type, ink-bottles and pens, and a desk well strewn with papers. Before the desk was a boy of about fourteen years of age, busily engaged in correcting proof.

Somewhat surprised at this unusual appearance of things, he inquired of the lad concerning it, and was courteously told that it was the publishing office of *The Grand Trunk Herald*, a weekly paper, edited, set up, and written by himself and the employees of the road.

Placed with his bright face and gentle manly manners, the passenger bought a copy and returned to his seat in the train. As he opened the pages of *The Grand Trunk Weekly Herald*, he said to himself: "That boy will make something yet;" and looking for his name as the editor, found it to be Thomas Alva Edison!

As we know Mr. Edison, crowned with riches and honours as the greatest inventor of modern times, it hardly seems possible that he started in life as a newsboy on a railway and won his high position in the same way that every boy must win honour and riches—by diligence, courage, and perseverance.

Yet it is true. Before he was sixteen he had read Newton's "Principia," Hume's "History of England," and Gibbon's "History of Rome," in his leisure hours. When he began as a newsboy he used every moment so well that he soon had a monopoly of the business, and obtained the right to put up a printing-press in the baggage-car. One day he saved, at great peril to his own life, the little three-year-old son of the station-master, who had wandered out on the track as a train was nearing the station. The father, in gratitude, offered to help him learn telegraphy; and so eagerly did he avail himself of this new advantage, studying late at night in the railway-station, that in five months he had become a most expert operator, and was appointed to take charge of the telegraph office in Port Huron. After taking this position he still continued to study and improve, and began to make experiments.

His first invention was an automatic telegraph repeater, made in Indianapolis, when he was sixteen years old. At eighteen he wrote and printed a book on electricity, in Louisville. At twenty-one he was in Boston, where he fitted up a shop for experiments, and designed a number of inventions; but failing in his first effort at duplex transmission he was compelled—penniless and almost discouraged—to seek employment in New York.

Here his skill in removing the cause of failure in a telegraphic instrument used in Wall Street secured him a fine position.

He afterwards became superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company,

and opened a shop in Newark, where he worked night and day, experimenting.

In 1876 his health broke down, and he removed to Menlo Park, N.J., and thence to Orange, where he has since resided. From the former laboratory nearly all of his inventions—some four hundred—have issued. The most remarkable of them is the quadruple telegraph, by which two messages may be sent simultaneously in opposite directions from each end of the line. The automatic telegraph, transmitting one thousand words a minute, and the Edison system of lighting by incandescence, are also great inventions.

As Mr. Edison is only forty-three years old he will, no doubt, perfect many of the wonderful machines he is now working on with the same industry and perseverance that made him at twelve years old the best newsboy on the road.

"Succumb thou a man diligent in business?
He shall stand before kings."

WHAT AILED THE BELL.

It was the first school after a vacation. The children were playing in the yards. The teachers sat at their desks, waiting for the bell to strike to call the children to their different rooms. The hands of the clock pointed to a quarter before nine.

The bell was a sort of a gong fastened to the outside of the building; and the master of the school could ring it by touching a knob in the wall near his desk. It was now time to call the children into school. The master pulled the bell and waited. Still the merry shouts could be heard in the school yards. Very strange! The children were so engaged in play that they could not hear the bell, he thought. Then he pulled it more vigorously. Still the shouts and the laughter continued.

The master raised his window, clapped his hands, and pointed to the bell. The children rushed into line like little soldiers, and waited for the second signal. The teacher pulled and pulled, but there was no sound. Then he sent a boy to toll each line to file in; and he sent another boy for a carpenter to find out if the bell cord was broken.

What do you think the carpenter found? A little sparrow had built its nest inside the bell and prevented the hammer striking against the bell. The teachers told the children what the trouble was, and were asked if the nest should be taken out. There was a loud chorus of "No, sir."

Every day the four hundred children would gather in the yard and look up at the nest. When the little birds were able to fly to the trees in the yard, and no longer needed a nest, one of the boys climbed on a ladder and cleared away the straw and hay so that the sound of the bell might call the children from play.

RED TAPE.

If Dickens were alive he would find a singular story, now going the rounds, another comical illustration of that "Circumlocution Office" which was thoroughly up "in the art of perceiving how not to do it." The story is as follows:

A younger son of the Duke of Argyll wished to marry an untitled lady, and not unnaturally asked his father's consent to that step.

The duke replied that personally he had no objection to the match; but in view of the fact that his eldest son (the Marquis of Lorne) had espoused a daughter of the queen, he thought it right to take her majesty's pleasure on the subject before expressing his formal approval.

Her majesty, thus appealed to, observed that since the death of the Prince Consort she had been in the habit of consulting the Duke of Saxe-Coburg on all family affairs.

The matter was therefore referred to Duke Ernest, who replied that since the unification of Germany he had made it a rule to ask for the emperor's opinion on all important questions.

The case was now before the kaiser, who decided that, as a constitutional sovereign, he was bound to ascertain the views of his prime minister.

Happily for the now anxious pair of lovers, the Iron Chancellor had no wish to consult anybody, and decided that the marriage might take place.

HOW TO DECLINE A TREAT.

THE following conversation was heard between two collegians, who were discussing a class dinner:

"Of course," said one (with a consequential touch of self-complacency and patronage which students call "frsh," and which only length of days cure), "if a fellow hasn't wit enough to know when to stop, he'd better be careful at first. Some heads are built weak, you know."

"Careful in what?" interpolated I, and both laughed.

"Why, drinking, of course," said the first speaker. "A fellow has to take his seasoning sooner or later. Some can stand it. Some can not, at least for a while."

He was, as I have intimated, a freshman. His friend, a bearded senior, the only son of a rich man, slapped him good-humoredly on the shoulder:

"When I was your age, old fellow, my father said to me: 'If I had my life to live over, I would never take a glass of wine or smoke a cigar.' I answered: 'It would be foolish not to profit by what such a sensible man says.' I have never tasted wine or touched tobacco, and I am glad of it—gladder every day I live. I might have been 'built' with a strong head—and then, again, I might not."

"What do you say when you are offered a treat?"

"I say: 'No, thank you, I never take it.' Generally that settles the matter quietly."

"And if they poke fun at you?"

"I let them 'poke' and then stand ready to put them to bed when their heads give out."

There are—for the comfort of mothers be it said—many "fellows" strong enough to maintain this stand, and sensible enough to see that the risks are not worth taking. It is the fool who meddles with firearms, the coward who carries a loaded revolver.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LUTHER was a great lover of children, and was in some regards much of a child himself. Possessing to a large extent the happy faculty of childhood, he was able to throw off the burdens which bore heavily upon him, and with the forgetfulness of childhood to relieve himself of the intense strain of life and living by indulging himself in merry pranks and romps with the children of his household. As he emerged from the clouds and darkness of Romanism into the full, pure, beautiful sunlight of Christianity and Christliness, the child-like spirit in him developed and expanded. Very touching and charming pictures are those which portray the great reformer in his relations to childhood. It is beyond all doubt true that much that is brightest and best in home life and in child life to-day is due, under God, to the civil and religious liberty which came to the world of God, through his servant, Martin Luther. In America we have the fullest and freest exhibition of the principles for which Luther contended. Though they are not always called by his name, they are in fact and fruit Lutheran.

Without the Reformation of Luther but little progress could reasonably be predicted, and Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Great Britain would now in all probability be but little advanced in popular intelligence beyond their condition centuries ago; and even Catholic countries would be by no means as far advanced as they now are in material improvements if they had not been carried along irresistibly by the enlightening advancement of Protestant countries through their proximity and the intercourse of their people. Without the Reformation the United States, as such, would not exist, and the country would be no farther advanced in material progress and in intellectual and religious enlightenment than Mexico and the other countries of Central and South America. The entire American continent, North and South, would have been colonized by Roman Catholics; and as great American republic would have demonstrated to the world for more than a century that a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people"—if that people be sufficiently enlightened and free—can be maintained permanently without a pope, without an ecclesiastical hierarchy and without a king.—*Lutheran Observer.*