

HONOR IN LITTLE THINGS.

BY HILARY TRUE.

After Miss I—, who is a teacher in our public school, had come home to dinner the other day, she discovered that she had left an open letter lying on her desk in the school-room. Mr. W—, another teacher in the same school, on hearing her state the fact, remarked: "I hope there was nothing in it that you don't want made public."

"Why?" said Miss I—, "who would touch it?"

"You'd better ask who wouldn't," returned Mr. W—.

"You surely don't think any of my nice boys and girls would read a letter that was directed to me, and was left on my desk," asserted Miss I—.

"I surely do think that nine-tenths of your pupils would do that very thing if they got the chance," Mr. W— replied with emphasis. Whereupon came a lively discussion, followed by an appeal to me, and, sad as it may seem, I was forced to admit that Mr. W— was probably too nearly right. But I cannot think that the boys and girls would be altogether to blame for such a state of affairs. If a child will do such a thing as that, I am certain that in nine cases out of ten it is because he has not had proper home training. That is one of the weak spots in his education. His teaching, in such matters, may have been simply a minus quantity, which is bad enough, or it may have been all right as to quantity, but altogether wrong as to quality, which is much worse.

For example: One day within the past year, I accompanied a lady friend and her little boy to the home of an acquaintance of hers, in order that I might consult some books of reference, known to be in her library. The owner of the library was not at home, but as the housekeeper knew my companion, we gained access to the library.

At first, Mrs. H— helped me to the books, and set me to work; and then, while I was reading and taking notes, I was conscious that she was, as children say, "just going through things." She didn't stop with examining the books, but the drawers beneath the bookshelves were opened and thoroughly investigated, and the drawers of tables and writing-desk—as many as were not locked—were also opened and their contents noted.

Meanwhile, when little Harry offered to touch anything, he was immediately stopped by a "No, no, Harry, you musn't touch," from his most exemplary mother.

If Harry, when he is older, should be guilty of reading a letter addressed to his teacher, and carelessly left by her within his reach, whose will be the blame?

As for me, I was positively ashamed to be in the company of such a daughter of Eve, and was heartily glad when my researches were made, my notes finished, and I could announce my readiness to leave.

When I was young,—in those good old times,—children were taught to be honorable as well as honest. My father gave me to understand, as soon as I was old enough to understand anything, that I was not expected to read letters that were not written to me, unless I was invited to do so. But, once, when I was about twelve years old, I allowed my curiosity to get the better of me, and read a letter with which I had no business. I am glad to say, however, that I was duly punished. Not by my parents, for they never knew it, but by having to carry around with me the miserable consciousness that I was a "sneak-thief." If I had been stealing sheep, I could not have felt any meaner. That one experience will last me a life time.

As long as I was at home, I felt no fear whatever of my letters being read by other members of the family without my leave. Consequently, when I first went away from home, I was not as particular about taking care of my letters as I afterwards learned to be.

Mrs. N, the lady with whom I boarded,—and a lady she was in most things,—opened my eyes on that subject, by telling me how a few years previous she had learned the opinion of a gentleman who boarded there, concerning herself and family, by reading an unfinished letter that he had carelessly, or too trustingly, left in an atlas in the common sitting-room. This she told me, not with shame and sorrow, but as if it were something that entitled her to credit and congratulation. You may be sure that I profited by the broad hint she thus gave me.

At another time, she related to me, as one of the smart tricks of her girlhood, a story that was disgraceful, could she but have seen it in that light. She said that when she was a young lady, at home, she roomed with her sister Emma, two or three years her senior. Emma had a lover, and very naturally, but to her young sister's great disgust, she refused to show her the

letters she received from him. But my narrator informed me with unpardonable pride, how she outwitted her sister Emma. They had but one bureau in their room, which they shared, and as bad luck would have it, the younger sister had a drawer directly over Emma's, in which said love letters were kept safely locked, as their owner supposed. But this over-curious girl wasn't to be baffled by a simple lock and key. So she conceived the brilliant idea of taking out her own drawer, and so helping herself to the contents of the drawer beneath. This she did, read the letters, and replaced them, and her sister remained in blissful ignorance of the fact.

Evidently Mrs. N— had never suffered as any right-minded and properly educated person would have done, from an uneasy conscience; for she told the story not only shamelessly and jocosely, but before two or three of her children, also, and then not in order to "point a moral," which purpose

it could have well served. Since that time, I have often wished—but in vain—that my old confidence in the honor of people could be restored to me.

Children should be taught, even from infancy, that reading the letters of others without permission is as truly stealing as is taking money which is not their own. It surely is so, and I should really think no more of a person who was guilty of stealing the reading of my letters than of one who stole my purse.—*Housekeeper.*

SOCIABLE OIL.

It is a well-known fact that much of the dissipation and nearly all of the intemperance of the present day is due to the American habit of "treating." The young man who smokes or drinks is seemingly not satisfied unless he can induce his companion to do likewise, and so it follows that not only does a man drink or smoke two or three times more than he would if alone, but many persons who lack the moral courage to say no are led into vices where they would not go if left to themselves. It is a reprehensible habit, as well as a foolish one, and the next time you are asked to smoke or drink, you may retort by telling the following true story:

Mr. Perry was a Southern gentleman, exceedingly polite and also a very temperate man. One day he met an acquaintance, who called out:

"Hallo, Perry! I was just going in to get a drink. Come in and take something."

"Thank you," said Perry; "I don't care for anything."

"But," persisted the other, "come in and take something just for sociability's sake."

"I want to be sociable," answered Perry; "I am anxious to be sociable, but I can't drink with you."

"All right," growled the friend. "If you don't want to be sociable, I'll go without drinking."

The two men walked silently along for a minute or two, the sociable man in a state of great irritation, until Perry suddenly halted in front of a drug store.

"I am not feeling very well today," said he, with a pleasant smile, "and I think I'll go in here and get a dose of castor oil. Will you join me?"

"What?" exclaimed the other. "In a dose of castor oil?"

"Yes; I'll pay for it."

"E-heu!" cried the sociable man, with a very wry face. "I hate the stuff."

"But I want you to take a glass of oil with me, just to be sociable, you know."

"I won't do it."

"Indeed! My friend," said Perry, gravely, "your sociable whiskey is just as distasteful to me as my sociable oil is to you. Don't you think I have as much reason to be offended with you as you have with me?"

The sociable man saw the point, and it would be money, health, and morals saved if the lesson could be firmly implanted in the mind of every young man in the land.—*Exchange.*

A WORTHY DISCIPLE.

A correspondent relates a touching story concerning one of Father Mathew's converts to temperance. He had taken a pledge as an abstainer forty years ago, and is now over seventy. During a recent severe illness the doctor recommended stimulants, but the old man firmly declined them. The correspondent added his entreaties, but was met with this pathetic reply—"An' how could I mate Father Mathew in Heaven, God bless him, an' me after breaking the holy promise I giv' him? Sure, too, wouldn't the blessed St. Pether himself be after turning me back at the gate, an' me wid his riverince's medal, and the smell of the whiskey on my lips."

This worthy disciple of Father Mathew recovered without whiskey. Early in life he had been a hard drinker.—*Temperance League Journal.*



COMPASSION.

"Wisdom hath sent forth her maidens."—Prov. ix. 3.

No bloom the woodland holds,
No leaf the thicket yields,
The snow is on the wolds,
The floods upon the fields.
Where hyacinths have waved the head,
And violets bloomed in leafy bed
The waters go
In icy flow,
And wintry winds blow loud and dread.
What wanderer seeks the glade
Afair from Shepherd's fold?
A lamb moans in the shade,
Anear the waters cold.
But love's compassion, pure and wise,

Is beaming from a maiden's eyes.
O'er wild and waste,
In pitying haste,
She seeks and finds him ere he dies.
Lo! in the cloudy day
The lambs are scattered wide;
Amid the floods they stray,
And perish in the tide.
O Wisdom's messengers of grace,
Bring back the wanderers to his face!
With tender hands,
And love's soft bands,
Enfold them in your warm embrace.
—Clara Thwaites, in the Quiver.