

for their house. They bought a rocking-chair and lounge and table. Then they bought a clock and some books. Sam made some book-shelves and a corner cupboard and a foot-stool.

"What a change is made here by these boys," said Parson Gray. "How much can be done by working together with a will. How a home is built up when people are sober, and earn money which they spend upon useful things."

The parson was correct. Suppose these boys had not been sober, but had followed their father's habits of drinking; would they have had this tidy home? No indeed.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, JUNE 3, 1893.

TAKE AIM.

We attended service at a church not long ago where there was a Boy's Brigade connected with the Sunday-school. To the strains of the organ the bright-faced boys marched, two by two, into the audience-room, singing as they came the ever soul-inspiring hymn—

"Onward Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war."

Those happy boys, care free, sheltered from the world, we wondered if they knew what marching as to war meant. That it was not all marching to music—but inevitably to battle, where fierce fighting must be done. To the Christian soldier what battle? The battle of life, most surely. Under the wise leadership of the church you are being drilled, disciplined for war. Your battle is to be with the world and with sin, and with forces opposing your progress. When the fight comes on and the enemy is met, what is the soldier's order? "Fire?" No. "Take aim! Fire!" If the soldier did not take aim the firing would be wild and useless.

Boys, your battle must be fought every day. Do not fire wildly. Take aim. Aim to be good, aim to be true, aim to make the most of yourselves for yourselves and for others. Let all you do aim at some great object you mean to reach in the future. Day by day work toward it. The most successful of men have taken their aim when very young, and never let sloth, or idleness, or the snares of sin hinder them from forging steadily ahead. Good aim and untiring effort will make you great and noble, and win for you success. In your Christian life aim at heaven. Keep your eye on spiritual things, and let your daily effort be to grow into the likeness of Jesus.

Dear Juniors—boys, girls—take heed early. The minutes in life's battle are your powder. Do not waste them. As Christian soldiers remember the order—"Take aim! Fire!"

AN OPEN LETTER TO BOYS.

BY META LANDER.

I.

How can I make you believe, dear boys, that what I am going to tell you is the truth? and that what your smoking companions say will surely put you on the wrong track?

Now be honest with yourselves. Did you not have a dreadful time of it when you began to smoke? Have you forgotten the nausea, the vomiting, the agonizing headache? That was Nature's earnest protest against poison. How did you treat her warnings? Well, I suppose your companions laughed at you for being a coward. They told you that it fared as hardly with them at first, but that they resolved to be men, and that they persevered till they got the victory.

To prove this they strut before you so grandly, their cigar in their mouth, their head tossed back with such an air of manliness that you gaze on them with admiration. You determine that, come what may, you will follow their examples. So you take a cigarette, and go into the barn or some hiding-place where the dear mother cannot see you, and there you wrestle again and again with that worse than seasickness, till at last honest Nature is silenced—may I not say gagged? Then you, too, can strut and throw back your head and puff away like any man of them all.

But, alas! and alackaday! dear Tom, or Harry, or whatever be your name, do you realize that you have delivered yourself over as a slave to a cold-blooded tyrant? Says one who understands whereof he speaks, "The tobacco slave little knows that a god more cunning than all the heathen divinities has bound him in his spell, and that he is in for a whole life of unspeakable abominations."

Now, boys, will you let me talk right out to you a little while? I have spent months and years in studying up this matter on purpose that I might help you. I have written more letters of inquiry to doctors and dentists and teachers and college and theological professors and all sorts of wise men and tobacco-users as well, than you could count off on your fingers in a long time. And I have gathered up all I could, and put it into a book which I call "The Tobacco Problem." I wish I could send everyone of you a copy, because I think it might be of service to you; I will tell you, however, some of the things I have learned.

If you look carefully at a tobacco leaf, you will see that its surface is dotted all over with tiny glands which contain an oil that is called nicotine, for Jean Nicot, who, in 1559, when he was the French envoy at Portugal, sent tobacco seeds to that wicked queen, Catherine de Medicis.

This nicotine is one of the strongest of poisons. In the *Popular Science Monthly* Mr. Axon says that "the nicotine in a single cigar, if extracted and administered in a pure state, would suffice to kill two men." Think of it, boys! Haven't you read how fatal were the arrow-wounds of the Indians? It was simply because these arrows were dipped in this same nicotine.

Sir Benjamin Brodie, the physician of Queen Victoria, wishing to test its power, applied it to the tongue of a mouse, a squirrel, and a dog. Death instantly followed. Put a drop on a cat's tongue, and in spite of its seven lives, it will quickly fall into convulsions and die. Hold white paper over the smoke of a cigar till it is burned up, then scrape off the condensed smoke and put a little of it on the tongue of a cat, or a mouse, or a dog, if you choose, and the poor creature will soon become paralyzed and draw its last breath.

But, you ask, is it not cruel to make such experiments? It would be if done in mere wantonness; but as you are worth a great many cats, if the lesson would only help you to take proper care of yourself, we would not hesitate for such a purpose to sacrifice creatures that have no soul.

Shall I give you any more examples of the effects of nicotine? An old wooden pipe was carefully washed and then given to a little boy to blow soap-bubbles with. He was taken sick and died in three days. You see, boys, the pipe had become so saturated with the poison that in blowing bubbles, he sucked in enough to kill him. Another child picked up from the floor a

quid which she mistook for a raisin, and, putting it in her mouth, died the same day.

Some people may say that it will do you good. A boy of fourteen who had a severe toothache, was told this; so he bought fifteen cents' worth of tobacco, and smoking it all, fell down senseless and died.

I could tell you of cases all day long if it were necessary. M. Orfila, President of the Paris Medical Academy, affirms that "tobacco is the most subtle poison known to the chemist, except the deadly Prussic acid."

How is it then, you ask, that men smoke every day, and yet are alive and apparently well? It is because our mother Nature is so tolerant. We know how tobacco affects a boy in the beginning, but he gradually accustoms himself to it, so that there is no immediate bad result. It is the same with arsenic, opium, and rum. But all the same, the mischief is going on, and by-and-by the wrong-doer learns this to his cost. It is with the earnest desire to save you such a lesson that I write. For, however any may argue as to its safety for grown-up people, all are agreed as to its injurious effect on the minds as well as bodies of the young.

"The effect of tobacco on school-boys is so marked as not to be open for discussion." So wrote Professor McSherry, President of the Baltimore Academy of Medicine. Dr. Willard Parker asserts that "tobacco is ruinous in our schools and colleges, dwarfing body and mind."

Facts gathered from Europe as well as from our own country prove convincingly that, however good the standing of lads, as soon as they become tobacco-users, they fall below the school average. In Vermont a bright boy of fourteen fell strangely behind his class. His teachers could not account for this; but the incapacity increased till he sickened and died, when it was found that he was killed by tobacco, to which he was in the habit of helping himself secretly from his father's store.

The public schools in France have been thoroughly examined by medical and scientific men, and the results given in medical journals. These show that smokers, in their various examinations, are inferior in scholarship to others, and that, in the various ordeals of the year, their average rank has constantly fallen. In this connection Dr. Constan gives instances to prove that the depressing action of tobacco on the intellectual development is beyond question, clogging all the faculties and especially the memory. Do you think it strange that the Minister of Public Instruction was led to issue a circular to the teachers in all the schools of every grade, prohibiting tobacco as injurious to body and mind?

Dr. Decaisne, of Paris, found by investigation that "even the restricted use of tobacco by children leads often to a change in the blood, paleness of the face, emaciation, palpitation and intermission of the heart, diminution of the normal quantity of blood corpuscles, difficulty of digestion, and sluggishness of intellect."

COULDN'T AFFORD TO GIVE.

A MAN who attempted to raise some money on a subscription paper for a necessary church out west relates his experience as follows:

"The first man I went to see was very sorry, but the fact was he was so involved in his business that he couldn't give anything. Very sorry, but a man in debt as he was, owed his first duty to his creditors.

"He was smoking an expensive cigar, and before I left his store he bought of a peddler who came in a pair of expensive Rocky Mountain cuff-buttons.

"The next man I went to was a young clerk in a banking establishment. He read the paper over, acknowledged that the church was needed, but said he was owing for his board, was badly in debt, and did not see how he could give anything.

"That afternoon, as I went by the baseball grounds, I saw this young man pay fifty cents at the gate to go in, and saw him mount the grand stand where special seats were sold for a quarter of a dollar.

"The third man to whom I presented the paper was a farmer living near the town. He also was sorry, but times were hard, his crops had been a partial failure, the mortgage on his farm was a heavy load,

the interest was coming due, and he really could not see his way clear to give to the church, although it was just what the town needed.

"A week from that time I saw that same farmer drive into town with his entire family and go to the circus, afternoon and night at an expense of at least four dollars.

"The Bible says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,' but it also says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' And I really could not help thinking that the devil could use that old excuse, 'In debt,' to splendid advantage, especially when he had a selfish man to help him."

Field Daisies.

BY ELIZABETH F. MERRILL.

Oh, the bonnie, bright field daisy, in her kirtle white and gold!
Sifting snows like winter drifting over meadow, field, and wold;
Breezy uplands, hoar with blossoms—now the starry bloom abounds—
Peeping shyly, creeping slyly, quite within the garden's bounds.

Oh, the farmer scouts and flouts you, sees no beauty in your face,
Only cons how he may rout you, tear, uproot you from your place.
Banished from the pleasant meadows, where the tall, lush grasses spring,
Patient still by dusty highways, brave, bright blossoms nod and swing.

Naught care you, white-kirtled daisy, for the farmer's hate and scorn,
Leading forth your laughing legions in the dewy summer morn,
For the little children love you, love you dearly as they stand,
With your hosts breast-high about them, while they fill each tiny hand.
Loves you too, the merry maiden, adds your beauty to her own.
Lays you on her breast, or gaily binds you in her clasping zone.

So the weary sufferer greets you from his couch with welcome smile,
For your starry bloom shall bring him sweet succor from pain the while.
Ah, we hail you, honest daisies, grow! the farmer as he will!
Glad we are your lavish splendour falls on meadow, field, and hill!

A Modern Prodigal,

BY

Mrs. Julia McNair Wright.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRISONER AND THE PRISON.

IRON doors, pitiless as those which Dante beheld shutting in the regions of the Lost, closed upon Thomas Stanhope—prisoner. The sheriff delivered him to the guard and he was placed in a room to wait for the warden. Stone walls, stone floors; iron doors, iron bars over the windows, all spoke to Stanhope of punishment. The warden came. Stanhope's name, age, parentage, occupation, all were demanded. How he blushed to think that the clean name of Stanhope, of his honorable father, must now figure on the records of the penitentiary.

To the question "What occupation?" Thomas could only answer, "None." He had been life-long an idler. The warden looked up over his glasses—a man of shrewd face, grey eyes and grey hair.

"None? Nothing to do, and too much to drink, have brought here nearly all of the prisoners within these walls."

Then a careful personal description of Thomas was written in the warden's book. Thus he might be identified if he tried to escape, and at departure.

Next Thomas was sent into a bath-room where, having stripped and bathed, he was given the prison clothes—those wide stripes, the hideous livery of sin, shame, and sorrow. After this the prisoner's hair was cut close to his head, and a number was given him instead of a name, and that number was marked upon his clothing.

"Would you rather be in a cell with one man or three?" asked the deputy.

"If I have any liberty of choice, I would