

A Conscience in the Wind.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

M. mother told me long ago (When I was a little lad) That when the night went wa- Somebody had been bad And then when I was snug in bed, Whether I had been sent With the plank—brawn up round my head. I'd think of what my mother'd said, And wonder what boy she meant! And "Who's been bad to-day?" I'd ask, Of the wind that hoarsely blew, And that voice would say in its awful way:

"Yoooooo!" "Yoooooo!" "Yoooooo!"

That this was true I must allow You'll not believe it though! Yes, though I'm quite a model now, I was not always so; And if you doubt what things I say, Suppose you make the test, Suppose, when you've been bad some day And up to bed are sent away From mother and the rest— Suppose you ask, "Who has been bad?" And then you'll hear what's true. For the wind will moan in its ruefullest tone,

"Yoooooo!" "Yoooooo!" "Yoooooo!" —Chicago World

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK. Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 24, 1900.

A KINDERGARTEN FOR THE BLIND.

BY J. L. HARBOUR.

Of all the philanthropies of modern times, none have been nobler than that which has had for its object the education of blind boys and girls, and, in some instances, deaf and dumb. Some one has wisely said of this work that it has added a new province to our wide kingdom of the Spirit.

The time has been when a child, born blind and deaf, had no hope of being led into the fields of knowledge because there was no system by which it could be taught to read, and become mentally the equal of children who see, and hear, and speak. Now it is not so. A child coming into the world to-day with the three-fold affliction of blindness, deafness, and dumbness, can develop character and intelligence, and a capacity for happiness equal to that of children who can see, and speak, and hear. From its almost animal-like existence it can be brought into a state of the highest and sweetest spiritual perception, and may know God with a spiritual vision keen and clear.

There are not many children who come into the world with this threefold affliction heavy upon them, but blindness is a common sorrow, so common that there are those who, holding their own unspeakable blessing of sight cheaply, look lightly upon it, and give little thought to its full and sorrowful import. But that there are less selfish and more generous and thoughtful souls is evident from the three great buildings of the

Kindergarten for the Blind, in the Jamaica Plain suburb of Boston. It is the only kindergarten for the blind in America, if not in the world, having its own ground and buildings separate from any other school.

Here may be found seventy-five boys and girls under twelve years of age. Many are totally blind, and none of them can see well enough to be educated by any but the system for teaching the blind. Some are deaf and some dumb, but only three of the pupils since the ten years of its existence have come to it deaf, dumb, and blind.

Helen Keller has never been a regular pupil of this school, but has spent a number of weeks here as a visitor, and she takes the most intense interest in it, and particularly in Tommy Stringer, the most remarkable blind boy in the world. They who have to do with the blind dwell in a continual moral sunshine, which abundantly repays all the labours undertaken in their behalf.

The Boston Kindergarten for the Blind is situated in the residence part of one of the most beautiful suburbs of the city. The kindergarten was organized in May, 1887, with ten pupils in attendance in a small building. To-day it has three large four-story buildings, besides a large gymnasium, and yet the facilities are inadequate for the reception of all the little blind children who would like to be received into the kindergarten. From a very small beginning it has in eleven years accumulated, in legacies and bequests, property to the value of more than half a million dollars. This is because its work has appealed so directly and so strongly to those sympathizing with afflicted childhood.

The three most noted pupils of the kindergarten have been Edith Thomas, Willie Elizabeth Robbin, and Tommy Stringer. Edith Thomas and Willie Robbin have graduated from the kindergarten, and are now at the advanced school for the blind, the Perkins' Institute, in South Boston. Here they are making good progress; Willie Robbin, who is but fourteen years old, being far more advanced in her studies than many seeing girls of her age. She is a singularly beautiful girl, of a very lovable disposition, and most acute perceptions. Rendered deaf, dumb, and blind by a very severe illness, she was brought to the Kindergarten for the Blind in Boston, where she developed into one of its most interesting pupils. Like many of the other pupils, the expense of her education has been met by the gifts of the charitable. Tommy Stringer is now the "star" pupil of the kindergarten. He has a special teacher of his own. He excels in mechanical skill, and his sloyd work is remarkable. This boy, who is entirely blind and deaf, and who is just beginning to learn how to articulate, does work that would be creditable to many a carpenter's apprentice. He knows eight different kinds of wood by their smell alone, and can drive nails as straight as any carpenter. He uses a saw with wonderful precision, and has made several articles requiring the use of twelve different tools. He quickly detects any imperfection in his work, and is not satisfied until it is made perfect. He can take a rough pine board, and, without any assistance, convert it into a neat letter-box, coat-rack, or shovel. He has made a sled for himself, and is as fond of coasting as any other boy of his years.

JUST FOR FUN.

BY BEATRICE YORK.

School had just begun, and the buzz of study filled the air when Tommy Jones entered the room and crept to his seat. He was the worst boy in school, and always playing jokes on the other children. He pretended to study at first, but presently he nudged his desk-mate and whispered: "I say, Johnny, let's have some fun with the boy that came in yesterday. He lives two miles from here, and he is not going home till nearly dark to-night, so we might dress up as ghosts and scare him."

Johnny readily assented, he being always ready to follow some bolder nature, though too timid to take the lead himself.

After school Tommy went home and took one of the sheets from his bed and got some matches and set out toward the spot where he and Johnny had agreed to meet; a lonely spot in the woods through which Virgil Hanley had to pass. Johnny soon came, similarly equipped. It was already dusk, and they had to hurry into their ghostly outfit lest Virgil should come. They wet their matches and made rings of the wet sulphur around their eyes and all over their faces, and wrapped the sheets about them. Johnny looked frightened when Tommy turned to him for approval, for the marks upon his face glowed like fire in the dusk.

Just then they heard a merry whistle, and Virgil came hurrying along. He was a sensitive-looking lad—just the subject for a practical joke. They hid till he had gone past, and then stepped out, and Tommy gave a shriek that echoed through the air. The sound started Virgil, and he turned quickly, but was utterly unprepared for the sight that met his gaze. He stared at the two figures till they suddenly started toward him, and then he tried to run away, gave a gasp, and fell like a log.

The boys had not expected that their joke would go so far; they thought they would simply have a good laugh at his fright. They ran toward him and were horror-stricken at the look of terror on his face. They tried to revive him, but failed.

Finally Tommy told Johnny to run for help while he stayed with Virgil. The doctor came back with Johnny, but there was no help for Virgil. He died soon after from the effects of the fright. All the excuse the boys could give was that they had done it "just for fun."

It was a terrible lesson to them, and they never played another practical joke.

HE NEEDED NO TIP.

"To tip, or not to tip—that is the question" with many of us. On one hand, the custom is decidedly a bad one; but on the other, the man who gives no tips receives almost no service. Here is a pointer, however, clipped from The Youth's Companion, which casts a faint ray of light upon the problem:

A hungry guest at a Chicago hotel, who had sat at one of the tables unnoticed for several minutes, called a waiter to him at last and said:

"Young fellow, I saw that man over there hand you a tip of half a dollar just now."

"Yes, sah."

"You've got his order, have you?"

"Yes, sah."

"Well, now, I'll give you a tip also— which is this: Bring me exactly the same order, served in exactly the same style as his, and with the same promptness, or I'll report you. Do you get the idea, young fellow?"

"Yes, sah."

The two dinners were served at the same time, and were precisely alike.

FILING HIS APPLICATION.

There are many ways to achieve success, but perhaps the doors of opportunity are opened oftener by the boy who knows how to use tools than by ordinarily "unhandy" mortals. One man, who tells his story in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, literally filed his application for work in a new and completely successful manner. He says:

When I was fourteen years old, it became necessary for me to go out into the world and earn my share of the family expenses. I looked about with small success for a week or two, and then I saw a card hanging in a store window, "Boy Wanted."

I pulled down my hair, brushed the front of my jacket, and walked in.

"Do you want a boy?" I asked of the clerk.

"Back office," he said.

I walked back to the little den with a high partition around it, and pushing open the door, which I noticed was slightly ajar, cap in hand I stepped in.

It was a chilly day in November, and before I spoke to the proprietor, who was bending over a desk, I turned to close the door. It squeaked horribly as I pushed it shut, and then I found that it wouldn't latch. It had shrunk so that the socket which should have caught the latch was a trifle too high. I was a boy of some mechanical genius, and I noticed what the trouble was immediately.

"Where did you learn to close doors?" said the man at the desk.

I turned around quickly.

"At home, sir."

"Well, what do you want?"

"I came in to see about the boy wanted," I answered.

"Oh!" said the man, with a grunt. He seemed rather gruff, but somehow his crisp speech didn't discourage me. "Sit down," he added; "I'm busy."

I looked back at the door.

"If you don't mind," said I, "and if a little noise won't disturb you, I'll fix that door while I'm waiting."

"Eh," he said quickly. "All right. Go ahead."

I had been sharpening my skates that morning, and the short file I used was still in my pocket. In a few minutes I had filed down the brass socket so that the latch fitted nicely. I closed the door two or three times to see that it was all right. When I put my file back in my pocket and turned round, the man at the desk was staring at me.

"Any parents?" he asked. "Mother," I answered. "Have her come in here with you at two o'clock," he said, and turned back to his writing.

At twenty-five I was a partner in the house; at thirty-five I had a half-interest; and I have always attributed the foundation of my good fortune to the only recommendation I then had in my possession—the file.

A DRUNKEN WILLIAM TELL.

"Ben, whose boy're you?" The voice was thick and husky.

"Your'n, pop."

"An' who's the best shot in these parts, Ben? Tell these fellers."

The man's dull eyes fixed themselves on the boy. The little fellow's face lightened up, and he answered, looking round defiantly: "My pop's the best shot in Montanny."

A silence fell over the crowd, and something of pride gleamed from the whiskey-dimmed eyes of old Billman. Then he said, handing the boy an apple: "These fellows 'low I'm no good, Ben; an' I'm just goin' to do our Wilyum Tell act, an' show 'em that Jim Billman kin draw as fine a bead now as ever he could."

Billman patted his son's head with a trembling hand, and the boy drew himself up proudly as he took the apple from his father.

"Go over to that tree, Ben," commanded Billman at last; and the boy walked with a fearless step to the place indicated, turned his back to the tree, removed his hat, balanced the apple on his head, then placed his hands behind him. There was not a quiver in his face, not a shadow of fear. His father, whom he loved and who loved him, was the marksman.

Old Billman raised his gun to his shoulder. The weapon shook in his nerveless hands like a reed. Uttering an imprecation, he lowered the gun and brushed his sleeve across his eyes, tried again, but still without success.

"I know what's the matter," he muttered, and took a drink from a bottle in his pocket. "Now, then; all right, Ben?"

"All right, pop."

A short moment the gun trembled in Billman's hands, and then—spring!

It was a strange, dull sound, not like the crash of a bullet through oak, but more like—

Alas! the smoke had cleared away, and the boy was lying in a lifeless heap upon the ground, killed by his drunken father. A cry as of a wild beast, a rush, and old Billman had the bloody form in his arms.

"Kill me!" shrieked the old man, rocking to and fro, "kill me!" but the miners passed silently away one by one, and left the old man alone with his grief and his dead.—Detroit Free Press.

When Mother Looks.

I 'member such a lot of things That happened long ago, When me an' Jim was six years old, And now we're ten or so. But those that I remember best— The ones I most can see— Are the things that used to happen When mother looked at me.

One time in church, when me an' Jim Was snickerin' out loud— The minister was prayin', and The people's heads was bowed— We had the biggest kind of joke About the bumblebee, But things got quiet rather quick When mother looked at me.

And then there's some times when I think I've had such lots of fun A-goin' in swimmin' with the boys Down there by Jones' run; But when I get back home again— Just 'bout in time for tea— There's a kind of different feeling comes When mother looks at me.

The time when I was awful sick, An' the doctor shook his head, An' ev'ry time pa came around His eyes were wet an' red, I 'member her hands on my face How soft they used to be— Somehow the pain seemed easier When mother looked at me.

It's funny how it makes you feel— I ain't afraid of her— She's about the nicest person You'd find 'most anywhere; But the queerest sort of feeling, As queer as queer can be, Makes everything seem different When mother looks at me.

—Youth's Companion.

Eggs as Fish.—Brown—"Waiter, bring me a dozen oysters on the half-shell." Waiter—"Sorry, sah, but we's all out of shell-fish, sah, 'ceptin' aigs."