

"KEEP GOIN'!"

You all know, children, of the great Erie canal, more than three hundred and fifty miles long, which connects the Hudson river with Lake Erie. You have often traced its course upon your maps, many of you live within sight of it, and others have seen it unwind, like a long silver ribbon, alongside the railway-track, as you sped over the country upon the rushing train. You have read, perhaps, of the vast expenditure of labour and money which was necessary to so immense a work, and how the country people shook their wise heads, at first, over the project, and some not very old men declared that they wished to live no longer than the time which it would take to dig the huge ditch. Yet, for all that, the Canal was finished in less than ten years, and now, after almost three quarters of a century, monstrous barges are still floating up and down the long water-way, laden with goods and produce.

They move so slowly, these great boats, that one must look closely in order to mark their progress at all, and the horses or mules plodding patiently along the beaten path at the edge of the grassy bank, seem scarcely more than ants in comparison with the unwieldy bulk which they draw after them at the end of the stout, twisted cable.

The boat is often a summer home for the driver and his family. Inside the little cabin, the mother cooks and scrubs and washes,—one may see, on sunny days, her snowy linen fluttering from lines strung over the wide deck. When her indoor work is done, she brings out her sewing or knitting, and, rocking to and fro in the open door-way, breathes in rest and comfort with the sweet country air.

I passed one of these floating houses not long ago. The driver's little son, a sturdy legged fellow of seven or eight years, was trudging beside his father. Suddenly, from afar, sounded the shriek of a locomotive; a growing rumble filled the air, a roar, a flash, and the lightning-express had passed like a shooting star, and was already vanishing in the distance.

The boy gazed wistfully after the flying vision.

"Where's the train going father?" I heard him say.

"To Buffalo, child."

"Oh, dear!"

"What ails ye, Johnny?"

"It goes a thousand times quicker than we can, father."

The driver gently patted the boy's shoulder.

"Never you mind that, Johnny boy!" said he. "We'll get there just the same, if we only keep goin'!"

"Ah, Johnny!" thought I, as I went on my way, "There you have a sure rule for success! 'Keep goin'!' Whether fast or slow, it makes little difference. The one thing needful is to set your goal and keep steadily toward it. Lincoln and Garfield never travelled to greatness by an express train, but it is quite as true that they never stopped by the way. Perseverance comes to the end of the longest road. 'Without haste, without rest!' is an old German proverb, but an older saying still is this: 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,'

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and this: 'To them that by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life.'

WAS WASTING AWAY.

"I could not eat, sleep, walk or sit down for any length of time. I was always in pain and was wasting away. I grew very weak and had a bad cough. I tried many different remedies, but did not get relief. Since taking Hood's Sarsaparilla, however, I am able to attend to my business." Minnie Jaques, Oshono, Ont.

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THE LOFTIER SPIRIT.

A young woman whose life was full of lofty ambitions found herself occupied day after day with disagreeable household tasks. As the future seemed to shut down hopelessly around these homely duties, the girl grew complaining and bitter. One day her father, who was the village doctor, said to her: "Do you see those vials? They are cheap, worthless things in themselves, but in one I put a deadly poison, in another a sweet perfume, in another a healing medicine. Nobody cares for the vials themselves, but for what they carry. So with our duties, insignificant and worthless in themselves; but the patience or anger or high thinking or bitterness which we put in them, that is the important thing, the immortal thing." A celebrated Frenchman said, "Perfection consists not, in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things with an extraordinary spirit."

THE BEST WAY.

It was a rainy day, and Joe had taken his bicycle apart to clean it. Next to the pleasure of riding, he enjoyed tinkering with his wheel, explaining its manifold perfections to his sister, who was a most appreciative listener, in spite of the disadvantage of being a girl. Joe had been out into the country, the day before, and now, as he examined the bearings of his wheel, he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

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"No wonder it ran hard," he said. "Look at the sand in there."

His sister looked, and then raised a wondering face to his. "Do you mean those tiny specks?" she asked. "Could they really make any difference?"

"Difference! I should say they did make a difference," Joe assured her. "Just the least friction is enough to spoil your comfort in riding."

While the boy worked on, the girl looked over his head and had her own thoughts. It does not take great trouble or intentional unkindness, she said to herself, to make discomfort in the home. Just the least friction is enough to spoil our happiness. The hasty word that has no real bitterness back of it, the thoughtless joke, the unsympathetic tone, the disregard of another's comfort, which does not spring from lack of love, how they make hard work out of that which should be a pleasure!

"The best way is to keep the bearings clean," the girl said aloud, with a decided little nod.

The boy looked up at her wonderingly. "Why, of course," he said.

THE MASTER'S TOUCH.

It is said that once Mendelssohn came to see the great Freiburg organ. The old custodian refused him permission to play upon the instrument, not knowing who he was. At length however, he reluctantly granted him leave to play a few notes. Mendelssohn took his seat, and soon the most wonderful music was breaking forth from the organ. The custodian was spellbound. He came up beside the great musician and asked his name. Learning it, he stood humiliated, self-condemned, saying: "And I refused you permission to play upon my organ." There comes one to us and desires to take our lives and play upon them. But we withhold ourselves from him, and refuse him permission, when, if we would yield ourselves to him, he would bring from our souls heavenly music.



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