

Daniel.

Good Daniel of old, when tempted with wine,
For truth grew quite bold, and dared to decline;
Though others might eat, he would not defile
His body with meat, nor let wine beguile
His heart into sin, lest he should offend
His conscience within and God, his wise friend.
Devoutly he took God's law for his guide;
The truth ne'er forsook, whatever might slide;
He wavered at naught, learned lessons each day;
Adversity taught that he should obey
The laws of his God—the people had erred.
And under the rod his spirit was stirred
To meekly obey, whatever the cost;
Not take his own way like some, and be lost;
But followed the light God lovingly gave,
That, choosing the right, his soul he might save.
The king gave command the Hebrews should feed
On food from his hand. Some weakly gave heed;
But Daniel, with those who like him did think,
Much simpler food chose, and water to drink.
Permission they sought, their principles tried,
Proved clearly that naught like truth would abide;
For fairer and fatter their bodies were found
Than those in the matter by custom well bound.
From this let us learn how we should obey;
Who will may discern how wise Daniel's way.
His life's lesson grand on us be not lost;
Like him may we stand firm, true at all cost!

—David Lawton.

LAYING THE CLOTH.

I HAVE only just found out what makes it so nice to dine at Mrs. Leslie's. If you are asked to stay to any other meal it is just the same. The fare is simple, for they are far from rich, yet it always seems to me much better than it could be in a palace. And I have just found out that the whole secret, next to the careful cooking, is the pretty way they have of laying the cloth. Who would have thought so much depended on this trifle. The cloth is not damask, but it is as white as snow, and has been folded neatly. The spoons and forks shine just like real silver, and the knives are a wonder. The glass sparkles so that the very sunbeams like to play about it and every plate and dish is as bright as a new pin. It is the same with everything on the table. The mats are put on straight; the salt is nicely smoothed, and so on; and the chairs are placed round the table as if waiting to welcome each to his own particular seat. And Mary Leslie always has some sort of flower or green thing on the table. She says it costs nothing and makes all the difference, which is quite true.
I mean to lay our cloth myself tomorrow, and see if I cannot save trouble and give pleasure. There is so much to do in our house that there seems no time to think of anything

pretty. 'Yot, as we lay the table three times every day, and sometimes oftener, it is right to do it nicely. Father is sure to notice if the room looks tempting when he comes in to dinner. I hope he will ask who laid the cloth.

I have never used that little white and gold cup Aunt Margaret brought me from Mayfield last summer. It will be the very thing to hold flowers for the table. I will put only a few, but freshen them every day. How long it seemed to wait. However, it's nearly bedtime now, and I really think I will get up earlier and lay the cloth for breakfast. It will be such fun to be as nice as the Leslies'.

BREAK THE CHAIN.

THE fable story is told of some young and inexperienced sailors who once, when out fishing, cast anchor as they thought, but soon found their boat moving slowly along.

A great fish had hold of the chain, and was dragging them down to a rocky coast, near which was also a dreadful rapid and waterfall.

What could they do? No time was to be lost. Their only hope was in breaking the chain. The fish was not in sight; but by cutting loose from it they could then row the boat with safety.

So it is every day in life. We seem to be safe; but a careful look will show us that we are moving toward danger. Some unseen enemy has hold of us at some point, and dragging us toward death. A bad habit, an ugly temper, laziness, dangerous company, evil desires, strong drink, and many other things, take strong hold on men.

Oh, break the chain! Cut loose from the enemy. Tear away from all that is unholy. And safety lies also in doing this at once. Waiting is dangerous. When too near the precipice death is certain.

PLAYING STAGE-COACH.

"ALL wanting the same place makes a good deal of trouble in this world," said mamma, thoughtfully. "Shall I tell you a little story about it—something I know is true?"

"O yes, do!" chimed the children.

"It's a very sad story, but I will tell it to you," she went on; "and the next time you are tempted to be selfish, stop and think of it. Once long ago there were four children playing stage-coach, just as you have been doing now; and just like you, they all wanted the first place. Instead of playing on a log, however, they were in the spreading branches of a willow tree.

"'I want to drive,' said Lucy, getting in the driver's seat.

"'No; let me drive.' And Harry climbed up beside her. 'Let me sit there.'

"'But Lucy did not move.

"'Let me sit there,' repeated Harry, giving her a slight push, and crowding

his way on the same branch where she sat. 'You must let me drive.'

"A moment more, a sudden crash, and they were on the ground. The branch had broken. Harry was on his feet instantly, trying to raise his sister. But there was a sharp cry of pain; then she lay very still. Mother and father came running out of the house, and gently raised the little fainting form, from which the arm hung limp and broken. There was sorrow and crying, but it was too late; nothing could turn aside the weeks of suffering and pain that must be borne before the little girl could take her place again among the other children. I think they all learned a lesson of loving unselfishness in those weary days, each trying who could bring the most brightness and happiness into the dreary hours. I was that little girl; and I learned to appreciate little kindnesses as I had never done before. It was then that I learned something else, too—something that I want you all to remember"—and mamma looked at the little group—"it is: 'Even Christ pleased not himself.'"—Selected.

STRANGE THINGS IN NATURE.

THE spider spins its ladder out of itself. When it ascends it eats the ladder; when it wants to go down it spits it out again. There are plants which eat animals. They have mouths and stomachs. If a fly falls on one of these it shuts up and begins at once to digest it. Having done so, it opens again ready for another meal. The leaves are the lips. The opossum has pockets. In its side-pockets this animal carries its young. "If the cat had only been provided with pockets she would not have to carry her kittens in her mouth by the back of their necks."

It is said that the huma never alights. There are sea-birds which can roost on the waves in the worst storm. The carrier pigeon knows the way home if let loose many a mile away. Camels weep. They are patient, but know by smell and sight when danger is near, and show their fear by tears. While being loaded the camel stops chewing its cud.

The mouth of the whale is an instance of ingenuity and foresight. It is a kind of shrimping net. One would hardly suppose that one of the largest animals would seek its food among the smallest, that millions would be daily destroyed to support one life, but so it is according to M'Culloch. But if the whale had to swallow all the water it must draw into its mouth with its prey it would be exceedingly inconvenient. So Providence has provided a singular piece of machinery to prevent this. It is a series of flat hoops meeting from both sides of the mouth into arches carrying ranges of bristles which form a strainer and also a kind of net. The water is thus rejected, and the mass of shrimps is delivered to the throat.—Anon.

ACTION OF MONKEYS.

AN officer stationed at Kalladgee, in India, was once climbing a rocky hill, when he and a native who accompanied him, witnessed the following episode. A poor monkey was being slowly enwrap in the voluminous folds of an enormous boa, its bones breaking like pipe-stems by the pressure. Gradually the reptile unwound itself, leaving a crushed, unrecognised mass. The numerous monkeys on the rock were in the greatest state of excitement, running wildly about, gesticulating, chattering, and moaning, though of course powerless to help their comrade. While the snake was commencing its gorge, and before its body began to fill and swell, the officer and native went in quest of a stout cudgel and a sharp knife, expecting to make an easy prey as soon as it should be filled to repletion. When they returned to the scene of strife the boa lay thoroughly gorged beneath a projecting mass of cliff, looking more like a log than anything more lively. On the summit above a troop of monkeys was assembled, and three or four of the largest and strongest were occupied in displacing a massive fragment of rock, already loosened by the rains from the main ledge. By enormous exertion—made too, with a silence quite unusual to monkeys—they at length succeeded in pushing the rock until it trembled just over the boa's head; then uttering a yell of triumph they dropped it over the miniature precipice. It struck the boa on the head, mashing it to a jelly. As its great tail lashed about ineffectually in its last struggle there was a chorus of exultation—man joining his near relative, if we believe some of our instructors—over this well accomplished act of vengeance.

A BLIND SPARROW.

LAST spring one of the old birds in Dr. Prime's collection—a gray sparrow—became blind, and straightway a little dark brown and white bird, known as a Japanese nun, and named Dick, became the sparrow's friend. The sparrow's home had a round hole as a doorway. Little Dick would sit down on a perch opposite the hole and chirp. The blind bird would come out, and, guided by Dick's chirps, would leap to the perch, and so on to the seed cup and water bottle. But the most curious part of the performance was when the blind sparrow would try to get back into the house. Dick would place the sparrow exactly opposite the hole by shoving him along the perch. When opposite, Dick would chirp, and the blind bird would leap in, never failing.—Exchange.

WHAT powerful persuasion to sin are the license laws! How idle to hope that men engaged in the traffic will abandon it while these laws remain unrepealed! Many will cherish a spirit of self justification under the shield of the law; and thus the law will aid in perpetuating the evil.—Hon. Gerritt Smith in 1858.