

he was left by his parents to depend on his own management. Many a time, on a Saturday afternoon, when there was no school, I have waited for him to call and go on a fishing excursion over to Mason's pond, according to his promise—waited, and waited, and waited, until I lost all my patience, as well as most of my good-humor, and went off without him. He was sure to disappoint me as to the time of fulfilling his promises, though he was sure to come some time or other. If he was sent on an errand, with particular instructions to be in haste, something would detain him, so that the errand would not be done in season.

Tom's habit was sometimes very expensive, both to himself and to others. One day, he and his sister were spending the afternoon at my father's. It was during the summer season. Toward night, dark clouds began to gather, and one or two reports of distant thunder were heard. My mother thought her young visitors would do well to start for home, for fear they might be overtaken by the storm. But Tom thought there "would be plenty of time" if they waited a little while longer. They did wait. Finally, however, Tom was ready to start. My mother lent him an umbrella, and begged him to walk as fast as possible. They had not left the door three minutes before the rain began to pour down in torrents, and both Tom and his sister, who had half a mile to walk, were drenched through and through. They reached home as wet as two drowned rats.

I said, a few moments ago, that Tom himself didn't know how he came to be uniformly *out of time* in anything that he did. Now, in this respect, I must give myself credit for being a little wiser than my old school-fellow. I think I do know. It resulted from his systematic and persevering habit of putting off things. Let me show you exactly how he did it. He was not ready to do anything at the instant when it ought to be done. He wanted to *think about it* when he ought to be *doing it*. He lay in bed, lazily and foolishly, when he ought to be getting up and dressing. That was the reason, you see, he was late at breakfast and late at school. It was just so with the lessons he had to learn out of school-hours. He was thinking of getting the books, when he ought to be conning over the lesson. He was absolutely never ready for the

lesson. After tea, at night, his mother, perhaps, would remind him of his task. But the reply would be, "Oh, there's time enough;" and so he would amuse himself with some boyish sport. By-and-by, it wanted only an hour of bed-time. If he was again reminded of his lesson, the same answer would be ready, "There's plenty of time." And so, very likely, the lesson would not be learned until the next morning, and then, of course, hurriedly and imperfectly, if at all.

How true is the sentiment in that line of poetry, with which almost every boy is familiar, "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined!" Tom was never broken of his habit. It followed him all through his boyhood, and after he became a man it stuck to him as closely as if it had been one of his most cherished friends; as, indeed, I half-suspect it was. Tom has never been successful in business, not because he is deficient in industry, or judgment, or foresight, or application—for he has all these qualities—but simply because he is not ready to do things in season, but persistently and invariably puts them off. He can not close a bargain to-day, when everything about it is as plain as the nose on a man's face, but puts it off till to-morrow: "Well, why will not to-morrow do about as well?" *About as well!* The very way you ask the question shows that you don't believe it is *quite* as well. Then why not to-day? But the fact is, to-day is every way better than to-morrow. Perhaps something may occur to prevent its being accomplished after to-day. Besides, let me tell you a secret: "To-morrow," with Tom Stansell, and men of his character, is only another word for "some other time," and that time, "other time," is almost sure never to come.

Now, boys, I have not told you this story because I thought it might entertain you; still less have I told it because I take pleasure in pointing out the defects in people's characters. I have told it for the same reason that lighthouses are erected.

Our government do not put up a lighthouse just because it is a rather handsome structure, and its light is pleasant to behold in a dark night. They build the lighthouse to show the mariner, as he approaches that coast, that there is danger on that shore. When a wise captain

sees that light, he gives it a "wide berth," to use a sailor's phrase—he keeps out of its way. That is precisely the reason I have told you the story, my boy. I have set up Tom Stansell as a lighthouse. So see to it that you do not let your vessel run on to that coast; for it is a dangerous one. There are breakers in that direction. If you strike on them, you are sure to be wrecked. Don't put off things.

#### ANCIENT ANTIQUITIES.

Nineveh was 15 miles long, and 40 round, with walls 100 feet high, and thick enough for three chariots.—Babylon was 60 miles within the walls, which were 75 feet thick and 300 high, with 100 brazen gates.—The largest of the Pyramids is 481 feet high and 763 feet on the sides; its base covers 13 acres. The stones are about 30 feet in length, and the layers are 206.—Thebes, in Egypt, presents ruins 27 miles round.—Athens was 25 miles round, and contained 25,000 citizens and 100,000 slaves.—The temple of Delphos was so rich in donations that it was once plundered of £10,000 sterling, and Nero carried from it 500 statues.

#### HEAT FROM THE STARS.

The Rev. Dr. Lardner says: "It is a startling fact, that if the earth were dependent on the sun for heat, it would not get enough to make the existence of animal and vegetable life upon its surface. It results from the researches of Pouillet, that the stars furnish heat enough in the course of a year to melt a crust of ice 75 feet thick—almost as much as is supplied by the sun. This may appear strange when we consider how immeasurably small must be the amount of heat received from any one of these distant bodies. But the surprise vanishes when we remember that the whole firmament is so thickly strewn with stars that in some places thousands are crowded together within a space no greater than that occupied by the full moon."

#### A HASTY TEMPER.

Fight hard against a hasty temper. Anger will come, but resist it strongly. A spark may set a house on fire. A fit of passion may give you cause to mourn all the days of your life. Never revenge an injury.