

to anger. You are a thoughtless puss, but I suppose you didn't know any better. If you had you wouldn't have spoiled my lovely plant."

Thus, you see, Emma's text did her good. Why? Because she minded it. Exactly so. If she had not given heed to it, learning it would have done her no good. Mark, then, my children, this truth. It is not by merely *learning* texts of Scripture that you are made better, but by *minding* them after they are learned. X.

Sunday-School Advocate.

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"I'VE TRIED MY BEST."



"T'S no use, pa; I've tried my best and can't bring the answer out."

Thus spoke, or whined, rather, Master Edward Starks as he pushed his slate across the table and looked with a most rueful face toward his father.

"Have you *really* tried your best, my son?" asked Mr. Starks, looking up from his book with a smile.

"Yes, pa, *really*," said Edward; "I have been just an hour poking over this one sum, and it won't come out right anyhow."

"Am I to understand that '*poking* over your sum' is what you mean by doing your best?" asked Mr. Starks, with a glance at his son which brought a blush to his cheek.

"What a *tease* you are, pa!" replied the boy.

"No, not a *tease*, but a true friend, my son," rejoined Mr. Starks. "I think that your phrase, '*poking* over this sum,' silly as the phrase is, proves that you have not done your best. If it has any meaning at all, it signifies that you have sat over your slate thinking of everything but your sum, and that you have not steadily tried to apply the rule to which it belongs to the statements it contains. Had you done so you would have worked it out three quarters of an hour ago."

Edward made no reply to this truthful account of his mental action except to exclaim:

"Father, I believe you are a wizard!"

His father was wizard enough to know that neither his son nor any other bright boy could really try to *think* out a simple sum for over an hour without doing it. In fact, Edward had been thinking of a hundred other things besides his sum. He had been in a day-dream. He had not given his whole mind to the work before him.

He soon proved the truth of this statement. Feeling his father's rebuke, he drew the slate toward him, read over his rule anew, examined the terms of the sum, decided which was the numerator and which the denominator, divided, subtracted, and multiplied according to the rule, and surprised himself by finding that he had found the correct answer.

"It comes out right, pa!" cried he, rubbing his hands in high glee.

"That's the fruit of really doing your best, my son," replied his father.

Mr. Starks was right. When boys and girls really try their best they almost always do their tasks well. There is Minnie Mix, for example. She will sit with her sewing in her lap a half hour at a time making thought-pictures of her friends, Ettie and Sarah, and of the good times they are having with their little brother, without making one stitch. Then rousing herself she will sigh, and say pettishly enough:

"O dear, I wish this sewing was done. I wish girls didn't have to sew."

She will then ply her needle with great swiftness the next half hour, driving it along the seam with the force of a little sewing-machine. When her mother examines her work she finds the seams puckered and crooked, and when she points out the fault of the work Minnie pouts and whines out her threadbare excuse:

"I can't help it. I did my best."

At other times Minnie will have the baby placed under her care. Then while baby sleeps in his cradle Minnie



MINNIE'S "THOUGHT-PICTURE."

will take up a story-book and begin to read. Presently baby wakes up, and, being tired of laying, he wants to be taken out, talked to, and bounced round a little. But it doesn't suit Minnie to do these kind things for baby. She prefers to go on with her reading. Baby feels himself ill-used, cries, kicks off the clothes, and makes all the fuss he can. This isn't exactly right, but what can baby do? Kicking and crying are his only means of bringing Minnie to terms. But Minnie reads on, rocking the cradle with her foot, and stopping now and then to cry, "Be still!" "Stop crying!" "Bother the baby!" "I wish there were no babies!" and similar idle speeches. To all this baby replies by crying louder and louder still, until his voice reaches mamma's ears and brings her into the room saying:

"Minnie, my dear, why don't you keep baby quiet?"

"I can't, mamma; I've been trying my best to quiet him this half hour and he won't be still."

"Pshaw! Minnie, you haven't done your best and you know it. You fib when you say you have. And so do all the girls and boys in the Advocate family when, without having given their whole minds to their tasks, they claim to have done their best. Remember, my children, trying your best means that you give all your thoughts and all your strength to your tasks and duties. Remember still further, that they who do this seldom fail. There is no such word as fail among children who really try their best."

OUR COUNCIL-CHAMBER.



In putting his hat on the table to-day the corporal upset a pile of books which had been ready to topple over for several days. Seeing the old gentleman busy placing the books in order, I told him he needn't take so much

pains with them, but to let them remain as they were.

"Excuse me, sir," said he, "I make it a point to do whatever I undertake in my very best manner. I owe this habit to a maxim taught me by my good old grandfather, long since departed. When I was a boy I often spent a few weeks at his house. On one occasion he set me and my Cousin Charlie to work weeding a garden-path. Feeling anxious to please my grandfather, I did my best. My cousin didn't like the work, and his part wasn't half weeded when grandfather came into the garden. Seeing the difference between my work and Charlie's, he patted my head and said, 'You have done well, because you have done your best. Charlie has done his work in a slovenly way, because he didn't like his task and didn't try to do his best. Now, boys, let me give you a maxim that will be worth thousands of dollars to you if you observe it—Whenever you undertake to do anything do your best. No matter how trivial a thing it is, if you

do it at all, *do your best*. ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.' I treasured up that maxim, Mr. Editor, as a sacred legacy from grandfather, and it has been worth much to me all my life."

Your grandfather was wise, corporal. I knew him well. His maxim is valuable, and I hope your company will adopt it—but the letters, corporal, the letters! Where are they?"

"Here they are, sir, thick as the leaves on your lawn; but let me first give my Try Company a Bible question in verse which I found in a magazine printed in dear old England, our glorious fatherland. Who can solve it?"

"The name a dying mother gave  
Her babe in sorrow born;  
A woman whose untimely grave  
Should us from falsehood warn;  
Israel's high priest, 'The saint of God,'  
An exile and a stranger  
Who still in David's footsteps trod  
And gave to him in danger;  
The race from which proud Haman came;  
A Syrian servant, one  
Who with a murderer's hand and name  
Possessed his master's throne.  
The initials and the finals show  
Two prophets good and great,  
Whose grand predictions, all allow,  
To Jesus Christ relate.

"Here is a letter from an '*old boy*.' He says:

"I did not know till last evening that you admitted boys as old as I (sixty-one years) into your Try Company. On reading your excellent S. S. Advocate—yes, excellent—I find that you admitted the Rev. E. Garrison, an old man. Now I am no *Rev.*, but I am trying to get to heaven. I am a Sunday-school scholar, and have been when practicable from the time when I was twenty years of age, at which time I first saw a Sunday-school. I attend two, one in the morning four and a half miles distant. I am not always there since my youngest son has gone to the war. In the afternoon, in our own neighborhood, I have as yet never failed. I am in my second dotage, if, in fact, I ever was out of my first. My parents feared God, and lived and died in the Church. God converted all their children. I joined the same Church when fourteen years of age. I promised my wife when dying that I would meet her in heaven and bring all the children with me. Thank God they have all seven given their hearts to God, and are trying to follow their mother to heaven. I am trying and will try. Mr. Corporal, will you admit me?"

"God bless thee, dear old patriarch! May thy mantle fall on my Try Company and bind them to the Sunday-school for life. I admit you cheerfully to my ranks."

So says the corporal, and so say I. Read on, corporal!

"LUCY B. says:

"I am a little orphan girl eleven years old. I have a nice home, kind adopted father and mother, who are very kind to me. Addie, Eddie, and Emma are my little companions, but I am sorry to say I am cross to them sometimes. I want to join your Try Company. Addie is seven years old and wants to join it too. Will you take us? If you will, instead of saying 'I can't,' we will say, 'I'll try.'"

"I'll admit Lucy," says the corporal, "because she sees her faults and is trying to mend them."

But what about Addie, Mr. Corporal?

"Enlist her, by all means, Mr. Editor. She comes in good company, and if she lives to be a woman will have cause to be glad she ever enlisted."

What next, corporal?

"JOHN MILTON writes that nearly all the teachers and scholars in his school belong to the Church and are battling for heaven. That's good news, indeed. I wish all my children were members of Christ's Church. ELLA M. C. says:

"O what a good paper you print! Many little boys and girls when they write to you say they wish you would put your likeness in the paper. They want to see how nice-looking such a good editor must be. Our school is ahead of any I have heard of, because we were presented with your picture, with your name written on it, all framed in beautiful gilt moulding. But only those who have one thousand merit marks can have one of those pretty presents. I have one. Then we have the best singing, and the largest school, and the best teachers, and the best superintendent I ever saw, perhaps as good as you ever saw. When our superintendent talks to us he gets happy all over, and that's a good deal too, for he is very large. I heard he weighs two hundred and forty-six pounds, and his great heart is all love. I want to join your Try Company. Will you accept me?"

Accept you, Ella? Of course, I can't do anything else. A girl who has my picture and autograph as the reward of a thousand merit marks I cannot find it in my heart to reject. The corporal laughs and says, "Ella is an optimist. She has the best of everything, hopes for the best, and stands among the best girls in her Sunday-school. May heaven bless her with its best gifts!"