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Words of kindness fitly spoken,
Fall like sunshine on the heart,
Breaking up its frozen currents,
That new life it may impart.

Perfect, says the Holy Bible,
On which we for life depend,
Is the man whose tongue is govern'd,
And whose lips do not offend.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 17, 1900.

SMOKING STUNTS THE GROWTH OF BOYS.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be upon the advisability of smoking for men, there is none as to its pernicious effect upon boys. It affects the action of the heart, and reduces the capacity of the lungs. Young men who are being trained for athletics are not permitted to smoke by their trainers, because, as they say, "It is bad for the wind." The argument that will appeal most forcibly to your boy is that smoking will stunt his growth. It has been proved that youthful smokers are shorter and weigh less than their comrades who do not smoke. Cigarettes are particularly injurious. Nicotine, the active principle of tobacco, is said by chemists to be, next to prussic acid, the most rapidly fatal poison known. The tender tissues of a growing boy cannot absorb even a very small quantity of it without most injurious results.

MARRIED TO A DRUNKARD.

A TRUE STORY.

She suddenly rose in the meeting and spoke as follows:

"Married to a drunkard! Yes, I was married to a drunkard. Look at me! I am talking to the girls."

We all turned round and looked at her. She was a wan woman, with dark, sad eyes, and white hair placed smoothly over a brow that denoted intellect.

"When I married a drunkard, I reached the acme of misery," she continued. "I was young, and, oh, so happy! I married the man I loved and who professed to love me. He was a drunkard, and I knew it, knew it, but did not understand it. There is not a young girl in this building that does not understand it, unless she has a drunkard in her family, then perhaps, she knows how deep the iron enters the soul of a woman when she loves and is allied to a drunkard, whether father, husband, brother, or son. Girls, believe me when I tell you that to marry a drunkard is the crown of all misery. I have gone through the deep waters, and know I have gained that fearful knowledge at the expense of happiness, sanity, almost life itself. Do you wonder my hair is white! It turned white in a night—bleached by sorrow, as Marie Antoinette said of her hair. I am not forty years old, yet the snows of seventy rest upon my head; and upon my heart—ah, I cannot begin to count the winters resting there," she said, with unutterable pathos in her voice.

"My husband was a professional man. His calling took him from home frequently at night, and when he returned

he returned drunk. Gradually he gave way to temptation in the day, until he was rarely sober. I had two lovely little girls and a boy." Here her voice faltered, and we sat in deep silence listening to her story. My husband had been drinking deeply. I had not seen him for two days. One night I was seated beside my sick boy, the two little girls were in the bed in the next room, while beyond was another room, into which I heard my husband go, as he entered the house. That room communicated with the one in which my little girls were sleeping. I know not why, but a feeling of terror took possession of me, and I felt that my little girls were in danger. I rose and went to the door. The door was locked. I knocked on it frantically, but no answer came. I seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength, and throwing myself with all my force against the door, the lock gave way and the door flew open. Oh, the sight! the terrible sight! she wails in a voice that haunts me now, and she covered her face with her hands, and when she removed them, it was whiter and sadder than ever.

Delirium tremens. You have never seen it, girls. God grant you never may. My husband stood beside his bed, his eyes glaring with insanity, and in his hand a large knife. "Take them away," he screamed. The horrible things they are crawling all over me, take them away, I say, and he flourished his knife in the air. Regardless of the danger, I rushed up to the bed, and my heart seemed suddenly to have ceased beating. There lay my children, covered with their own life-blood, slain by their own father. For a moment I could not utter a sound. I was literally dumb in the presence of this great sorrow. I scarcely heeded the maniac by my side—the man who had wrought me all this woe. Then I uttered a loud scream, and my wallings filled the air. The servants heard me, and hastened to the room, and when my husband saw them he drew the knife across his own throat. I knew nothing more. I was borne senseless from the room that contained my slaughtered children and the body of my husband. The next day my hair was white, and my mind was so shattered that I knew no one."

She ceased. Our eyes were riveted on her wan face, and some of the women present sobbed aloud, while there was scarcely a dry eye in that temperance meeting. So much sorrow, we thought, and through no fault of her own. We saw that she had not done speaking, and was only waiting to subdue her emotion to continue her story.

"Two years," she continued, "I was a mental wreck, then I recovered from the shock, and absorbed myself in the care of my boy. But the sin of the father was visited upon the child, and six months ago, my boy of eighteen was placed in a drunkard's grave, and as I, his mother, saw the sod heaped over him I said, 'Thank God! I'd rather see him there than have him live a drunkard.' and I turned into my desolate home a childless woman, one on whom the hand of God had rested heavily.

"Girls, it is you I wish to rescue from the fate that overtook me. Do not blast your life as I blasted mine; do not be drawn into the madness of marrying a drunkard. You love him! So much the worse for you, for, married to him, the greater will be your misery because of your love. You will marry him and then reform him, you say. Ah! a woman sadly overtakes her strength when she undertakes to do this. You are no match for the giant demon drink when he possesses a man's body and soul. You are no match for him, I say. What is your puny strength beside his gigantic force? He will crush you, too. It is to save you girls from the sorrows which wrecked my happiness that I have unfolded my history to you. I am a stranger in this great city. I am merely passing through it, and I have a message to bear to every girl—never marry a drunkard."

I can see her now as she stood amid the bushed audience, her dark eyes glowing, and her frame quivering with emotion as she uttered her impassioned appeal. Then she hurried out and we never saw her again. Her words fitly spoken were not without effect, however, and because of them there is one girl single now.—Railway Signal for August.

Patsy McKenna (in an electric car which has broken down). "Well, av 'his car don't be after moving soon, o'ill take the wan behoind."

"Papa," said a boy, "I know what makes people laugh in their sleeves!" "Well, my son, what makes them?" "Cause that's where their funny bone is."

KATRINE'S CHARM.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

It was an odd team, the dog and Katrine, drawing the clumsy cart, but it was not that which seemed strange to Katrine. The thing that seemed strange to her was that the cart should be so full of potatoes that it was hard pulling, even with Heinrich pushing with all his might. A woman drawing cart or plough with a cow or dog for yoke-fellow was no uncommon sight in her country, but such a yield of potatoes from the Mullers' little field was so rare that even yet Katrine could scarcely believe it.

"Not since the father has been sick have we had such luck, Heinrich," she said, pausing a moment to rest. Heinrich straightened himself, looked at his hardened hands, and answered from a boy's practical standpoint: "Not a year have we worked so hard!" "That is true. But I should have had no courage to work so hard, but for the charm. You need say nothing, Heinrich, you know that you believe in it yourself, and it is great good luck that has come to us by having it." Katrine wiped her heated face with her apron. She was warm and tired, but she was also triumphant, for had she not been the one to think of the charm? Times had been so hard. The father grew no better, and the grandmother, who was old and lame, had lost heart and lamented continually over the hardships of the present and the evils that she was sure were coming. The little sum laid aside for a rainy day had been loaned where it could not be recalled when wanted; indeed there seemed danger that it had been invested so securely that it never could be recalled. Katrine and Heinrich had looked at each other helplessly. The boy, a sturdy lad of fifteen, had tried to find work, and Katrine had tried to find some magic that would turn the tide of affairs and bring better days. Her neighbour, Elspeth, had suggested that idea.

"Ah, then, it is something that may be working evil to your house. People may say this thing or that thing; they are wise that know," said Elspeth, oracularly, with a solemn shake of her head. "But there are charms that can bring good; that do I know."

And she enforced her knowledge with so many stories of wonderful happenings, that Katrine, though remembering what the Herr Pastor had said of such things, and so not willing openly to acknowledge any faith in them, had gone away with a secret longing to obtain some of the marvellous aids of which she had heard. That was why she had stolen across the fields in the early morning to find the "witch-woman" of whom Elspeth had told her.

But the old cabin seemed to have been long deserted, and she was turning away sorely disappointed when she met Uncle Fritz—queer, sharp, shrewd Uncle Fritz—"ringle" to the whole neighbourhood—who guessed her errand at once, and cunningly drew the confession from her.

"It needs not that woman. I can give you a charm if you have the perseverance and patience to make it come true," he said, thoughtfully. "There is that field, left only for pasture now, that your father once tilled. Take Heinrich into your secret, and do your best in working it this year, and you will see that this spell that I give you shall hold true."

Then he wrote something on a paper, sealed it carefully, and gave it to her, "to be opened by her after the harvest was gathered," he said. Heinrich had smiled his slow smile when she told him. He pondered over the matter in his thoughtful fashion, but he had not objected to going to work in the field—indeed, he had seemed to lay more stress upon the work than did Katrine.

"It is great good luck to have so many potatoes," he said, replying to his sister's remark as she stopped to rest. "This is the last load, Katrine. We shall sell enough to buy us many things for the winter."

"It cheered the grandmother when I told her that," said Katrine. "The last load it is? Oh, Heinrich, then we may read the charm at last! I have it here."

But when the long-cherished paper was opened, the words written upon it were only old familiar words:

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand.

"He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread.

"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

"Only that?" cried Katrine in disappointment.

"That is what I thought," said Heinrich, placidly. "But it is enough, Katrine—you see the charm has worked. Industry and making the best of what we have, and God's blessing—they are all the charm we have needed."

WHAT MADE A LITTLE GIRL GLAD.

A Prussian nobleman, who did not believe in God nor in the Bible, once overheard a little girl singing. It was a sweet strain, and a child's voice is always irresistible. As he drew near he saw tears upon her cheeks, as if she had been weeping.

"Why are you crying as you sing?" he kindly asked her.

"Oh, I am so happy!" said the little girl.

"But why do you weep if you are so happy?"

"I love Jesus so well that I was crying for joy," the little girl said.

"But where is Jesus?" asked the nobleman.

"In heaven."

"How can he do anything for you if he is in heaven? He cannot give you your clothes and playthings, as your parents and friends do."

"Oh, yes; he can do something for me. He comes to my heart and makes me happy."

"Nonsense!" said the nobleman, "that is nonsense."

"Oh, no; it is not nonsense!" answered the little evangelist. "I know it is the truth, and it makes me glad."

The nobleman turned away, but an angel had touched his heart. He sought the little girl's Saviour, and found peace and joy.

THE FOOLISH BOY.

Nelle came running to me the other day, her eyes big with surprise, and exclaimed: "Oh, auntie, what do you think? You know Bertie, who lives down the street—that little bit of a boy—well, he smokes cigarettes, and he is awful white."

"Then he will make a little man very likely, if he has begun so early," I replied.

"Yes, that is what Jertie says. He steals off by himself behind the back fence and then smokes."

"Then he must know he is doing wrong, and is ashamed to be seen. What do you suppose he does it for?"

"I guess he thinks it will make him look big. He wants to be a man, and he is always telling us girls what he'll do when he gets big," said Nelle.

He has begun the wrong way, if he wants to grow. Tobacco will hurt his heart and nerves. If he lives to be a man he will be nervous, his heart will be weak, and he will not be the strong man that he might be if he had not begun this bad habit.

A schoolboy died in Brooklyn only a little while ago, because he had smoked so many cigarettes. His whole body was sick; the poison in the tobacco had gone all through him. His skin was yellow, his nerves were weak, and he was so sick that he had to go to the hospital. But the doctor could not help him. He said just before he died:

"Oh, if all the boys could see me now, and see how I suffer, they would never smoke."

If you would not be a smoker, do not begin.

THE LEGEND OF ST. GREGORY.

It is related that when Gregory was only a monk in the monastery of St. Andrew, a beggar presented himself at the gate, and requested alms: being relieved, he came again and again, and at length nothing was left for the charitable saint to bestow but the silver porringer in which his mother, Sylvia, had sent him pottage; and he commanded that this should be given to the mendicant.

It was the custom of Gregory, when he became pope, to entertain every evening at his own table twelve poor men, in remembrance of the number of the Lord's apostles. One night, as he sat at supper with his guests, he saw, to his surprise, not twelve, but thirteen seated at his table. He called to his steward and said to him, "Did I not command thee to invite twelve? and, behold, there are thirteen!" The steward told them over, and remarked, "Holy father, there are surely twelve only!" and Gregory held his peace. After the meal he called forth the unbidden guest, and asked him, "Who art thou?" He replied, "I am the poor man whom thou didst formerly relieve; but my name is the Wonderful, and through me thou shalt obtain whatever thou shalt ask of God." Then Gregory knew that he had entertained an angel—or, according to another version of the story, our Lord himself.

"Henry came home furious last night."

"What was the matter, daughter?"

"Why, mamma, I had put two eggs in his luncheon and forgot to cook them."