

ing or bitter; of brothers and sisters alienated instead of growing up in beautiful comradeship. Nagging not only does not accomplish the pretended object for which it is used, but it often does just the reverse. The Editor has seen some who were saints under it, but they were well on their way to sainthood before they became subjected to it. It brings out the devil in most people.

Nagging, then, is a waste of energy, or flagrant misuse of it, inasmuch as no one, not even the nagger, is benefited by it. Out of the general uncomfortableness caused by it, some one should be able to get some enjoyment, but that is not done even by the discomfort-maker. The nagger changed a 'happy family' into a set of snarling creatures, not only without deriving any profit or pleasure from the act, but actually suffering with the rest, like the hornet, which when it uses its sting is forced to leave it in the wound it has made.

The habit of nagging is usually apt to fasten upon those of a nervous disposition. It is a sign of a fussy nature. It must have every little thing just so, or there is an outbreak. It is not the great things that it worries about so much as it is the infinitesimals. It is frequently blind to great faults and magnifies the small ones. A nervous disposition resorts to nagging as a relief, but is made worse by it. The real root of nagging is 'self.' Doing it for the good of others is a delusion. The habit is acquired because of resenting all those actions on the part of others that interfere with one's comfort, convenience, or notions of what is proper or right. It is simply an effort to make every one in the family do and behave according to the nagger's ideals.

'Let him alone,' counselled a wise elderly woman to a girl in her teens who was always criticizing her brother. 'You are driving him from home now. Instead of doing that, make home attractive to him. Quit pecking at his faults, and, instead, praise him for the things that he does that are right. Make him think there is no brother in the world who has quite so good a sister.'

That was sound advice. That sister had been concerned only with externals and was losing her brother's heart. Doubtless the boy was inconsiderate, careless, rough, boorish, it may be, but the way to make a thoughtful gentleman of him, was not by irritating his temper, but by increasing his love. Love 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things'—and winneth all things where nagging completely fails.

### A Victory Worth Winning

(Eva Williams Malone, in 'Christian Observer'.)

Old Mr. Simms was coming down the street—cross, stingy, old Mr. Simms, who hated boys, and who looked as if he could never, by any chance, have been a boy himself.

A bevy of school-fellows were huddled on the corner comparing balls and marbles. Just as the old man came opposite them, a solid rubber ball, was hurled from the crowd of boys, and the word—'Skinflint'—hissed through the air. The thrower was a good marksman, for Mr. Simms' moth-eaten 'stovepipe' hat was knocked from his head and rolled into the gutter.

The old man was furious; forgetting to rescue his hat, he rushed across to capture his assailant. But boys are fleet of foot, and before Mr. Simms's rheumatic limbs had carried him to the spot, the youngsters had all scuttled away.

'The young villains! They needn't think they'll get off so easy. I know who did it. I'd know Hal Preston's voice anywhere. His father will make him wish his skin was made of flint before he is done with him.'

And the old man quivered with rage as he went down the street toward Mr. Preston's store, where he told his story. In telling his story, Mr. Simms gave forth no uncertain sound. He declared that he not only recognized Hal's voice, but saw him raise his arm to throw.

'What's all this I hear about your striking old Mr. Simms with a ball, my son?' asked Mr. Preston sternly, as he came up to his own back gate at noon to find his son and several other boys standing together in earnest discussion.

'I? I, father?' exclaimed Hal, turning pale with what might have been either innocent surprise or guilty fear. 'Why, I did not do it; I declare I did not.'

'But Mr. Simms says he knows your voice, and that just as he saw you raise your arm to throw the ball you called out, "Old Skinflint!" That looks ugly for you, my young man.'

The frown on Mr. Preston's face, and the set lines about his mouth showed that he thought his boy was telling him a falsehood.

'Boys, who threw that ball?' Mr. Preston asked sharply; 'Mr. Simms is one of the best customers, and he says flatly that he not only saw Hal throw, but heard him use language that no gentleman would apply to an old man. Did anyone in this crowd see Hal throw? The ball came from the place where he was standing—that is clear.'

There was silence in the group; the boys all shaking their heads in denial of Hal's guilt.

Mr. Preston looked at his son searchingly.

'Harry, do you know who did it, if it was not you?'

'Yes, sir, I know, but I can't tell,' came from the boy's pale, set lips.

'Now, boys, if it wasn't Hal, who was it?' continued Mr. Preston. 'It looks to me very much as if you are all trying to screen Harry in a very ungentlemanly thing. I know how boys will do that. Mr. Simms is a truthful old man, and if I can't get the name of the boy who threw that ball from some of you, I am bound to believe it was Hal, and I'll settle with him.'

Mr. Preston waited a moment, and then said in a stern, resolute voice:

'Harry, come with me.'

As the two started into the house, a muttered cry of 'Shame! shame!' rose from the group of boys. Then a slim boy, with a set face, stepped out from among them, and said:

'Come back, Mr. Preston! I can't let Hal be punished, he didn't throw that ball—I did it.'

As he spoke these words, the boys set up a shout: 'Hurrah! hurrah for old Frank. He ain't a sneak, after all. He's fit to belong to the Gang!'

'What is the Gang?' asked Mr. Preston, coming back to where the boys stood.

'That's our Club,' answered the lad, who had confessed to the ball-throwing, 'we're sworn never to tell on each other, and also never to do a cowardly, sneaking thing.'

'Don't you think it was somewhat of that order to throw at an old man?' asked Mr. Preston, looking down into the bright, young face.

'Yes, sir, I reckon it was, but I didn't just think about it. That old stovepipe hat did look so easy to hit. And old Skinny—I mean Mr. Simms, sir—is always calling us boys "young rascals."'

'Well, I was a boy myself once, and I have not forgotten how boys feel,' said Mr. Preston, 'but what do you think would be the real manly thing for you to do—the thing that would be truly worthy of "the Gang?"'

'Why, to ask Hal's pardon first, and then to go and tell old Sk—, I mean Mr. Simms, that it wasn't Harry that hit his hat. It's a pretty bitter pill, sir—well, never mind, I'll do it!' and the lad started down the street followed by 'the Gang' shouting:

'Hooray for old Frank! He's the real stuff. We'll make him captain of the Gang!'

And they did.

### 'Saving the Sun.'

The Rev. W. P. Knight, writing from P'ing-Yang, Shan-si, describes as follows the custom of the Chinese at the time of an eclipse.

I saw a proclamation yesterday in one of the public places of this city, to the effect that on the 1st of the 10th moon there will be an eclipse of the sun. All classes—scholars, tradesmen, soldiers, officials, etc.—are therefore commanded to unite in 'saving the sun.' The idea is that a voracious animal in the sky has swallowed the sun, and all must combine in making the greatest possible noise, frighten the beast and thus get him to vomit the sun, that China may not be deprived of its light and heat. In talking the matter over with a Christian teacher, he assured me that from the emperor down to the lowest subject, this was believed. On the day named, temples will be sounding with the chanting of priests and beating of tom-toms; officials will set off crackers and bombs while the poorer people will beat tins, blow horns, and make all manner of noise to 'save the sun.' I pointed out the folly of it all, but got the answer, 'It is the established custom.' That is the last argument, the final court of appeal—custom must not be broken. It seems strange that a man who can assume the duties of the governorship of a province, could issue such a childish proclamation. Strange indeed are the workings of the Chinese mind!—'China's Millions.'

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