

## The Flawed Link

Everything on board a ship of war is subject to strict and constant scrutiny, but perhaps none more than all relating to the anchors by which the ship is made fast, and rides securely at her moorings in harbour. The chains are laid out upon the deck at stated periods, and the blacksmith or locksmith proceeds to inspect them, knocking each link with his hammer. If it does not give forth a clear, full ring, he has discovered a fault, and the flawed link must be immediately removed, while a new and sound one is put into its place. So every cable is examined and all sign of weakness repaired.

It happened on one occasion that a flaw was thus discovered, but it was so slight it was thought probable it might hold for a very long time, and even bear a severe strain. The ship was on a short voyage, and repairs could easily be done when she arrived at the next port, where she might be detained for some weeks. An accident, however, occurred, and it was deemed needful to run her into a strange roadstead, and come to an anchorage there to prevent destruction. The men were told off for duty, the heavy anchor got overboard, and slowly a wheel was turned, and coil after coil of the chain sunk into the deep and troubled water. Suddenly a violent shock was felt, and the ship shivered and reeled as a living creature might have done, then she rocked in a white pool, and eddies and bubbles which rose to the surface alone told her anchor had gone. The flawed link had given way, the cable hung loose; she had parted from that on which she depended for safety.

The anchor has always been taken as an emblem of hope: we suppose because the Bible speaks of it as such. It tells those who trust His promise that "by two things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Faith is the chain that connects us with this anchor: let us look well to it that it has not a flawed link. Be sure you are connected with Christ as your Saviour: it will not do to know Him only as a Saviour, or that your father, mother, friend, or brother is a Christian; you must be a Christian too. Don't trust to improvement: don't try to make yourself better before you come to Him. Christ alone can save you, and not proper feelings or good conduct. If you look to anything short of Christ, there is in your faith, as in the ship's chain, a flawed link.

## The Disobedient Bears.

## A FABLE.

Once upon a time there lived in a cave in the side of a mountain a large black bear and two merry, playful little cubs.

One morning Mother Bear said to her little ones, "I must go out to-day to look for some food. Be sure you don't go outside the cavern, but stay here quietly until I return, and I will bring you something nice for supper. Good-bye, my dears."

The young bears said, "Very well, mamma," and gave her a hug, and away she went.

Now one little bear was of a naughty, restless disposition, so after playing with his little brother Bruno, and then

having a short nap, he began to look about for some mischief to do, but could find none. Presently he said, "How I should like to see the world, Bruno! Let us go out and see what there is outside."

But Bruno said, "Oh, Bruin! you know mother said we were to stay here until she returned."

But Bruin only said, "Oh, bother! I can't stay here all day." So the two disobedient little bears trotted off into the wood together.

Presently Bruno said, "I smell honey, Bruin."

"So do I," replied Bruin. They sniffed about at the root of a tree, and then decided to climb it to look for honey. They climbed it, but they didn't get any honey—a swarm of bees flew out and attacked them, and stung their little noses and eyes and ears. So they came down as fast as possible, but when they were half way down, Bruin said quite crossly to Bruno,—

"It was your fault that we climbed that tree."

"It was your fault that we came out at all," retorted Bruno; and so they quarrelled, and were just coming to blows when Mother Bear arrived on the scene. She scolded them well, and drove them home before her, and would not give them any supper for their disobedience.

Poor Bruin and Bruno were very penitent and sorrowful, and you may be sure that they never disobeyed their mother any more.

## Getting Rid of a Trouble.

A little girl who must be called by her pet name of "Litti" (for this is a true story, and I am going to tell you about a real living child), had one day been greatly frightened by hearing some silly tales of ghosts and hobgoblins from her nursemaid. It is very wrong to frighten children in this way, and I would advise our young readers not to listen to anything of the kind.

Poor little Litti was so much disturbed in her mind that as she went up to bed that night she started from her own shadow on the wall, and fancied she heard other footsteps on the stairs. So she did, for her aunt, who did not know the cause of alarm, but saw something was wrong with the child, followed her to her room, and, dismissing the maid, undressed her little charge herself.

Litti was comfortably tucked in, but Litti could not go to sleep. Directly her aunt made a motion to leave the room, the blue eyes unclosed and the child became watchful. Once she whispered,—

"Aunt Jane, you are not going away?"

"Hurry and go to sleep, or I shall have to call Martha to take my place," was the reply.

You may think this did not help poor Litti. Her aunt, perceiving that something was really troubling her, said,—

"Supposing you ask God to make you forget whatever is keeping you awake."

Litti knelt up in bed and did as she was directed. Then she laid down again, the blue eyes closed, and she was soon fast asleep.

Young friends, do you know this way of getting rid of a trouble? Try it. Pray about everything. Pray at all times, and everywhere.

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## Nancy's Pleasure.

Riches and grand houses and plenty of toys are not needed to make children happy. Nancy had none of these, yet there was not a merrier, happier child in the whole kingdom. She had very plain food always, and seldom wore any shoes or stockings; but what of that! She had the best of health, the most delicious fresh air to breathe, and a good appetite at all times.

Then, what playthings could be compared to hers? She had the daintiest and freshest of wild flowers; a sparkling, dancing brook, that went singing over the stones, and was always a pleasant companion; and if she kept very still, the young fawns, with their almost human eyes, would come down to the brook-side, and look timidly at her, and if she did not move, they would sometimes venture to drink the cool water, and then bound away. How Nancy loved them all!

She would often go out in the early morning and gather the stately foxgloves that grew on the edge of the brook, weaving them into gay nosegays, with fern and nodding blue-bells and mosses. And when she had got a basketful, she would walk some miles to the nearest town, and try to sell them, so earning a little money to help her hard-working father and mother.

It was a happy, busy life, and Nancy would not have exchanged it for the most luxurious nursery that was ever built.

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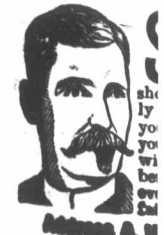
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