

The next day was even worse. No sooner did Frances mention, in her usual consequential manner, some of her own possessions or attributes than a chorus of approval rose from all sides.

On the evening of the second day Frances went up to her room at an early hour. Standing before the dressing table she talked, after the fashion of girls, to the reflection of her own face in the mirror.

'I never thought about it before, Frances Knapp, but you do talk too much about yourself. Well, there shall be a change. It—it makes me feel as if I had been boasting.'

The next day Frances watched herself closely. How often some expression of self-approval sprang to her lips!

She restrained these expressions, but her silence did no good. The girls continued to praise her. They commended her looks, her demeanor, wardrobe, family, accomplishments, school standing, and even good nature.

Frances was first annoyed, then impatient. A little later anger came, and she flashed out a few hot words, only to be met by Tula's extravagant praise of her 'proper spirit.'

A week went by. One rainy evening there came a timid rap at Abby's door.

'It is I—Frances. May I come in?'

'Certainly, dear.' Abby's hand upon the other's arm was as gentle as was her voice. 'I am glad to—'

'Don't praise me. O Abby! I am so wretched!' And sinking into a chair Frances laid her head upon the study table and began to sob, not noisily, but in a low, sad way that brought the tears to Abby's eyes.

'It is too bad,' Abby said to herself, 'but I must be careful to say nothing that will counteract the treatment, not at this late hour.'

'Why do you do it?' Frances demanded. You know what I mean; don't pretend that you do not.'

'I am not going to pretend. We did it because you seemed to like to talk of yourself and what belonged to you.'

'Abby, I have been horrid. I—I thank you. It was awful, but nothing else would have cured me, for I would not have believed I was so bad. Never again will I brag. Do—do you suppose the girls will begin over again?'

'I know they will,' was Abby's comforting reply, as she stroked her friend's sunny hair.

Great Disasters From Small Causes.

A few mischievous lads dug a 'brigands' cave' at the base of the big dam which confined the waters of the South Fork reservoir above Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and so weakened it that the entire massive structure gave way, and six thousand persons were drowned.

A restive cow kicked over a paraffin lamp in Chicago on the evening of October 7th, 1871. The resultant explosion started a conflagration which destroyed the city.

To win a bet of twopence, a little pit lad employed at the Ferndale Colliery, in the Rhondda Valley, picked the lock of his safety lamp with an ordinary hairpin. He himself, together with nearly two hundred of his mates perished in the explosion which followed.

At Shoeburyness, some fifteen years ago, Colonel Francis Lyon invented a new kind of sensitive fuse for big calibre shells, and invited a number of gunnery experts to be present at the trials. Unfortunately, on the night prior to the day on which the experiments were to be made, he locked up a number of the fuses in a shed in which were some fowls. The chickens started scratching, as is their wont, and the dust flew up and settled on the threads of the screws of the fuses. When, next morning, an unfortunate gunner started to fix one to a live shell, the missile 'went off,' killing the operator, the inventor and five other persons.

On the 28th of November, 1875, a meddling 'middy,' testing a new screwdriver, managed to open a valve in the 'Iron Duke.' The sea rushed in and the country was the poorer by £5,000, the sum spent in making good the havoc wrought. We also came within an ace of losing our—at that time—biggest battleship.

A year or two later the 'Esperanza' was cast away on the coast of Chili, through a

tiny toddler of five meddling with the compasses. She had on board ninety-seven souls, and all but eleven perished. Among the saved was the innocent cause of the terrible catastrophe.

A fire, which was directly responsible for the loss of more lives than any other single conflagration, originated through the vagaries of a stray tarantula, a species of huge, hairy spider peculiar to South and Central America. The scene was Santiago, and a grand religious festival was taking place in the principal cathedral. The building was a sea of drapery, flooded with every variety of illumination. Twenty thousand silver lamps were in full blaze, and the acolytes were busy lighting the two thousand tapers on the grand altar when the errant spider skipped into the central aisle and alarmed a lady, who screamed. The acolytes, or some of them, looked around to ascertain the cause of the commotion, and one of the naked lights they carried came in contact with the drapery of a colossal figure of the Virgin. A few minutes later the vast cathedral was a raging furnace, in which were being consumed more than two thousand bodies—the elite of Santiago society.

So sin begins with little transgressions, little thievings, trivial lying, the first glass of liquor, and becomes the destroyer of uncounted hopes and lives.

Frozen to a Carcass.

A gentleman standing by Niagara saw an eagle light upon a frozen lamb encased in a floating piece of ice. The eagle stood upon that dead carcass and feasted upon it as it was 'drifting' on towards the rapids. Every now and again the eagle would proudly lift his head into the air to look around him, as much as to say 'I am "drifting" on towards danger, but I know what I am doing; I will fly away and make good my escape before it is too late.'

When he neared the falls he stooped and spread his powerful wings and leaped for his flight; but alas! alas! while he was feasting on that dead carcass his feet had frozen to its fleece. He leaped and shrieked and beat upon the ice with his wings until the ice-frozen lamb and eagle went over the falls and down into the foam and darkness below.

This is the picture of every soul that is playing and feasting upon sin. Many a young man intends after a little more indulgence in, to turn from his sins and be saved; but alas! when he would turn he finds himself fettered by sinful habits, his affections have been poisoned by sin, his will paralyzed, his soul has frozen to the decaying mass of rottenness upon which he has been feasting. Turn, ere it is too late.—Anon.

Systematic Giving.

A system of stated giving has proved beneficial to all of our parishes where it has been introduced and properly carried out. It not only increases the offerings, but teaches the people to be regular in the habit of giving. Many are unable to contribute to any extent toward the Church's support, and cannot give a large amount at any one time. Let us illustrate the effect of systematic giving:

There was once a man who thought himself very poor—so poor that he could give but little money for any good work. One day a lady asked him to put his name down on her paper, promising to give eighteen dollars and twenty-five cents during that year to the different causes for which his church was trying to work. He looked at her in amazement.

'Why, my dear woman!' said he, 'I never had eighteen dollars and twenty-five cents a year to give in my life, and never expect to have. I'm a poor man.'

'Well,' she said, 'if you really think you cannot afford that sum, will you promise to give five cents a day for this year?'

'Why, yes,' he said, 'five cents a day is a little bit, certainly; if that will do you any good, I can manage so much.' And he did, and enjoyed it.

Just multiply the number of days in a year by the figure five, will you? Well, what is your produce? How much money did the man save by not pledging eighteen dollars and twenty-five cents? This is a true story.—'Episcopal Register.'

Youthful Consecration.

ECCL. xiii. 1.

(Amos R. Wells, in the New York 'Observer'.)

What is it to 'remember our Creator in the days of our youth,' as the writer of Ecclesiastics bade us? Not to forget our Sunday-school lesson? Remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy? Far harder things than these.

It is to take our pleasure in the eternities more than in the times. It is to set our affections on things above. It is to be more ambitious for celestial applause than the hand-clapping of mortals. It is to plan a life that reads smoothly on beyond that little, heaped-up grass and grave-stone semi-colon which creeps so soon into our life sentence. In all our planning, we shall look beyond the turn of the road. Our training shall be not for this transient naval academy, but for the great fleet and the vast ocean of eternity. That is the hard thing which it is to remember our Creator in the days of our youth.

And why do it? For three reasons: the first of which is because not to do it is to be mean. We know who gave us life and all its joys. We know what is the great longing of His infinite heart. To drive a hard bargain with Him is contemptible. To take an eleventh-hour advantage of His mercy is abominable. It is to drink the wine of life and give Him the lees. It is to exhaust the ground with crop after crop of wild oats, and then hand over the soil. It is the spirit of giving as little as possible in order to get as much as possible, and that will take all the manliness out of any man.

And why yield our youth to God? Because in the second place, not to do so is foolish. Prosperity lies in eternity. To spend one's central energies on mammon is as if a man should make mud-pies in front of a palace he might be helping to build, or as if he should use his days picking up cigar stumps in front of a diamond mine. Moreover, there is a 'too late.' Carefully gathered statistics show that the vast majority of conversions occur at the age of sixteen. After that time the numbers that turn to God grow swiftly less and less. Now is always the day of salvation.

Why yield youth to God? Because, in the third place, not to do so is wicked. It is more than mean, it is worse than foolish, it is sinful. It is not a matter of indifference to a general whether his soldiers begin to obey him at the start or the end of a campaign. When a king commands, to postpone obedience is to be a traitor. In the table of the law it is written that our God is a jealous God. No one can serve Him and mammon. It is either youthful consecration or it is youthful desecration, and there is no ground midway.

Test yourself with the following covenant. Can you subscribe to it with all your soul?

I givest myself to Thee,
To do, to be, to know,
To walk only with Thee,
Where Thou leadest.
To talk only in Thee,
At Thy bidding,
To think only in Thee,
As Thou thinkest for me.
To do only Thy will,
As Thou dost reveal it,
To follow only Thee,
As Thou leadest.
To follow all the way
Till He come.'

But nothing is a better test of character than the ability to discern when it is well to say 'No,' and when it is better to say 'Yes.' The man who assents to everything equally with the man who opposes everything will be a failure. Life is neither all affirmation nor all contrariety.

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