

suddenly about a month after Bertrand had taken leave of him. He had had another stroke of paralysis, and had lingered only a few hours after it; but apparently he had experienced some sensation previously which had warned him of approaching illness, for on the morning of the day which proved to be his last, though he had risen to all appearance in his usual health, he had sent for the notary, and charged him so soon as his death should take place, to see that all the directions contained in the will he had entrusted to him were carefully executed; for which purpose he was to communicate with Bertrand de L'Isle at the address given, in Paris, and to make all arrangements for placing him at once in possession of the castle and estates.

The notary explained to Bertrand that, in the impossibility at that time of having letters conveyed into Paris, he had, with the help of the cure and one or two country magistrates, gone through all the legal formalities necessary for establishing him as lord of his ancestral home and all that belonged to it, and nothing was now required but that he should come and take final possession of his fair inheritance. In conclusion, the notary briefly detailed the value of the property, and the amount of the yearly rent-roll. At these last figures Bertrand looked with very great astonishment; for he had asked his uncle no questions whatever as to the revenues of the estate, and he now found that it amounted to many thousands a year more than he had imagined, and that he was now about to take rank among the wealthiest land-owners of France.

(To be Continued.)

HOW A BEETLE SAVED A PRINCE.

"Once upon a time—"
"O, that is nice," quoth Queen Mab, "all the best stories begin in that way."
"Once upon a time," repeated Frank with a smile, "there was an Eastern prince, about eighteen years of age, who had offended the king his uncle. So he was shut up in a very high tower, and in three days he was to be put to death. Now there was a beautiful Arab maiden that dearly loved him, and she went and sat at the foot of the tower, trying in vain to find some way by which she could set him free. At last she went to an old hermit, who was said to be a very wise man, and asked him, with many tears, how she might save her lover. The hermit stroked his beard, and thought a little while; then he gave her a big black beetle, and told her what to do. So next morning, about sunrise, she came to the foot of the tower, and having tied a small green thread around the beetle, she set him clinging to the wall with his head looking upward. She then touched the nose of the beetle with one single drop of honey, and sat down with folded arms, and watched to see what the beetle would do. Now the first thing the beetle did was to smell the honey. 'I wonder where that honey is,' said the beetle to himself; 'somewhere above me, I know.' So off he set, literally following his nose, straight up the side of the tower. He crawled slowly and steadily for a long while, and then stopped, sadly disappointed that he had not got to the honey yet. But as often as he stopped, the smell of the sweet prize came fresh and strong. So off he went again, dragging after him the fine silk thread, and at last reached the parapet, when the young prince seized the thread with trembling hands, and commenced to wind it up. Now the Arab maiden had tied to the other end a strong cord; he pulled that up by the thread;

with the cord he pulled up a rope, and with the rope a ladder. Having made the ladder fast to the parapet of the tower, he came down in safety, and he and the Arab maiden fled to another country, and lived a long time in happiness and peace."

"Do you think that is a true story, uncle," said Ida.

"Well, my beauty, I think it is quite as true as most stories that begin with 'once upon a time' are, and whether or no, there is something good to be got out of it for those who know how. Now, here's a round half-a-dozen of you who have heard it, and if it be a fable, it must have a moral. Who can find it out. Master Harry, what say you?"

"Well," said Harry, "it teaches that young folks do well to take advice from old folks, for the maiden got counsel from the old hermit."

"Well spoken, Middy. Years should teach wisdom, and good boys will listen to grey beards. Now, Miss Marion give us your opinion?"

"I think," said Marion, "it teaches the value of contrivance, and shows what may be done by a little wit in finding a way out of a difficulty."

"Very well said, little sweetheart. That's the lesson taught by the fable of the 'Crow and the Pitcher.' If you can't do a thing one way, try another. Master Frank, what say you?"

"I think the story shows how everybody has to depend on everybody, and that none of us can do without our neighbours. The maiden had to depend on the hermit, and the prince had to be helped by the maiden, and even the beetle could not be spared."

"Very true, Master Frank," said Uncle Charlie. "The peer would get on badly without the ploughman, and we could not enjoy this cosy fire without the collier and the chimney-sweep. That is the idea of true brotherhood. Now, Miss Ida, point your moral."

"Well," said Ida, "I think it teaches the value of perseverance, for by creeping and keeping at it, the beetle reached the top, though I'm sorry he found no honey when he got there; he certainly deserved it."

"That he did," said Uncle Charlie, "and your moral is very sound, for 'at it and keeping at it' is the way to reach the top of any tower that duty bids us climb. Now, Master Tom, squeeze another drop of honey out of Frank's story."

"I think it is intended to teach that a small fault, like a small thread, may one day, become a strong rope that can't be broken, and also that a feeble effort to do right, if carried out, will end in strong principle and power for good."

"Hear! hear! my boy. If we suffer ourselves to go wrong, it may become a habit so strong that we cannot break it, and good beginnings, however feeble, make a man strong as Sampson in the end. Queen Mab, what have you to say?"

"Well, Uncle, I think it teaches that the littlest of us may be very useful, and that however small we are, we may do big things, for it was a little beetle that saved the prince."

"Bless your little majesty's heart; that's as clear as daylight," said Uncle Charlie. "Little seeds bring great harvests; little strokes fell great oaks; and the mouse in the fable set the lion free."

"Now, Uncle Charlie," was said in chorus, "What moral can you get out of it?"

"Why this, my bairns," said the old man solemnly, "the poor beetle teaches us how Satan tempts us by sweet and lying promises to seek for pleasure and happiness where it can't be found, and poor foolish mortals find that the honey is all delusion when it's too late to untie the thread which binds them to his will. Let my precious bairns remember that all the Devil's promises are lies. However bright and sweet may seem the prize he offers, be sure you will never get it. So let us give him and his temptations a wide berth, and turn our eyes to Jesus. Let us climb Christward and heavenward, for in His presence is fullness of joy, and at His Right Hand are pleasures for ever more."

The evening hymn was sung, and then kneeling down, Uncle Charlie prayed for his darlings, that they might be kept from all the wiles of the "wicked one," and find a true and lasting peace in the arms of the Children's Friend.—*The Christian Globe.*

THE first step in the way of life is a right will; the second, a strong will; the third a devoted will; the fourth, a full will. In the first, the soul consented to the law of God, but, through weakness of the flesh, findeth not how to perform; in the second, it performeth, although heavily, yet firmly; in the third, it "runneth the way of God's commandments," because "set at liberty;" in the fourth are angels only, who will and perform with equal ease, because unhindered by the body.—*St. Bernard.*

The number of the stars is very deceptive. There are never more than 3,000 visible to the naked eye at a time, though there are about twice that number to be seen in all the heavens without a telescope. With the aid of a good telescope millions are brought into view. Let the astronomer select one little star to look at, and then turn his telescope upon it, and he will find hundreds under his gaze. This is the star dust, or the star clusters the astronomers talk about. The small stars increase vastly in numbers as they diminish in size. The telescope reveals at least twenty millions of stars, and some estimate that there are a hundred millions. Some stars shine brightly for a time and then grow dim. Of these more than one hundred have been catalogued.

"A DISTRESSED FATHER," writing in the *Islington Gazette*, gives an illustration of the tactics of Romanism. His daughter, who is now sixteen years of age, visited at a house in which two Romanists were lodging. One of these introduced her to a Romish priest, who passed her on to some nuns for instruction. The visits were continued without the knowledge of the parents, until one day the young lady left her home, with the pretext, "I am going to meet brother, who is coming home from business." Instead of doing so, however, she went straightway to the Romish priest, who was waiting to baptize her. The father says: "When I mentioned this lying to Father Smith, and also to the young man who has been seeking to lead my child to Rome, they both justified it. Father Smith said that there were limits to truth, and that if she had told the truth she might have been prevented from coming to be baptized." It is the old casuistry, "The end justifies the means," but those who have heard the vehement denunciations with which Romanists have sometimes repudiated such a slander, will be able rightly to estimate the value which is to be attached to such utterances.

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