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'No paper so well fitted for the general needs of Canadian Sabbath Schools.'—Wm. Millar, McDonald's Corners, Ont.

Everybody's Castle.

(By John Taylor, Author of 'Great Lessons from Little Things.')

The heart is the keep of a castle that we must all defend.

You have seen a picture of an old English castle. Outside its walls there ran a deep ditch, or moat, that went all round. In times of war the moat was filled with water, and crossed by a drawbridge. If the enemy appeared outside the drawbridge was lifted up, and there was no means of crossing the water. The walls were pierced with loopholes, through which arrows might be shot by the defenders. Each gate was protected by a portcullis, or massive frame of iron armed with spikes. The towers along the castle walls were filled with troops; and if you had seen such a castle ready for war you would have thought the people inside were safe as long as they had plenty of food and water. But inside the castle yard was another stronghold called the 'keep' of the fortress. It was the home of the chief who owned or defended the castle. It was the stronghold. Sometimes the enemy would swim across the moat in the darkness of night, and climb the castle walls, and kill the sleepy sentinels, and capture the towers and walls and gates. Then the defenders would run to the keep, or stronghold, and the siege would begin again. If the 'keep' were captured, all the defenders were prisoners of war. When the citadel was taken, all was lost.

The heart is besieged by evil—it tries the gates of the castle sometimes.

I know a man who has a weakness at ear-gate. I said to him one day, 'Are you going into the market-place this afternoon, my friend?' 'No, sir,' said he; 'I dare not go. I used to be a member of a capital band of music, and if I were to hear the music in the town to-day I should go mad. You would see me dancing in the street, and going into the gin-shops, and I should finish the day by getting drunk. Evil would come in at my ears, and steal my heart, and I should be ruined; I must try and keep myself from evil.'

I heard of another man, who used to be a desperate drunkard. He reformed; but he always crossed the street when he came near a public-house, and went on the opposite side of the road till he was safely past it. If there happened to be two of them on opposite sides of the street, he would pull out his pocket-handkerchief and hold it to his nose while he walked down the middle of the street, out of the way of temptation. If you asked him why he did so, he would say, 'If I were to smell spirits, I could not resist the temptation to drink them.' Evil vainly tried to take that man's heart by storming nose-gate.

Many young people are very weak at eye-gate. Sight-seeing and pleasure-seeking are the innocent-looking traps that evil sets to catch them, which makes them too often forget duty.

But perhaps the most successful gate that



evil can try is mouth-gate. He can do almost as much mischief with what he brings out as what he puts in. He has a faithful servant in your street who turns out oaths and curses: children pick up the naughty words, and say them again. Perhaps they hardly know their meaning, but they defile their little tongues, and damage their hearts. The wicked words are scattered abroad like thistle-seeds, till every good man must wish that foul mouths could be muzzled night and day. Then there are things put into people's mouths that steal their hearts. Evil spirits are admitted by mouth-gate in the shape of drink. When they enter the castle, they drug and poison all the sentinels; they open all the gates, and make a rush on the citadel, and it falls. I believe more hearts are lost through mouth-gate than all the other gates together.

'Keep thy heart with all diligence. Watch all the gates. There are traitors inside, and there are foes outside. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' If he gains your heart, all is lost. Keep your heart as the text means, 'above all keeping.'

But now you ask, perhaps, how does a man keep his money? He puts it in his safe, he

locks it up securely, and puts the key in his secret pocket, he chains his trusty dog so near the door that no thief can pass without risking his teeth.

How does a man keep his warehouse? He locks it up, and bolts the windows, he pays a watchman to spend every night in taking care of it, he insures it against fire, he watches it against thieves.

Surely we should be as wise and prudent about our hearts as we are about money and property! we should keep it above all keeping.

We must commit the keeping of our hearts to God; He is a watchman who never sleeps, He is a protector that thieves cannot overcome. Pray every day the prayer that Jesus taught, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

'All my trust on Thee is stayed;
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.'

I have shown you that the heart is the fountain that fashions the life, and the stronghold of the castle that we must defend. If you keep your hearts, by the help of God, you will be happy and safe.