

# LITTLE FOLKS

## How Tom Used Tacks.

A gentleman had visited the school that day and had talked to the scholars.

Tom Baxter knew that the gentleman was a good man, and that what he said must be true. But Tom did not understand what he meant when he said, 'If we would have friends, we must watch for opportunities to do good, and then we must use tact.' If the gentleman had said 'discretion,' 'wisdom,' or 'common-sense,' Tom would probably have understood what he meant, but tact was a new word to him.

Now, Tom had many queer ideas. He did not ask as many questions as boys generally do; but had a way of thinking out things for himself.

Tom knew about t-a-x, tax; and t-a-c-k-s, tacks; and concluded that the gentleman must have meant one of these, but that he had a peculiar way of pronouncing the word.

Tom had heard the men who sat on the boxes in the grocery store complain that taxes were too high now. So he knew that people did not usually like those who levied a tax upon them. It was house-cleaning time, and Tom had recently been sent to the store twice for tacks.

'Now, if mama did not put tacks in her carpet it would not stay in place, and would look dreadfully, and people would call her slack, just as they did Mrs. Jones, and would not like her. Women ought to be good housekeepers,' he reasoned sagely. He decided that it must be tacks, small nails, that the gentleman meant. But he could not see how a boy like himself could use tacks so as to gain friends. However, he placed some tacks in his pocket, so as to have them ready if he found a chance to use them.

'Tom, I wish you would take this paper over to Mrs. Hopkins,' said his sister, Mary, the next morning.

When Tom reached Mrs. Hopkins she had just placed the linoleum on the kitchen floor, and was preparing to tack it down.

'Ah!' thought Tom, 'here is an opportunity to use tacks.'

'Let me tack the linoleum down for you, Mrs. Hopkins, I have nothing else to do.'

'Oh, thank you, Tom,' said Mrs. Hopkins, gratefully, 'You are a good boy. My rheumatism is so

bad I can scarcely get up and down.'

'I should think that John would be ashamed to leave such work for his mother to do when she is so lame,' thought Tom, but he said nothing.

'I wonder if I can find another chance to use tacks?' said Tom, as he started for home, eating a huge piece of gingerbread. 'Why, what is the matter, Charlie?' he asked, as he came upon a very little boy crying.

'I have broken my waggon,' sobbed Charlie, holding up a toy cart.

'Another chance to use tacks,' thought Tom. 'Here, Charlie, give me the cart and I will mend it for you.'

'What makes you look so happy?' asked Mary, as Tom entered the house with shining eyes.

'I have found two chances to use tacks already this morning,' replied Tom.

'To use tacks!' exclaimed Mary. 'What do you mean?'

'Why, Mrs. Hopkins had the rheumatism, and I tacked her lin-

oleum down for her, that is one. Then Charlie broke his waggon, and I tacked it together for him, that is two.'

'But why do you say a chance to use tacks?' asked Mary.

'Why, the man at the school yesterday said that if we would have friends we must watch for opportunities to do good, and then we must use tacks.'

Mary looked puzzled for a moment, and then she laughed, and said, 'Oh, I see; "must use tact," not "tacks." The gentleman means that we must be careful to do good in such a way as not to hurt the feelings of those to whom we are trying to be kind.'

'It was kind of you to tack Mrs. Hopkins's linoleum for her; but if you had reminded her that her son ought to be ashamed to let his mother do such a work, you would have hurt her feelings, for she does not like to have John blamed.'

'Mrs. Hunt can scarcely read at all. Though she dearly loves to hear the Bible read, she prefers to have people believe that it is her



DRAWING LESSON X.