

This was the great temptation of Robert Langley's life. The cheque had been given him by a friend who had left the city, with the request that Robert would take the money to his widowed mother. So here was additional security to the chances of escape. The gentleman trusted entirely to his honor. His name was good for any amount. That Robert knew; and it was the easiest thing in the world to add merely a zero, and place the point back another zero, and change the little word one to ten.

For a long time after his companion had gone, Langley sat irresolute. He was alone in the world. The world's pleasures looked very alluring to him. He had contracted a few debts. To pay them he had decided to wear his old suit another three months. Here was the opportunity of settling everything, and being far away from danger of arrest long before there would be a chance of discovery.

The gentleman had casually mentioned to him that his mother did not expect the money, or that he had not spoken to her about it.

Look at it in what light he would all the circumstances seemed favorable to the commission of the crime.

Ah, Robert Langley, what angel of darkness had possession of your soul in that dark hour! Did you not feel his baleful breath? Did you not see his fiendish eyes, as he thus stood, eager for your soul, fearful of every thought, as it leaned now to the side of virtue, now of vice?

Poor tempted boy! tempted of Satan and your own heart! Was there to be no help? No blessed influence from those angels who are sent to minister to the souls in danger?

At last he concluded that he would try. If he did not succeed he could plead that the cheque was mislaid, or lost; if he did succeed, then to-morrow would see him richer by ten thousand dollars, and he could go where he would.

And so he deliberately chose to commit the sin, and bid good-bye forever to virtue. It might have been his agitation that caused it, but suddenly, though he had not touched it, to his knowledge, a book fell to the floor.

Mechanically he stooped to lift it. It was his mother's Bible. He threw it back with an impatient gesture. But something else lay whitely on the carpet where the book had been. He picked it up. It was only a photograph of his little sister Mary, who had died two years before.

He look at it. What would she say if she could see from heaven his terrible resolve on that fateful night? Even now it seemed to him that her soft eyes grew sorrowful as he gazed. He remembered her pure, winning little ways, her sweet, childish talk about heaven. The tears started to his eyes. Ah! God had sent an angel at last. He turned the card over. On it was written in her own childish hand:—

"To my dear, good brother Robert, from his little Molly."

He drew his breath harder, and the tears came pouring down his cheeks, penitent tears, burning hot from his heart.

"Little Molly! little Molly!" he said over and over again, caressingly, "for your sake I'll be honest."

A great burden seemed to be lifted from his shoulders. The deed he had purposed to do had assumed its real colors, and he fairly gasped as the revulsion of feeling came.

The next day came the tempter again.

"Well, what did you do about it?" he asked.

"I let it alone," answered Robert with a peculiar look; and the other drew back as if stung.

"Then you've missed the greatest chance of your life," was his muttered reply.

"I've missed making a great scoundrel," said Robert angrily. And from that day they were no more friends.—*The Youth's Companion.*

### Our Casket.

#### JEWELS.

#### THE V-A-S-E.

Far from the madding crowd they stand apart,  
The maidens four and the work of art;  
And none might tell from sight alone  
In which had Culture ripest grown—  
The Gotham Million fair to see,  
The Philadelphia Pedigree.

The Boston Mind of azure blue,  
The soulful soul from Kalamazoo—  
For all loved Art in a seemly way,  
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

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Long they worshipped; but no one broke  
The sacred stillness until up spoke  
The Western one from the nameless place  
Who, blushing, said, "What a lovely vase!"  
Over their faces a sad smile flew,  
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.  
But Gotham's naughty soul was stirred  
To crush the stranger with one small word.  
Deftly hiding reproof in praise,  
She cries, 'tis indeed a lovely vase!"  
But brief her unworthy triumph, when  
The lofty one from the house of Penn,  
With the consciousness of two grandpapas,  
Exclaims, "It is quite a lovely vase!"  
And glances round with an anxious thrill,  
Awaiting the work of Beacon Hill.  
But the Boston maid smiles courteouslee  
And gently murmurs, "Oh, pardon me!  
"I did not catch your remark, because  
I was so entranced with that charming vaws!"  
Dies erit pragelida  
Sinistra quum Bostonia. —*Life.*

#### BITS OF TINSEL.

"You are now one," said the minister to the happy pair he had just wedded together. "Which one?" asked the bride. "You will have to settle that for yourselves," said the clergyman.

Young Lady (to fellow-passenger)—"Can you tell me what station this is, please?" Foreigner (looking out of the window at the advertisement)—"I think it is de Colman's mustard."

Willie had been forbidden to ask for desert. The other day they forgot to serve him, and, as Willie is very obedient, he remained silent, although much affected. "Josephine," said the father, "pass me a plate." "Won't you have mine, papa?" said Willie; "it is very clean."

When he returned to his seat in the theatre and said he had just stepped out to see some one, she gravely responded: "It must have been the Evil One;" and when the young man asked if she saw the cloven foot, she turned up her pretty nose and said: "No, but I smell the cloven breath."

A little girl who ran home from school, all out of breath said: "Oh, please, ma, may I get married and have a husband?" "My child!" exclaimed the astonished mother, "don't let me hear such words from you again!" Well, then, may I have a piece of bread and butter and go out to play in the back yard?"

"Larry, my wife and I have both noticed that the townspeople stare at us very hard. I hope you haven't been telling anybody that we are newly married." "Me tell 'em, sor? Is it likely I'd go agin my express order? Why, whenever anybody thryed to pump me, sor, I tould 'em you wasn't married at all."

"So you are the new girl," said the boarders to the pretty waiter lass; and what name are we to call you?" "Pearl," said the maid, with a saucy toss of her head. "Oh?" asked the smart boarder, "are you the pearl of great price?" "No; I am the pearl that was cast before swine," retorted the pretty waiter. There was a long silence, broken only by the buzz of the flies in the milk pitcher.

"Do you like the squash pie, Alfred?" asked a young wife of her husband a few days after marriage. "Well, it is pretty good, but—" "But what? I suppose you started to say that it isn't as good as that which your mother makes." "Well, yes, I intended to say that, but—" "Well, Alfred, your mother made that pie and sent it to me."

"For ten years past," said the new boarder, "my habits have been regular as clock-work. I rose on the stroke of six; half an hour later I sat down to breakfast; at seven I was at work; dined at twelve, ate supper at six, and was in bed at 9.30; ate only hard food, and hadn't a sick day in all that time." "Dear me," said the Deacon, in sympathetic tones, "and what were you in for?" And an awful silence followed.