

Dropped Stitches.

BY FLORENCE A. JONES.

I dropped a stitch in my knitting
As I sat at work one day,
And it seemed such a little matter,
I sang as I worked away.
But, lo, when my work was finished,
I saw with infinite pain
The stitch I had missed in the morning
Had rendered it all in vain!
That all of my perfect stitches
Were useless because of one.
That one little flaw had cost me,
The loss of my heart's "Well done!"

Just so it is in our lives, dear,
But the stitches dropped, ah, me!
Are part of the soul's own garment
We weave for eternity
The stitch of unbridled passions,
Of an evil bitter thought,
The stitch of neglected duties,
Are into the pattern wrought!
The stitch of the first cigar, lad,
The stitch of your first strong drink,
And the work of your life is ruined—
Does it pay, dear do you think?
Alas! for the stitch unheeded,
Ah, me, for the mischief done,
For the glad hopes of the morning,
For heartache at set of sun!

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Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

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SOME THINGS THE BIBLE FORBIDS.
STEALING.

(Ex. 20. 15; Rom. 13. 9.)

It is an old saying, "It is a sin to steal a pin." The crime consists not in the amount of the theft, but in the theft itself. "Provide things honest in the sight of men," is the command of Scripture. In the rush and hurry to get rich, men sometimes think—if they don't say it—I am determined to get on, honestly if I can, if not, well, anyway I can. But in the long run, and often in the short run, too, honesty is the best policy. All fraud and treachery, and deceit are utterly forbidden by God's word. They undermine character, and make a man ashamed of himself, or if he is not it is all the worse for him. President Garfield used to say there was a man he had to live with, to eat with, and sleep with, and he must have his good opinion, and that was himself. Only these can have the favour and smile of God. It is bad enough to steal from one another, but it is worse to steal from God. Yet this we do when we break the Sabbath, or withhold what we should give to God's cause or God's poor. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, where-in have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

It was said, "These are the three commandments of John Lawrence, Governor-General of India. Thou shalt not slay thy daughters, thou shalt not burn thy widows, and thou shalt not bury (alive) thy lepers."

THE WAY BEES LIVE.

BY MARY WHITING ADAMS.

If you want to see an example of the usefulness of unselfishness, you could not do better than to look into a glass beehive—such as scientists have made sometimes for studying the habits of these wonderful little insects—and notice how each bee lives for other bees, rather than for itself, and how happy and cheerful and prosperous the whole community is in consequence.

Did you ever notice, for instance, the humming sound that comes from a beehive on very warm days? If you will watch the door of an ordinary hive on a July day, you will see a number of bees near it, continually moving their wings rapidly, as in flying. By doing this, a current of air is sent backward into the hive, keeping it cool and well ventilated, even if the thermometer is very high.

If the bees did not do this, some of those inside would be suffocated, for there is only a small opening in each hive, and the crowds of bees coming and going, and working at the honey-making and the cell-building, would soon make the air as bad as that in the Black Hole of Calcutta. But the untiring, unselfish little farmers at the entrance keep the air pouring in so that everything is kept comfortable.

Another set of bees, called the "nurses," spend their lives in taking care of the little grubs that will one day develop into bees. They feed them, watch over them, and never seem to tire of their helpless charges. Other bees still are "workers," provisioning the hive, collecting honey and wax, making the cells, and defending the hive from any attack.

No bee seems to have a selfish thought. Each works for the hive; each is at peace with his fellows; and the result is that the honeycombs fill with honey, and the hive is crowded with busy, happy swarms.

THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON.

Very early in the history of the world people saw the use and beauty of gardens. As far back, indeed, as we have any trace of men, we find that they were in the habit of cultivating flowers and shrubs, and so decorating and arranging nature as to supply a pleasant spot whither they could retreat and enjoy bright colours, rich, shady foliage, and sweet perfumes.

In all the oldest nations of which we read—in Egypt and Assyria, in China, in India, in Greece—the art of gardening was carried to a high state of cultivation. To natural beauties were added the graces of the painter, the sculptor, and the architect. Temples were built in the centre of the lovely gardens; frescoes adorned the walls of stone summer-houses and lofty towers; nestled amid the shrubbery, rising from flower-beds, placed at the crossing of paths, were to be seen statues of gods and heroes, of cupids, muses and graces.

Among the most famous of the ancient gardens, the ruins of which still remain to give an idea of their vastness and grandeur, were "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon." These have a special interest for those who are familiar with the Bible, in which Babylon, the mighty city over which the warlike kings of Assyria ruled, is referred to.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the seven wonders of the world; and truly, if we can judge anything by the remains of them which still exist, they well deserved a place among the marvels of the olden time.

The story of their origin is an interesting one. It is said that there once lived a great Assyrian king, of vast wealth and power, who was devotedly attached to his wife. Everything that she asked of him he was wont to grant. The moment that she formed a wish, it was gratified.

Now this fair queen came from one of the most beautiful valleys of Persia, in which she was born and reared. She had been accustomed to live amid the most romantic scenery, to delight in avenues of trees and banks of flowers.

But Babylon was a dull place, and around it were nothing but bare fields and dreary heaths.

So the queen, though she had every luxury which money could bring, tired of the uninteresting views from her palace windows; and remembering the lovely scenes of her girlhood, she plied for them and begged the king to make for her a garden which should remind her of her native valley.

The king hastened to gratify her; and setting on a number of labourers, some of whom he called from Persia to work, in the course of time the wilderness

about Babylon was converted into the magnificent Hanging Gardens.

They were constructed on the sides of some sloping hills not far from the royal palace. Of course, as they were intended for the pleasure of the queen, they must be made on the most splendid scale. Vastness was the ancient idea of magnificence. Not long ago, the royal palace at Nineveh was explored, and found to cover a space larger than that covered by Boston Common and the Public Garden put together.

So the Hanging Gardens were made to cover a very large expanse. They were adorned with noble edifices and the most skilfully carved statues and pillars. In form, the gardens were a vast square. From the bottom of the hills on which they rose, they were reached by broad flights of stone steps leading from terrace to terrace, the terraces rising one above another in a series. At the foot of the hills were noble archways, with paved roads, and sculptured figures of great size lining the walls on either side; and beneath these archways the Assyrians might pass with ease on the backs of their largest elephants.

At the end of each terrace, just before the next stairway, was either an arch or a pavilion supported by massive pillars, while at the tops of the staircases were to be seen immense vases filled with flowers, and vines which hung down their sides, and carved figures of lions and tigers.

It was upon the broad terraces, which rested on gigantic columns, that the gardens were laid out with tasteful and lavish hand.

HIS WORK.

One time a man came to one of the men who worked for him, and gave him a big stone, and said:

"Now you cut in this stone the leaves just like the ones in this picture."

The stone did not look very pretty, and the man said:

"I will do just the very best I can, but I wish I could cut in this beautiful marble here." So he toiled away with his sharp tools, and after much work he finished the leaves according to the pattern.

When he finished this the master brought him another just like it, and told him to cut a branch in it. And so for weeks he worked on these big rough stones; and he did not know what they were for.

One day, when he was walking down town, in the large city, he saw a beautiful building. He went over to look at it, and there, in front of that large building were all those big rough stones upon which he had been working for so long. But they were all put together now to form a most beautiful picture. The man looked at it a long time, and then said:

"Oh! how glad I am I did it well. Now I see what the master meant."

And so it should be with us. No matter what work is given you to do, be sure you do it well.—Olive Pianta.

A POLITE GUIDE.

I heard a pretty story the other day, says W. E. Curtis, of two American girls who visited the palace at Potsdam. The imperial palace is open to visitors only when the emperor and his family are absent; but, without knowing this fact, the two American ladies made the journey out there, and were repulsed by the usher at the door. They understood very little German, and he could talk no English, but, with the usual persistency of the American tourist, they were trying to induce him to admit them. While they were in the midst of the controversy a gentleman in the uniform of a soldier came rapidly up the steps, much to the confusion of the doorkeeper, and, addressing the ladies in English, asked if he could be of any service to them. They explained that they had come from Berlin to see the palace, and were very much disappointed because they were not allowed to enter it.

"I think I can let you in," he answered, "and will show you around myself."

So he escorted them through the various rooms and corridors, and explained everything in a most entertaining manner. Then he followed them out to the portico, where one of them, who had a kodak, asked permission to take his photograph. He gracefully consented, and posed for three snapshots. Then he bade them good-morning, hoped they would enjoy their visit to Germany, saluted them in the German way, and re-entered the palace.

The young ladies were delighted, and related their experience with great gusto when they returned to their board-

ing-house. That afternoon they took their kodak to a photographer to have the films developed, and when they brought home the first prints of the handsome officer their German landlady exclaimed, "Der Kaiser!" with her eyes as big as saucers at their presumption.

The young ladies, being sovereigns in their own country, were not abashed at the discovery. They had a print of each film handsomely mounted, and sent them to the emperor, with their compliments and the explanation that they were not aware of the identity of their guide or they would have made a more formal acknowledgment of the honour conferred upon them.

"I Wish" and "I Will."

BY NIXON WATERMAN.

"I Wish" and "I Will," so my grandmother says,

Were two little boys in the long ago. And "I Wish" used to sigh while "I Will" used to try

For the things he desired; at least that's what my Grandma tells me, and she ought to know.

"I Wish" was so weak, so my grandmother says,

That he longed to have some one to help him about,

And while he'd stand still and look up at the hill,

And sigh to be there to go coasting, "I Will"

Would glide past him with many a shout.

They grew to be men, so my grandmother says,

And all that "I Wish" ever did was to dream,

To dream and to sigh that life's hill was so high,

While "I Will" went to work and soon learned, if we try,

Hills are never so steep as they seem.

"I Wish" lived in want, so my grandmother says,

But "I Will" had enough and a portion to spare;

Whatever he thought was worth winning he sought

With an earnest and patient endeavour that brought

Of blessings a bountiful share.

And whenever my grandma hears anyone "wish,"

A method she seeks in his mind to instil

For increasing his joys, and she straightway employs

The lesson she learned from the two little boys

Whose name were "I Wish" and "I Will."

PIONICKING BY THE SEASHORE.

Most of our readers have heard of clambakes, but doubtless few of them know exactly what a clambake is. A Leng Island boy writes to St. Nicholas a description of one that fairly makes one's mouth water. He says:

"Two men went to the beach and laid a bed of stones and gathered some dry wood; and the next day sixteen of us, some in a waggon, and some in a boat, went to the place. The men built a fire on the stones and kept it burning four hours, until the stones were very hot; then they raked the embers off, and swept the stones very clean. When this was done they put on a layer of clams, then crabs, then four large fish sewed in cloth; after this, corn wrapped in its own husks, and sweet and white potatoes, with their jackets on; last of all, spring chickens, wrapped in cloth to keep them clean. Then a large piece of canvas was thrown over all, and a waggon-load of seaweed on top, to keep the steam in. This was all cooked by the steam of the clam-juice. In one hour it was ready, and we all sat down to a rough table; and an hour and a half later we all declared it was the best feast we ever had eaten."

John Morley, it is thought, will undertake the task of writing, or at any rate supervising, the biography of Gladstone. The material for such a work will be inexhaustible. Mr. Gladstone kept everything and always made copies of his own important letters. All were carefully sorted, arranged and docketed by himself and preserved in a fireproof-room at Hawarden. The letters from the Queen alone number 500. Mr. Gladstone himself, it seems, made some little progress, not with a full autobiography, but a history of his mental development in one particular phase—an intimation that excites lively interest.