

Family Circle.

The Power of Kindness.

"Tom! here!" said a father to his son, speaking in tones of authority.

The lad was at play. He looked toward his father, but did not leave his companions. "Do you hear me, sir?" spoke the father more sternly than at first.

With an unhappy face and reluctant step the boy left his play and approached his parent.

"Why do you creep along at a snail's pace?" said the latter angrily. "Come quickly, I want you. When I speak I look to be obeyed instantly. Here, take this note to Mr. Smith, and see that you don't go to sleep by the way. Now run as fast as you can go."

The boy took the note. There was a cloud upon his brow. He moved away but at a slow pace.

"You Tom! Is that doing as I ordered? Is that going quickly?" called the father, when he saw the boy creep away. "If you are not back in half an hour, I will punish you."

But the words had but little effect. The boy's feelings were hurt by the unkindness of the parent. He experienced a sense of injustice; a consciousness that wrong had been done him. By nature he was like his father, proud and stubborn; and these qualities of his mind were aroused and he indulged in them fearful of consequences.

"I never saw such a boy," said the father, speaking to a friend who had observed the occurrence. "My words scarcely make an impression upon him."

"Kind words often prove most powerful," said the friend. The father looked surprised.

"Kind words," continued the friend, "are like the gentle rain and the refreshing dew; but harsh words bend and break like the angry tempest. They first develop and strengthen good affections, while the others sweep over the heart in devastation, and mar and deform all they touch. Try him with kind words, they will prove a hundred fold more powerful."

The latter seemed hurt by the reproof; but it left him thoughtful. An hour passed away ere his son returned. At times during his absence he was angry at the delay, and meditated the infliction of punishment. But the words of remonstrance were in his ears, and he resolved to obey them. At last the lad came slowly in with a cloudy countenance, and reported the result of his errand. Having stayed far beyond his time, he looked for punishment, and was prepared to receive it with an angry defiance. To his surprise, after delivering the message he had brought, his father, instead of angry reproof and punishment, said kindly, "very well, my son, you can go out and play again."

The boy went out but was not happy. He had disobeyed and disobliged his father, and the thought of that troubled him. Harsh words had not clouded his mind or aroused a spirit of reckless anger. Instead of joining his companions, he went and sat down by himself, grieving over his act of disobedience. As he thus sat he heard his name called. He listened.

"Thomas my son," said his father, kindly. The boy sprang to his feet, and was almost instantly beside his parent.

"Did you call father?"

"I did, my son. Will you take this package to Mr. Long for me?"

There was no hesitation in the boy's manner. He looked pleased at the thought of doing his father a service, and reached out his hand for the package. On receiving it he bounded away with a light step.

"There is a power in kindness," said the father, as he sat musing, after the lad's departure. And even while he sat musing over the incident the boy came back with a cheerful happy face, and said—

"Can I do anything else for you, father?"

"Yes, there is the power of kindness. The tempest of passion can only subdue, constrain and break; but in love and gentleness there is the power of the summer rain, the dew and the sunshine.

Spare Moments.

A lean, awkward boy came one morning to the door of the principle of a celebrated school, and asked to see him. The servant eyed his mean clothes, and, thinking he looked more like a beggar than anybody else, told him to go round to the kitchen. The boy did as he was bidden, and soon appeared at the back door.

"I should like to see Mr. —," said he.

"You want a breakfast, more like, said the servant, "and I can give you that without troubling him."

"Thank you," said the boy, "I have no objection to a bit of bread, but I should like to see Mr. —, if he can see me."

"Some old clothes, may be you want," remarked the servant, again eyeing the boy's patched trowsers. "I guess he has none to spare, he gives away a sight; and without minding the boy's request, she went away about minding her work.

"Can I see Mr. —?" again asked the boy, after eating his bread and butter.

"Well, he's in the library; if he must be disturbed, he must; but he does like to be alone sometimes," said the girl in a peevish tone. She seemed to think it was very foolish to admit such an ill-looking fellow into her master's presence; however, she wiped her hands, and bade him follow her. Opening the library door, she said, "Here's somebody, sir, who is dreadful anxious to see you, and so I let him in."

I do not know how the boy introduced himself, or how he opened his business, but I know that after talking awhile, the principle put aside the volume which he was studying, took up some Greek books and began to examine the new comer. The examination lasted some time. Every question which the principal asked, the boy answered as readily as could be.

"Upon my word," exclaimed the principal, "you certainly do well!" looking at the boy from head to foot over his spectacles. "Why, my boy, where did you pick up so much?"

"In my spare moments," answered the boy.

Here he was, poor, hard-working, with but few opportunities for schooling, and yet almost fitted for college by simply improving his spare moments. Truly are not spare moments the "gold dust" of time? How precious they should be! What account can you give of your spare moments? What can you show for them? Look and see. This boy could tell you how very much can be laid up by wisely improving them; and there are many, many other boys, I am afraid, in the jail, in the house of correction, in the fore-castle of a whaleship, in the gambling-house or in the tippling shop, who, if you could ask them when they began their sinful courses, might answer, "in my spare moments." "In my spare moments I gambled for marbles." "In my spare moments I began to smoke and drink." "It was in my spare moments that I began to steal chestnuts from the old woman's stand." "It was in my spare moments that I gathered with wicked associates."

O, be very, very careful how you spend your spare moments! Temptation always hunts you out in small seasons like these, when you are not busy; he gets into your hearts, if he possibly can, in just such gaps.

There he hides himself, planning all sorts of mischief. Take care of your spare moments.—Mrs H. C. Knight.

General Miscellany.

A Skater Chased by Wolves.

A thrilling incident in American country life is vividly sketched in "Evenings at Donaldson's Manor." In the winter of 1814, the relator sallied forth one evening, to skate on the Kennebec, in Maine, by moonlight, and having ascended that river nearly two miles, turned into a little stream to explore its course.

"Fir and hemlock of a century's growth," he says, "met overhead, and formed an archway radiant with frostwork. All was dark within; but I was young and fearless; and as I peered into an unbroken forest that reared itself on the borders of the stream, I

laughed with very joyousness; my wild hurrah rang through the silent woods, and I stood listening to the echo that reverberated again and again, until all was hushed. Suddenly a sound arose; it seemed to me to come from beneath the ice; it sounded low and tremulous at first, until it ended, in a low, wild yell. I was appalled. Never before had such a noise met my ears. I thought it more than mortal; so fierce, and amidst such an unbroken solitude, it seemed as though from the tread of some brute animal; and the blood rushed back to my forehead with a bound that made my skin burn, and I felt relieved that I had to contend with things earthly and not spirituals; my energies returned, and I looked around me for some means of escape. As I turned my head to the shore, I could see two dark objects dashing through the underbrush at a pace nearly double in speed to my own. By this rapidity, and the short yells they occasionally gave, I knew at once that these were the much-dreaded grey wolf.

"I had never met with these animals; but, from the description given of them, had very little pleasure in making their acquaintance. Their untamely fierceness, and the untiring strength which seems part of their nature, render them objects of dread to every benighted traveller.

"There was no time for thought; so I bent my head and dashed madly forward. Nature turned me towards home. The light flakes of snow spun from the iron of my skates, and I was some distance from my pursuers, whence their fierce howl told me I was their fugitive. I did not look back; I did not feel afraid, or sorry, or even glad; one thought of home, of the bright faces awaiting my return, of their tears if they should never see me again; and then every energy of body and mind was exerted for escape. I was perfectly at home on the ice. Many were the days I spent on my good skates, never thinking that at one time they would be my only means of safety. Every half minute an alternate yelp from my ferocious followers told me too certainly that they were in close pursuit. Nearer and nearer they came; I heard their feet pattering on the ice nearer still, until I could feel their breath and hear their sniffling scent. Every nerve and muscle in my frame was stretched to the utmost tension. The trees along the shore seemed to dance in the uncertain light, and my brain turned with my own breathless speed; yet still they seemed to hiss forth their breath with a sound truly horrible, when an involuntary motion on my part turned me out of my course. The wolves close behind, unable to stop, and as unable to turn on the smooth ice, slipped and fell, still going on far ahead; their tongues were lolling out, their white trunks glaring from their bloody mouths, their dark shaggy breasts were fleeced with foam; and as they passed me, their eyes glared, and they howled with fury.

"The thought flashed on my mind, that by this means I could avoid them, namely, by turning aside whenever they came too near; for they, by the formation of their feet, are unable to run on the ice except in a straight line.

"At one time, by delaying my turning too long, my sanguinary antagonists came so near that they threw the white foam over my dress as they sprang to seize me, and their teeth clashed together like the spring of a fox trap.

"Had my skates failed for an instant—had I tripped on a stick—or caught my foot in a fissure in the ice—the story I am now telling would never have been told.

"I thought all the chances over; I knew where they would take hold of me if I fell; I thought how long it would be before I died; and then there would be a search for the body that would already have its tomb; for O! how fast man's mind traces out all the dread colours of death's picture, only those who have been so near the grim original can tell!

"But I soon came opposite the house, and my hounds—I knew their deep voices—roused by the noise, bayed furiously from the kennels. I heard their chains rattle; how I wished they would break them!—and then I should have protectors that would be peer to the fiercest denizens of the forest. The wolves, taking the hint conveyed by the dogs stopped in their mad career, and after a moment's consideration, turned and

fled. I watched them until their dusky forms disappeared over a neighbouring hill; then taking off my skates, wended my way to the house with feelings which may be better imagined than described. But, even yet, I never see a broad sheet of ice in the moonshine, without thinking of the sniffling breath, and those fearful things that followed me so closely down the frozen Kennebec."

Interior of Africa.

Evidence is rapidly multiplying that Africa is a widely different country from what it has been supposed to be. A missionary to Liberia thus speaks of what he saw on a tour to the interior of 253 miles:

Such a country as we passed through in that missionary tour, I have not seen surpassed in either of the West India Islands which I have visited, from Trinidad to Tortola and the Virgin Island. It is an elevated, mountainous country. Ranges of mountains running most generally parallel with the line of coast—from north-west to south-east—rise up before the delighted eye of the traveller, convincing him that he is no longer in the land of burning sands and deleterious swamps, such as are encountered in proximity with the shores, but in quite another region. And such are the gradual undulations of its surface as would greatly facilitate the objects of agriculture. There are few, if any, very steep acclivities—nothing like the bold, precipitous mountains of our Eastern States. Beautiful and extensive valleys lie at the base of these mountains, which gently slope down to the level country, lying between them.

It is a well-watered country. During the eight hours' travel which we were frequently obliged to perform in a day, we never walked more than two hours, or two and a half at one time, without coming to some beautiful stream of cool and very pure water.—Within the Goulah country especially, any number of the most eligible situations may be found, where, at any time during the year, good water-power may be obtained, for any of the purposes which an enterprising community, agriculturists and mechanics, may require. My journey was performed in the very middle of the dry season, and yet we found plenty of water in the different streams.

It is a well-timbered land. I measured several trees, and my journal, kept at the time with scrupulous exactness, records 23, 24, 25 feet as the circumference of many of them within six feet of the ground. Let me remark, that the variety and superior quality of the wood found in these forests, and indeed all along the borders and around the settlement of Liberia, from Grand Cape Mount to Cape Palmas, or Maryland, cannot be excelled anywhere within the torrid zone. From a species of poplar, soft and adapted to all the purposes for which the white pine is used in America, the teak, a variety of mahogany, a beautiful species of hickory, very abundant at Cape Palmas, the iron wood, the brimstone, susceptible of a polish for furniture of surpassing beauty, and many others, an almost endless supply may be found.

It is an exceedingly fertile soil. The immense undergrowth of shrub and vine interwoven around the giants of the forest, so thick, so impenetrable without much effort, and through which a foot-path only conducts the traveller, is the best proof of this. But the grains, roots, fruits, vines of the tropics, all concentrate here, and may be raised with a degree of comparative ease, a rapidity of growth, and an abundance almost incredible. I have stood erect under the branches of a cotton tree in a Goulah village, as they spread forth from the main trunk, laden with bolls, and supported by forked sticks to prevent their being broken down by their own weight, and found, on measuring, that the tree covered a space of ten feet in diameter. On examining the staple, as the ripened bolls burst into maturity, it was found as good and equal in the fineness of its fibre to the cotton of any country.

But the region in the vicinity of Liberia is one of great mineral wealth. And such is the purity of the iron ore obtained by the natives of Africa immediately in the vicinity of Liberia, which they describe as being abundant, that they have no furnaces—they need none. All their rude agricultural and