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PLEASANT HOURS
A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK
ROLPH, SMITH & Co.

VOL. XIII.] TORONTO, AUGUST 12, 1893. [No. 32

DRAWING IN THE NETS AT EARLY DAWN.

THE nets used for catching fish are about one hundred and twenty feet long and seven or eight feet broad. They are buoyed with pieces of light wood and weighted with stones, so as to remain upright when let down into the water.

They are set and allowed to remain in the water until morning, for as long as it is daylight the fish see the net, and avoid it, even though it be four hundred feet deep, but at night, they rush blindly along and are caught in its meshes, from which there is no escape.

The picture shows the men at early dawn drawing in the nets. They first empty them into a sieve-like basket, so that the boat will be kept free from water, and the heavy fish are struck with an iron hook, as soon as brought to the surface and flung into the boat or else they would undoubtedly tear the meshes. The effect of the rising sun on the fleecy clouds and on the sails seen through the mist is very fine.

HOW OUR ANCESTORS ATE.

A THOUSAND years ago, when the dinner was ready to be served, the first thing brought into the great hall was the table. Moveable trestles were brought, on which were placed boards; and all were carried away again at the close of the meal. Upon this was laid the table-cloth, which in some of the old pictures is represented as having a handsome, embroidered border. There is an old Latin riddle of the eighth century, in which the table says, "I feed people with many kinds of food. First, I am a quadruped, and am adorned with handsome clothing; then I am robbed of my apparel, and lose my legs also."

The food of the Anglo-Saxon was largely bread. This is hinted in the fact that a domestic is called a "loaf-eater," and the lady of the house was the "loaf-giver." The bread was baked in round, flat cakes, which the superstition of the cook marked with a cross to preserve them from the perils of the fire. Milk, butter, and cheese were also eaten. The principal meat was bacon, as the acorns of the large oak forests, which then covered a large part of England, supported numerous droves of swine.

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were not only hearty eaters, but, unfortunately, deep drinkers. The drinking horns were at first literally horns, and so must be immediately emptied when filled.

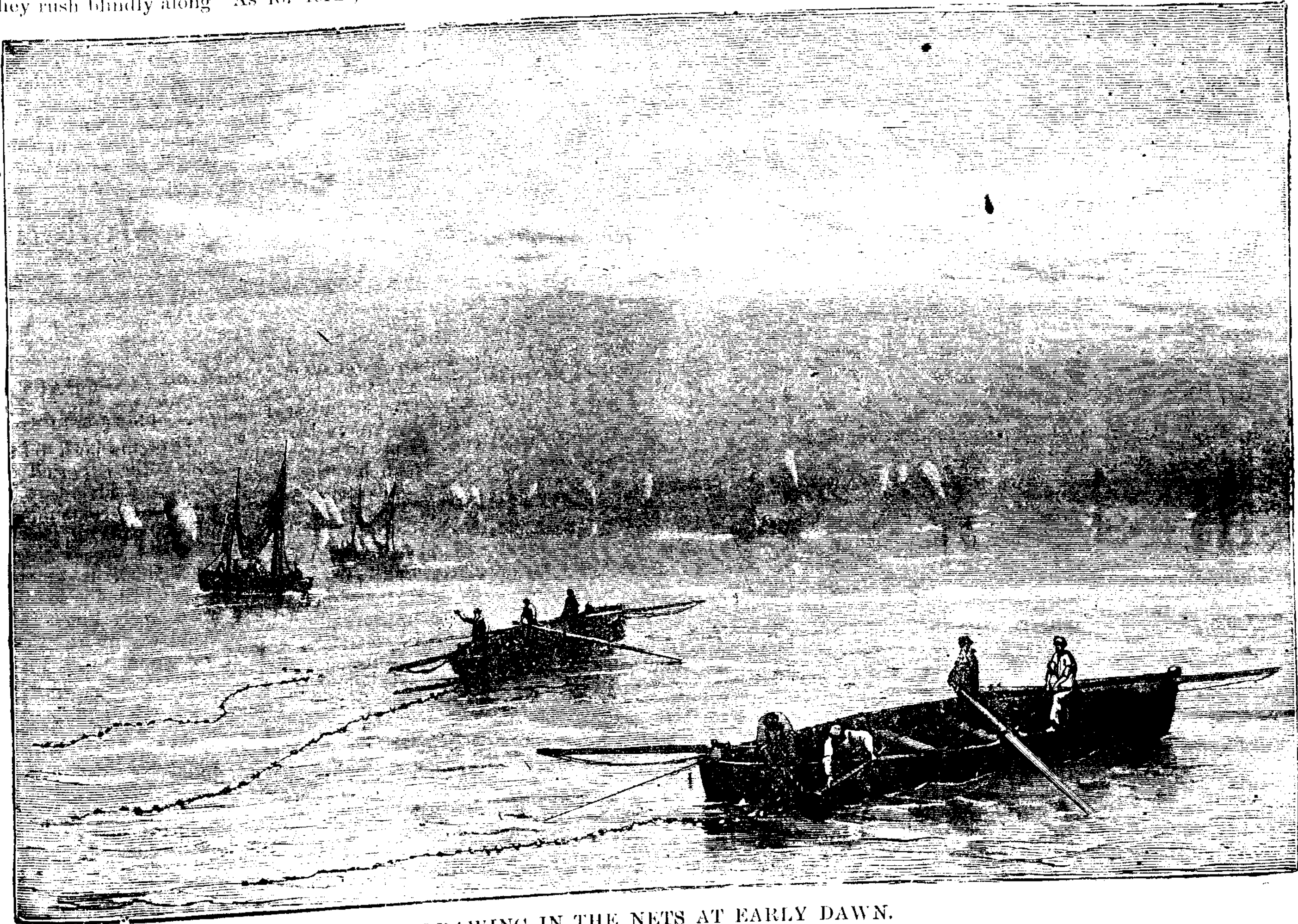
Later, when the primitive horn had been replaced by a glass cup it retained a tradition of its rude predecessor in its shape; for it had a flaring top while tapering towards the base, so that it too had to be emptied at a draught.

Each guest was furnished with a spo n, while his knife he always carried in a belt. As for forks, who dreamed of them when nature had g'ven men ten fingers? But you will see why a servant with a basin of water and a towel always presented himself to each guest before dinner was served and after it was ended. Roasted meat was served on the spit or rod on which it was cooked; and the guest cut off or tore off a piece to suit himself. Boiled meat was laid on the cakes of bread, or later on thick slices of bread called "trenchers," from a Norman word meaning "to cut," as these were to carve the meat on, thus preserving the table cloth from the knife. At first the trencher was eaten or thrown upon the stone floor for the dogs that crouched at their masters' feet. At a later date it was put into a basket and given to the poor who gathered at the manor gate.

During the latter part of the middle ages the most conspicuous object on the table was the salt-cellar. This was generally of silver in the form of a ship. It was placed in the centre of the long table, at which the whole household gathered, my lord and lady and their family and guests being at one end, and their retainers and servants at the other. So one's position in regard to the salt was a test of rank—the gentlefolks sitting "above the salt" and the yeomanry below it. In the houses of the great nobles dinner was served with much ceremony. At the hour a stately procession entered the hall. First came several musicians, followed by the steward bearing his rod of office; and then came a long line of servants carrying different dishes. Some idea of the variety and profusion may be gained from the provision made by King Henry III. for his household at Christmas, 1254. This included "thirty-one oxen, one hundred pigs, three hundred and fifty-six fowls, twenty-nine hares, fifty-nine rabbits, nine pheasants, fifty-six partridges, sixty-eight woodcock, thirty-nine plovers, and three thousand eggs."

Many of our favourite dishes have descended to us from the middle ages. Macaroons have served as desert since the days of Chaucer. Our favourite winter breakfast, griddle cakes, has come down to us from the far-away Britons of Wales, while boys have lunched on gingerbread and girls on pickles and jellies since the time of Edward II., more than five hundred years ago.

WHATEVER is worth being done, is worth being done well.



DRAWING IN THE NETS AT EARLY DAWN.

THE TOBACCO NUISANCE.

Is it not time to call a halt in smoking upon the public streets? This act, now so common, was once (and not without reason) punished with a fine. Now, this filthy, poisonous, pre-eminently selfish habit, largely increased by the accession of foreign population, has become so common, that gentlemen to whom this habit is a serious annoyance—yes, even an insult, and also to refined ladies—seem to have no rights, apparently, to walk unmolested on the public streets by this supremely selfish class. No man would be allowed to carry a dead animal or mass of carrion along our streets, for a single block without an immediate arrest by the guardian of the public peace. Yet, men calling themselves gentlemen, and who would take it in "high dudgeon" if they were not accounted as gentlemen in public and private estimation, will march along the street, and puff and puff this foul tobacco smoke from their more foul and diseased mouths, and allow this to blow back, directly into the faces and throats of ladies and gentlemen who may be following them, and who have a legal right to open their mouths to converse as they walk, and to be protected by law from such annoyance and insults.

The writing of this communication is impelled by the witnessing, a few day ago, of an insult to a lady, who received such a volume of tobacco smoke as obliged her to stop, and almost made her ill. Now the party who caused his offence and discomfort might not under any consideration have perpetrated so ungentlemanly an act to a lady one or two steps in front of him, but is he not equally as guilty and ungentlemanly and responsible for his act for the first and second step in the rear as for the first and second step in front? And for the results, certainly in law he is so holden.

A MERCHANT may sell goods successfully without piety. A farmer may obtain golden harvests without godliness. The lawyer may gain his case without prayer. The physician may become eminent without faith in Christ. The mechanic may do good work without the witness of the Spirit. But the Christian worker can accomplish nothing unless he be endued with energy which is divine.

An Old Song With a New Tune.

THREE'S a saying, old and rusty,
But good as any new—
"Never trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you."

Trouble's like a thistle,
That hangs along the way;
It cannot fail to wound you
Some other bitter day.

But why not walk around it?
That's just what you can do;
Why should you trouble trouble
Before it troubles you?

Trouble is a bumble bee,
It keeps you always vexed,
It surely means to sting you
The next time—or the next.

But bless you, bees think only
Of breakfast dipped in dew;
Keep right ahead—this trouble
Will never trouble you.

O merry little travellers,
Along life's sunny ways,
When bumble bees and thistles
Affright you at your play.

Remember the old promise
That your sorrows shall be few,
If you never trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you.

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·Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 12, 1893.

THE POWER OF MUSIC.

ONE who looked the crowd over as we waited for the train would not have set us down as hard-hearted and indifferent, but so we proved to be, as a young girl not over fifteen years of age, leading an old man, who was stone blind and very feeble, passed slowly around the room soliciting alms. They got a penny here and there, but even those coins seemed to be given grudgingly, and those who gave nothing consoled themselves with the reflection that the pair were frauds, and really needed no financial assistance.

When they had made the tour of the room the girl led the old man to a seat in the corner, and after a few had passed between them they began singing a hymn. She had a wonderful voice for a child, clear and sweet. And his was a deep bass. The hymn was that entitled "Nearer, my God, to Thee." You have heard it by a full choir, accompanied by the strains of a grand organ, but you never listened so intently as we did there. There was a plaint in that girl's voice which touched a chord, and there was a quaver in the old man's bass which saddened you. They sang low and soft, and they had not finished a verse when half of us were standing up to see them better. The girl kept her eyes on floor at her feet. The sightless eyes of the old man—her father—were raised to the ceiling, and over his wrinkled face crept a glad smile as they finished the chorus:

Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee.

The hymn was not finished when every man began feeling for a contribution, and women opened their portemonnaies. It was different now. They were no longer frauds, and every one was glad to give something. Two or three were ready to move about to take up a collection, but they waited for the end of the hymn.

When it came to the chorus of the last verse the old man was singing bravely. Halfway through, his voice suddenly choked, and the last two lines were sung by the girl alone, and died away in a sob and a cry. All of us saw the old man's head drop forward and his body lurch. He would have fallen to the floor, had not the girl seized and held him up. A dozen of us were there in a moment, but we were too late. The old man's life had gone out as you breathe upon the flame of a candle, and on his ashen lips still trembled the sacred notes of the refrain: "Nearer to thee."

THE "GRIT BARE-LEGGED LADDIE."

BY FRED MYRON COLBY.

NEARLY a hundred years ago, a stout, freckled-faced, awkward boy of eighteen years, dressed in a ragged waistcoat and short breeches, without stockings or shoes, rapped one evening at the door of a humble cottage in Northern England, and asked to see the village schoolmaster. When that person appeared, the boy said very modestly:—

"I would like to attend your evening school, sir."

"And what do you wish to study?" asked the teacher.

"I want to learn to read and write, sir," answered the lad.

The schoolmaster glanced over the boy's homely face and rough clothes somewhat scornfully, and said, "Very well, you can attend, but a grit, bare-legged laddie like you had better be doing something else than learning his letters." Then he closed the door in the lad's face. Yet this poor, ignorant lad who did not know the alphabet at eighteen, accomplished great things before he died.

He did it by hard work and because he made up his mind to do the very best he could. He kept pegging away. His ignorance was a misfortune and not a fault. His parents were too poor to send him to school. He was the son of the fireman of a pumping-engine in a Northumberland colliery. His birthplace was a hovel with a clay floor, mud wall, and bare rafters. When he was five years old he began to work for his living by herding cows in the daytime and barring up the gates of the mine at night. As he grew older he was set to picking stones from the coal, and after that to driving a horse which drew coal from the pit. He went half-fed and half-clothed, but for "a' that" he had a man's brave soul in his sturdy little body.

For several years he was assistant fireman to his father; then he was made a fireman himself. Subsequently, at the age of seventeen, he was made plugman of a pumping-engine, a post superior to his father's.

But all this time, though ignorant of books, he had been studying his engine; gradually he acquired so complete a knowledge of his machine that he was able to take it apart and make any ordinary repairs. The "grit bare-legged laddie" was smarter than he seemed, and this fact his teacher was not long in finding out.

At the end of two years, by attending evenings alone, he had learned all that the village schoolmaster could teach him. This brought his school life to an end, but he still kept on studying. He bought books on engineering and mechanics, and spent his leisure in learning what they taught and in experimenting. At last he began to think about making better engines than those he saw about him.

He succeeded in making his locomotive, and at a trial which took place near Liverpool it attained to the unprecedented speed of fourteen miles an hour. By making certain improvements this same engine, the Rocket, was made to attain a speed of thirty miles an hour. People laughed no longer but admired.

He was invited as a consulting engineer to foreign countries, and wealth flowed upon him. Philosophers sought his friendship. His king offered him knighthood, but he refused a title, preferring to remain plain GEORGE STEPHENSON.—*Golden Rule.*

ONLY ONE.

"I AM glad she died." This ejaculation was forced from my lips and heart the other day by one of the saddest sights that one can ever see; a grey-haired man, intoxicated, staggering to his home. My thoughts had flown back many years to the death of his daughter, who almost worshipped him. And then no daughter could have had apparently greater reason for loving and honouring a parent. What I beheld was the wreck of a once handsome gentleman; just the barest semblance of the man as God had made him, and as I remembered him long years ago.

I had known and loved him from the time when I was a little child. I had played with his idolized daughter; I had no father living, and Jennie's father was very good to me. In those days he was a kind, generous-hearted man, pure and upright, and devoted to wife and children. Successful in all he undertook, a beautiful home, a fine business, and now—one day when I was about ten years old, I heard his brother say to him, "James, for the sake of your wife and little ones, be careful. Remember that is the door once open that is never tight shut again."

I pondered many times over this sentence; what could it mean? What door was it Mr. H. wanted his brother to keep shut tight?

It was many years before I understood all it meant, and my kind old friend had made the meaning very plain to me now. I have learned that it was about that time that Mr. H., Uncle James, as I called him, began the fatal habit that has proved his ruin.

He opened the door just a little way at first; only drank a little beer now and then with genial companions. Soon he opened it a little wider, just occasionally took a glass of spirits when worried or fatigued, or when some one invited him, rather as a favour to his friend. Then when troubles began and sorrow crossed his threshold, he added grief to grief and sorrow to sorrow for those who loved him, by giving full rein to the demon who now ruled him.

His devoted wife never ceased to pray for him and to love him. His idolized daughter had been taken home before the fatal weakness had become generally known. It was of her I thought when I saw the wreck he had become. Knowing how the sight I saw would have wrung her heart, I had said, "I am glad she died." After many years of suffering and humiliation that only the wife of a drunkard can ever know, his wife died of a broken heart, people said.

And why was all this misery? Why a broken heart? Why the beautiful home gone, riches and happiness of wife and children and himself all departed? Why? Because of the opening of that fatal door. Some weak people with maudlin pity say, He had the appetite for liquor and could not help it." The weakest of all weak excuses. Could not help it! Could he not have simply kept the door tight shut? Had he never tasted the dreaded stuff, if the appetite did exist, would it not forever have lain dormant?

"STEER STRAIGHT FOR ME."

A FISHERMAN, who habitually drank to excess, used to sail from a small cove on the Scottish coast to the fishing grounds, several miles out in the ocean. There was no lighthouse to guide him, not even a beacon light, and the channel was intricate. When the fisherman had taken a drop too much and night had fallen, it was dangerous work entering that cove.

His little son used to watch for his father's coming, and as soon as he saw him he would run down to the point, and cry out:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

The boy died; and one evening the father was sitting at his lonely fireside. His conscience troubled him, for he had been thinking over the sins of his life. As the night settled down he thought he heard the voice of his boy ring out through the darkness:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

Springing to his feet he called out:

"You're right this time, my son!"

From that moment he was a changed man; he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and served him until he was taken to heaven to join his little son whom he had so much loved.

A CHILD'S LOVE.

A POOR drunkard had an only daughter whom he abused shamefully; but she clung to him with undying affection. One day, when he awoke from a slumber after a debauch and found her preparing breakfast for him and singing a childish song, he turned to her, and with a tone almost tender said, "Millie what makes you stay with me?"

"Because you are my father, and I love you."

"You love me!" repeated the wretched man; "you love me!" He looked at his bloated limbs, his soiled and ragged clothes. "You love me!" he still murmured. "Millie, what makes you love me? I am a poor drunkard. Everybody else despises me; why don't you?"

"Dear father," said the girl, with swimming eyes, "my dear mother taught me to love you; and every night she comes from heaven and stands by my little bed and says, "Millie, don't leave your father. He will get away from that rum fiend some of these days; and then how happy you will be!"

A Modern Prodigal,

BY

Mrs. Julia McNair Wright.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNCLE BARUM'S LITTLE SCHEME.

IT occurs both to families and individuals that after a period of storm and excitement and adventure, when every day was marked by some new event, comes a lull in life—a time of peace. Day follows day, season succeeds to season, with little to distinguish it among its fellows. The lapse of time is so calm and uneventful that we scarcely know that it has gone by us. Suddenly we find that a change has come; we cannot mark the day or the hour; we must observe long periods to see that there is change at all.

The children have grown up, it seems. Was it not yesterday that dolls and marbles engrossed them, and now dolls and marbles are forgotten. The trees that we set as saplings so little time ago spread out wide branches and bear fruit. We, ourselves, have changed; gray hairs are here and there upon us and we know it not.

Thus it was at the home of the Stanhopes after Letitia went to Uncle Barum. Many things happened, but so quietly and such small things individually, that time seemed to be like some still stream that scarcely had a current. The vines and the trees grew, the fowls increased, there were two cows and a two-year-old colt in the barnyard; the house had a coat of buff paint with dark trimmings, the dormer window had been put in the roof, and a square bay window in the sitting-room for mother's winter flowers.

Letitia had graduated at the High School, and had taken her place as teacher in the primary room in the Ladbury school. Samuel, at twelve, had passed through all the classes of the schoolhouse on the mountain, and Uncle Barum had taken him into his house and sent him to the High School. Patience went alone now to the mountain school. Achilles worked as hard as ever, but for higher wages; he had enough money laid by with Friend Amos Lowell to buy a waggon, a plough, and a horse. In another year he meant to make the first payment on ten acres more of land and begin work for himself.

That secret fund of Mercy's had become

nearly seventy dollars, and the hoard of treasures for Letitia, when she should marry, and for that little home which she should have with Thomas, had grown until the trunk was well filled. And now when April came again, Thomas would have been eight years a prisoner. When any one mentioned the swiftly lessening years of that long sentence, Achilles set his lips more firmly and his brow contracted; he felt that the hour of trouble and action drew on apace.

With all these changes Uncle Barum had changed. He had grown old fast, and the disease that preyed upon him, and at times racked him, had a deeper hold. While in many respects as bright as ever, Uncle Barum was in some things growing childish and losing clearness of thought. This must be remembered as serving to excuse him in some little measure for a singular course of action.

Some one has said of a captious and contrary Christian that "Divine grace is sometimes grafted upon a crab-tree." Crab-tree Christians are by no means unusual specimens. Uncle Barum was undoubtedly one of them. Naturally of a selfish disposition, setting his wishes and his own comfort first in his thoughts, and unused to any self-sacrifice, the older Uncle Barum grew the more he was his own object in life. Whatever crossed his wishes was unendurable, whoever opposed him was unforgivable; in following out his own ends the boundaries between right and wrong were in his mind to some extent obliterated. He wished people to live according to the lines he laid down for them, and to be happy in his way only. It was this long-nourished perversity, and this growing childishness and feebleness of mind which led Uncle Barum to a course of action which, if discovered and brought to judgment, might have landed him in the penitentiary beside the despised and hated Thomas.

The return of Thomas Stanhope became a nightmare to Uncle Barum's soul. The cottage on the mountain was now an abode of peace and plenty; why should Thomas return to share a prosperity for which he had never laboured, to disgrace his children by the presence of a felon father, to return to his carousing, and wasting, and idleness, and make discord where now was harmony? Uncle Barum resolved that Thomas must not return. Did he wish to be meeting that felon in the street? Should Thomas, the ex-convict, come to Uncle Barum's respectable home to see Letitia and Samuel, ask to share Letitia's salary, perhaps demand that Samuel should leave school and go to work for him? Whatever could prevent such a turn in affairs must be just and right.

The return of Thomas Stanhope would, no doubt, militate against a plan which Uncle Barum had much at heart, and which he had formed so long ago as the night when Samuel, a self-invited guest, slept in the house marked by the red-and-blue rooster.

The Titus farm was promised to Philip Terhune, and was willed to him. To Sacy Terhune, Uncle Barum had solemnly promised to give all his store of government bonds. Desires to help Mercy, and to have one of Mercy's blood enjoy the farm first cleared and settled by Mercy's great-grandfather, had tugged at Uncle Barum's heart. He had devised this plan of accomplishing his desires. Philip Terhune should marry Letitia Stanhope, and so Letitia should find her home in what had originally been intended for Mercy's inheritance.

When Philip Terhune took the Titus farm in possession, Uncle Barum visited him at least twice a week, and usually took Letitia with him on Saturday. On Sunday he was ready to dispute with Sacy for the possession of her son for dinner. He praised Philip to Letitia, and Letitia to Philip; in fact this old man, who had laid down as a positive decree for his niece Mercy that she should never marry, had now, in behalf of his grand-niece, become a genuine match-maker. Meanwhile Philip was all engrossed with his stock-farm and Letitia with her school-studies, and neither of them had any thought to spare for the other.

Achilles, the planner, had discovered from afar this little scheme and had said nothing. It might be a very good scheme indeed. He had heard of Philip Terhune that he was one of the best respected young man in the county.

Sacy Terhune was the next one to descry Uncle Barum's intentions, and she took umbrage at once. The idea of her Philip being expected to marry the daughter of a felon—a girl without a penny! When Philip married, he should choose a girl of good family and some property. Such a young man as Philip should do well when he married; and to do well in Sacy's dictionary was defined to marry some one with a little money. Sacy, as a girl, had been somewhat jealous of Mercy, Barum Titus' prospective heiress; she had made good use of her opportunities to supplant Mercy, and therefore liked her less than ever.

As an antidote to Uncle Barum's praises of Letitia, Sacy Terhune began to make invidious criticisms upon her to Philip.

"Silly girl," "sly girl." "Those Stanhopes were a weak set like their good-for-nothing father before them." "She did not see what Barum Titus found in Tish to take his fancy so." "For her part she should think if the girl had any feelings, she would hide away in the country, and not show herself in town, flaunting about as if she were as good as anybody, and her father in the penitentiary!"

Now when strictures are so excessive and unjust, they usually inspire a right-minded hearer to take up the defensive, and so it happened in this case. Philip honestly endeavoured to make his mother see that Letitia was a very nice girl, doing exactly what she ought to do, and most unexceptionable and admirable in her behaviour.

Descanting on this, he did not convince his mother, but thoroughly convinced himself, and from not thinking about Letitia at all, began to think about her a great deal in the most admiring fashion. Driven to scrutinize her conduct and position, he proceeded to see that there was no girl in the town, or even in the country, to be compared with her.

Sacy saw that she was by no means furthering her ends by decrying Letitia to Philip; moreover, her husband, to whom she unfolded her suspicions and complaints, stoutly insisted that Letitia was the very nicest kind of a girl, and that any mother ought to be thankful if her son could secure such a wife.

Who could tell, moreover, what Uncle Barum would do for Letitia? The old man was stubborn and crafty, and if he were antagonized and thwarted, might revoke any will he had made in favour of Philip or Sacy. Thus Mrs. Terhune was led to see that there two sides to this question of Letitia's eligibility in a matrimonial way, and as, in spite of herself, she could not help a certain liking for one so uniformly kind, respectful, and helpful as Letitia, she relapsed into the position of a silent observer of events.

Uncle Barum now began to mature his plans. Philip was showing the most praiseworthy docility in regard to falling in love with Letitia, and Letitia showed no aversion to Philip. What was now necessary was to break off all communication between the prisoner and his family, and hinder Thomas Stanhope's return to Ladbury. There was now and then a hint given by well-meaning people that Thomas' sentence would be shortened on account of his excellent behaviour.

Uncle Barum knew when and how often Thomas wrote to Mercy, and when Mercy replied. He had now been frequently in the post-office for several years assisting Postmaster Terhune, and as Uncle Barum was one of the most highly esteemed citizens of the county, it never occurred to Mr. Terhune that the old man would nefariously interfere with the mail. Barum Titus liked to help distribute the mail; he enjoyed gathering the letters into packets for the mail-bag, why not let him do it? Old men have but few pleasures. Who guessed Uncle Barum's little scheme?

Uncle Barum concluded in the first place to sequestrate Thomas Stanhope's letter to his wife and then the letter which she would inevitably write to him. Then he would watch the mail to see if Mercy wrote to the chaplain, or the chaplain to Mercy. Then he would remove from the mail a second pair of letters, and then if Thomas was so regardless of decency as to drive him to extremities by not dying, as a convict ought to die, Uncle Barum meant to write him a letter which would prevent his ever returning to Ladbury. He meant to write Thomas that Mercy had accepted her privilege of divorce, and had remarried. After that, Thomas would surely communicate no more with Ladbury.

It was the clumsiest possible scheme, the product of a mind grown childish and futile. Uncle Barum did not consider the infinite probabilities that so poor a plan would fall to pieces like a wall laid up without mortar. It did not occur to him that the chaplain might write to Friend Amos Lowell or the minister about this step taken by Mercy; it did not enter his mind that further proof of a divorce and a marriage would be required than a single letter. He never thought that, if long silence fell, Mercy might go to the penitentiary herself, or send Samuel, who was past thirteen, and fully able to go on such an errand. All these little points escaped the dull mind of Uncle Barum, and his clumsy plan succeeded, perhaps, in very virtue of its rudeness and stupidity. It seemed that as an invention, a plan must have been more neatly put together, and this being so rude must be truth.

Uncle Barum, with some moral misgivings, began to execute his plan in the November after Letitia graduated and Samuel had come to live with him, when Thomas had been in prison seven years and a half. His hand trembled a little as he subtracted that penitentiary letter from the mail and slipped it into his coat-pocket. It trembled yet more when, alone at night by his open fire, he drew it from his pocket and committed it to the flames. He knew he was all wrong, but he said:

"It is for Mercy's good—and then, they have not seen each other for seven years and nine months, and of course they have nearly forgotten; and then, Mercy has her children, she cares only for them."

O Uncle Barum! you did not forget Mercy in seven years and nine months; did you not for seventeen years "keep your latch-string out," and long for your exile's return? Uncle Barum could not say his prayers that night; somehow the words would not come. The poor old gray head tossed and turned uneasily on that prayer-less pillow, but his last whisper was: "It is all for the good of Mercy and her children." For them he was willing to endure even the upbraidings of his conscience.

Poor Uncle Barum! he had nurtured his mind in crookedness so long that now, what to most would have seemed a very plain case, based on such simple fundamental truths as, "it is wrong to lie, it is wrong to steal," was to him as complex as to the veriest casuist of them all.

It was not quite so hard to purloin Mercy's letter. Was not Mercy his neice? was he not as a father to her? He had a right to what was hers, and to interfere to prevent her injuring herself. Besides, if he did not secrete Mercy's letter, all that trouble about the letter of Thomas was clearly thrown away. Therefore, Mercy's letter went not into the mail-bag but into the pocket of Uncle Barum's faded bottle-green great-coat from which he never parted, and from the coat-pocket it too dropped among the red embers in the grate.

Now must the vigilance of Uncle Barum be unceasing. At what minute might not his plan be defeated. He got all the information he could through Letitia and Samuel, and learned that Mercy meant to write to the chaplain if she did not hear from Thomas by Christmas. She wrote—and Uncle Barum burned a third letter. It was Mercy's, he had a right; he only wished he had shot that Thomas Stanhope years ago. But then if Thomas had been shot, and Mercy had never married, he would not have had Letitia and Samuel to cheer him, and where would Philip Terhune have found a wife? But if he had never seen them, would he ever have missed them or wanted them? Probably not. Entangled in the meshes of these thoughts, he sat long by his fire. He did not try to say his prayers when he went to bed. He knew now that it took him about a week to recover so far from the sacrifice of each letter that he could say his prayers.

Now, as time passed by, and Mercy began to grow uneasy at not hearing from Thomas, Uncle Barum had to invent many reasonings and arguments to explain to her this silence. He had also to suggest to the minds of Letitia and Achilles various lines of thought by which they were to brace up the mind of their mother to endure this silence. Then evidently Thomas became as uneasy as Mercy, and a letter quite out of the usual time came from him, and was burned, and then there was a letter from the chaplain to Mercy which was also sequestrated, and Uncle Barum felt as if he had no peace night or day, because of the unexpected and disorderly coming of these letters.

"Mother is talking of going to the penitentiary for a visit to find out about father," said Achilles. "I don't want her to do it. The idea of mother going there to see a convict in a two-coloured suit. I can't stand it."

"Don't you let her go," said Uncle Barum anxiously. "You can see how it is. Thomas had lost all care or feeling for any of you long before he went there. Now he sees the time coming on when he will be free, and he means to slide off somewhere away from all of you, among folks that don't know he has been a felon."

"Perhaps that will be the best end of it," said Achilles gloomily.

"As soon as he comes out he'll take to drink again."

"I'm afraid so," said Achilles.

"The law's all wrong, all wrong," said Uncle Barum excitedly. "Prisoners ought never to be allowed to write to their families. The very fact of getting to a penitentiary ought to divorce a man at once. After that he should have no family and no friends. And when a man is like Thomas Stanhope, and cannot keep sober a minute unless he is in jail, then he ought to be kept in jail all the time."

"I have often thought the laws were not what they should be," said Achilles. "It seems to me drunkenness itself should be a misdemeanour and punished. I think a man has no right to destroy his own body, property, and brain, any more than he has to destroy his neighbours. A man belongs partly to the state and the community, and he hurts the state and the community when he hurts himself, and he should not be allowed to do it. I think whenever a man gets drunk, he should be put in jail at hard labour for a certain number of days. And every time the offence is repeated, he should get a heavier sentence. Then the drunkenness itself would come to be considered disgraceful from its punishment. Now a man is arrested for being 'drunk and disorderly,' and locked up or fined. It is not the drunkenness, but the disorder that is punished. The drunkenness should be the misdemeanour, and it should be corrected out of existence."

"That's so; yes, yes, that's so," said Uncle Barum, who wanted to agree with Achilles. "You look out for your mother, and don't let her go to the penitentiary to see him."

That night Uncle Barum sat long by his fire meditating what he should do next.

(To be continued.)

IT MAKES ALL WRONG.

"Please, father, is it wrong to go pleasuring on the Lord's day? My teacher says it is."

"Why, child, perhaps it is not exactly right."

"Then it is wrong, isn't it, father?"

"Oh, I don't know that—if it is once in a while."

"Father, you know how fond I am of sums?"

"Yes, John, and I am glad you are; I want you to do them well, and be quick and clever at figures. But why do you talk of sums just now?"

"Because, father, if there is one little figure put wrong in the sum, it makes all wrong, however large the amount is."

"To be sure, child, it does."

"Then please, father, don't you think that if God's day is put wrong now and then, it makes all wrong?"

"Put wrong, child—how?"

"I mean, father, put to a wrong use."

"That brings it very close," said the father, as if speaking to himself; and then added, "John, it is wrong to break God's holy Sabbath. He has forbidden it and your teacher was quite right."

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—*Kind Words.*

That was a noble deed performed by a large Philadelphia bottle manufacturer. He was offered a large order for liquor bottles but refused the order.

DOVER CLIFFS AND CASTLE.

DOVER AND ITS CASTLE.

The city of Dover is situated about seventy-two miles from London, England, in a main valley of the Chalk Hills, corresponding with the opposite cliffs between Calais and Boulogne. Its dominant object is the Castle on the east heights. Within its walls stands the Roman Pharos; the Romano-British fortress church, forming a primitive Christian relic, unique in Christendom; some remains of a Saxon fort; and the massive keep and subsidiary defences of Norman building. These ancient works provide for a garrison of 758; but they are now covered by the superior site of Fort Burgoyne, a position of great strength for 221 men. The western heights, where is still the foundation of a consort Roman Pharos, forms a circuit of elaborate fortifications, with provision for 3,010 troops. Between these and stretching inland lies the town.

The Dover Cliff rises precipitously to a great height above the sea. It was the white face of these chalk cliffs that gave to Britain in the olden time the name of "Albion," from the Latin word Alba, white. The following is Shakespeare's vivid description of the view from the cliff to the waves beneath.

"Here's the place:—stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Shew scarce so gross as beetles; halfway down,
Hangs one that gathers samphire,—dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark,
Diminished to her cock; her cock, a buoy,
Almost too small for sight; the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumbered pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high:—I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong."

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF PAUL.

A.D. 59.] LESSON VIII. [Aug. 20.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

Acts 24. 10-25.] [Memory verses, 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you men, be strong.—1 Cor. 16. 13.

OUTLINE.

1. Paul before Felix, v. 10-21.
2. Felix before Paul, v. 22-25.

PLACE.—The palace of Felix, in Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.

Chapters 22 and 23, and the first part of Chapter 24, tell an exciting story of Paul's rescue from the mob at Jerusalem; his hearing before the chief council of the Jews; the conspiracy to kill him; his transfer to Cæsarea; the accusation by the orator Tertullus. Paul's response is our present lesson.

EXPLANATIONS.

"Beckoned"—A nod from the judge permitted Paul to speak. "Many years"—Felix had resided six years in Cæsarea. "Because"—Paul now answers the first charge, namely, of sedition. "Twelve days"—Since the Pentecost. "They call"—But I do not admit. "Heresy"—The second charge was of heresy, and to this Paul replies in verses 14-16. "God of my fathers"—As a Christian, Paul reverenced the God of the Jews, and was not therefore guilty of irreligion. "Now"—Paul now refers to the third charge, namely, sacrilege. Verses 17-21. "Many years"—Rather, "after some years" more, the four years since he was last in Jerusalem. Chapter 18. 22. "Purified"—As a Nazarite. "One voice"—One utterance, or exclamation. "That way"—Because he knew more exactly what referred to Christianity. "Reasoned"—Conversed. "Trembled"—More correctly, "was fearful."

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn that—

1. Truth may sometimes be considered heresy.
2. Men who are just to others may be unjust to themselves?
3. People often put off their immediate duty?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Of what did Paul say he had hope? "Of the resurrection of the dead." 2. Paul exercised himself to have what? "A conscience void of offence." 3. Of what did Paul reason before Felix? "Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." 4. What effect had this on Felix? "He trembled." 5. What does the Golden Text say? "Watch ye, stand fast," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The resurrection of the dead. Verse 15.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Why did God create all things?

For his own pleasure, to show forth his glory, and to give happiness to his creatures.

When did God create man?

After the creation of the earth, God made man to be the chief of his creatures upon it.

ROB'S BATTLE.

BY KATE T. GATES.

"There isn't any use in my trying to do good, mother," said Rob Winter one Sunday afternoon, "I've tried this week so hard, but it didn't do any good. I get mad so quick. I think every time I never will again, but the next time anything provokes me, away I go before I know it."

"You can conquer your enemy if you meet him the right way. Rob, remember how David went out to meet Goliath; who would have thought that he, with only his sling and the little stones he had taken from the brook, could defeat the mighty Philistine? But he did, because he went in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts.

"Now your temper is your giant. If you meet him in your own strength, he will defeat you, but if, like David, you go in God's strength, you will overcome. Try again to-morrow, Rob; ask God to go with you and help you, and when your enemy rises up against you, fight him down. Say to him that he shall not overcome you, because you fight with God's help and strength."

"Well," promised Rob, "I'll try; but I can't help being afraid."

Everything went smoothly the next day until afternoon recess. The boys were playing ball, and one of them accused Rob of cheating. Instantly his face crimsoned, and he turned towards the accuser, but the angry words died on his lips.

His conversation with his mother flashed into his mind. "I will try if God will help me," he thought. It was a hard struggle for a minute. He shut his eyes tight together, and all his heart went out in a cry for help, and he conquered.

"David killed Goliath, and that was the end of him," said Rob that night, "but my giant isn't dead if I did conquer him once."

"I know," said his mother, "but every victory makes you stronger and him weaker, and when the warfare is over there is a crown of life promised to those who endure to the end."

DORE'S FIRST ATTEMPT.

An interesting anecdote is related of Doré, the celebrated artist, showing that he was a genuine boy in spite of his genius. Ever since his first crude attempts at painting he had always hoped for a set of oils, and when late one evening the long-promised box did arrive he was wild with delight. The next morning he was up with the sun eager to begin operations. But then came the difficulty—he had no canvas or paper. Nothing daunted, the inspired Gustave pounces upon a dirty white chicken feeding around the door, and, in spite of vigorous protests from the astonished fowl, paints it a bright pea green. Enraptured at the result, the young artist turns the transformed chicken into the street and, with a contented mind, goes to breakfast. Soon sounds of lamentation are heard from without. It seems that the ignorant inhabitants had taken the æsthetic chicken for some supernatural warning of dire calamity. And it took the united efforts of the whole Doré family to restore their equanimity.

Ten Cents, and a Moral.

Here is a silver dime, my son;
Looks like lead, it is blackened so;
Not a bit like the shining one
I dropped in my pocket a week ago!
Dingy? Yes; do you think it strange
It should lose its sheen in so short a time?
Would you like to know what wrought this change
For the worse in a brand-new silver dime?

The cause is simple, and readily told;
But pay good heed to it, son of mine!
See if it does not a lesson hold
For a bright, brave boy, with a wish to shine.
I draw from my pocket a copper cent;
See, there is the secret; this silver dime
Dropped in the pocket by accident,
Has rubbed against copper all the time.

And the copper is never a whit more white,
And has gained not at all by its company;
But the silver dime comes out less bright,
And its value is questioned, as you see!
Now, the moral for boys is very clear;
And you see it, of course? Well, lay it to heart,
And see, I drop the dime in here,
And the copper there: let them be apart!

—*Pittsburgh Christian Advocate.*

Why cannot the question of licensing the sale of intoxicating liquors be submitted to the vote of the poor mother—working hard to support and save the child, whom the saloon threatens to destroy—as well as to the drunken bummer, who will sell his vote early and often for a drink of whiskey? Isn't it strange that "the mothers of men" should not be reckoned as "people"?

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