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### MRS. TRACY'S LESSON.

Dinner time was approaching, but dinner dragged. Bridget had a way of forgetting the coal fire until it was so far gone as to require a lengthy peltting in order to be in time for cooking. Mrs. Tracy had to hurry to the kitchen and do her best to hasten things forward.

"Never mind," she said to herself, as she returned to the nursery, "Harvey will probably be late, too. He usually is. I'm glad for once."

But, to her dismay, Harvey was even then coming up the walk with a quick step.

"Dinner ready, I hope, Amy?" he said. "Business is pressing to-day."

"No, indeed, it is not," she said, with a cloud spreading over her face. "It really seems as though the only times you ever come punctually are the days when there is trouble in the kitchen."

It did seem so. Harvey was so habitually late at meal time that Mrs. Tracy felt justified in feeling very cross as she again went to the kitchen, and after fifteen minutes of exertion, which bore poor results in the ill-served dinner, seated herself, hot and worried, at the table, in a mood which would have prevented her enjoyment of a much better repast.

"Did you get good seats?" she asked, after the children had been helped.

"Seats? What seats? Bless me if I've had a thought of those seats since I went away this morning. I'm sorry, Amy, I'll step in on my way down."

"You needn't. Mrs. Rice was here a little while ago, and she said every good seat was taken two hours after the plan was opened."

"I've been more than usually bothered of late, Amy. I've been trying to make arrangements to get a safe for my office, and I have a good many valuable papers, and don't feel like risking them. Fussed all the morning, but still failed of it. But I'll get the tickets for tomorrow night."

"It will do no good. I had all my arrangements made for to-night, and I can't go out to-morrow night."

The manner was more ungracious than the words. Mr. Tracy looked appealingly at her as he expressed his real regret for the carelessness which had brought her such a disappointment. He had a very tender appreciation of the fact that his wife's cares were very pressing and burdensome. She seldom got out, and this missing of a fine musical entertainment was no light thing to her.

There was no response to his apologies. She was recalling the time, only a few weeks since, when he had promised to go out with her, then had become absorbed in business, sent her a hasty note to say he could not dine at home, and she had seen no more of him until half-past ten at night. It is not to be wondered at that the cloud on Mrs. Tracy's face deepened. It reflected itself on the faces of the three children, one of whom, after a few whimpers of discontent over the unsatisfactory dinner, was dismissed with sharp words from his mother.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Harvey a few minutes later, impatiently pushing away his plate, "if a man is to be treated like a criminal because he has forgotten some concert tickets, he'd better look for a pleasant place than home."

He strode away, leaving her, with some reason, perhaps, to consider herself a very ill-used woman.

She was always busy about the house or always trying to bring up arrears of sewing. Intervals of leisure for reading or going out were rare, and always becoming rarer. She was willingly giving her best energies to the work of making the most out of small means, taking her full share in the struggle which her husband was carrying on to get a foothold in business. But she was forgetting that husband and children should not be left to live by bread alone—that they looked to her for something more valuable than the mere keeping of a house. She was many a time so wearied with her round of duties in the care of their bodies that she lost sight of their higher needs, not realizing that a smile or a cheery word from her could go far toward making amends for a much more serious household failure than a poorly cooked meal. Her face was rapidly taking on a look of combined anxiety and impatience, and she was forgetting the sweetness of loving forbearance toward little faults and shortcomings.

"Tug, tug, tug," she said, fretfully. "I'm tired of it all. Harvey has no more thought of me than if I were a pack-horse. How would he like it if I thought no more of his comfort than he does of mine, I wonder?"

The fretful mood and the fretful expression, fast coming to feel at home by long indulgence, stayed by her as the hours wore on. The children looked inquiringly at her when occasion brought them in her way, but wisely made such occasions as few as possible. As the tea hour approached Mrs. Tracy would not have acknowledged to herself that her brow was taking on an added cloud at the prospect of her husband's return.

He had left her in anger, after sinning against her so unpardonably, and need not expect to be pleasantly received.

If, however, he should come home early, she might relax a little toward him. But the hour came and passed without him, and Mrs. Tracy grew angrier. If he was staying away to punish her, he might stay as long as he liked—she would never care.

But as another hour passed she grew uneasy. With all his trying want of punctuality, Harvey never really missed a meal without sending her a word of explanation. It was already growing dark as she pressed her face anxiously against the window pane, when her little boy rushed in.

"O mamma! there's such a big fire down town. Can't I go and see it?"

She had heard an alarm an hour or two before, but paid little attention to it.

"No, of course you can't, Willie, it is too late for you to be out. But where is the fire?"

"I don't know, but it's a great, great big one, I know. Hear how the whistles blow—and see, the folks are running more and more."

She caught a few words from some passers by which brought a look of dismay to her face.

"The Phoenix block—and spreading fast. Trouble with water freezing in hose."

Breathlessly she ran into the house and threw on her wraps. Then, with a few words of direction to the servant girl, she took Willie's hand and hurried in the bitter cold of the fast closing winter night through the streets, becoming more and more crowded as they drew nearer the business precincts with others, whose faces were all turned in the same direction.

Her husband's office was in the Phoenix Block. A chill, denser than that of the inclement air struck her heart, as through her mind ran one after another dread imagination of what might be. She remembered his worry about the safe—how little she had heeded him in her selfish resentment over a little disappointment! Her steps quickened with a wild fear as she thought of the papers he had spoken of—she knew the first instinct of his faithful soul would be to peril his life for the safety of what others had confided to his care.

The crowd grew thicker as she neared the fire, until she could move only with difficulty as she still pressed on. They had not lived in the place for any length of time and the faces about her were all strange, until at length a familiar voice said:

"You here, Mrs. Tracy? This is no place for you."

She grasped the speaker's arm.

"Mr. Brand—do tell me! Is it serious? Is it the Phoenix?—and have you seen Mr. Tracy?"

His face was more troubled than he wished her to see as he tried to lead her away from the crowd.

"Well, a large fire is always more or less serious, you know. It began in the Phoenix—"

"I want to hear about it," she insisted, as he paused. "How are things there, now?"

The fire went up the elevator shaft, so there has been difficulty in getting the occupants. But I do assure you, Mrs. Tracy, that no lives are known to be lost. The last I saw of Mr. Tracy he and the other lawyers were working like beavers trying to get out their belongings."

"When was that?" she gasped.

"Perhaps an hour ago."

"I'm going to get nearer," she said, and, as her friend could not dissuade her, he took her arm and they slowly worked their way toward the large building to which the fire was now confined.

It was a strange and magnificent sight. Winter had laid his pitiless finger on every attempt to interrupt the progress of the ruin, seeming to rejoice in promoting the advance of the fire. All the noble engineering of the fire department was in full play, but many a bursted hose had been thrown aside, and other difficulties from clogging ice in every direction were continually arising. The tall, partly fallen walls of the brick building were sheeted with ice, which shone and sparkled in the gas-light like the famed Russian palace, and against which many a stream of water fell in rattling hail. Banks of ice, from leaking hose, lay across the streets, while around the burning building lay a piled-up mass of ice, mingled with books, carpets, and furniture, which had been thrown out, to the depth of ten or twelve feet.

The fire was by this time, however, well under control, and painful interest was now centered upon the perilous condition of a man who could be seen through the window of one of the upper stories.

"That is the old watchman of the building," exclaimed Mrs. Tracy's escort; "he is not in any immediate danger, but it will be difficult to reach him, and it is feared he may lose his head and fall. Some other men are on a balcony around the corner, not far below him—they are positively in no danger as yet, but I heard some one say that they were refusing to be helped down

until the old man is safe—are doing all they can to encourage him. Mr. Tracy may be among those."

To Mrs. Tracy's eyes there must be danger. Brick and portions of the wall were continually falling. And Harvey might not be there—nobody could know certainly where he was. No lives are known to be lost—that was how her friend had phrased it.

The falling of a portion of the roof drove back lookers-on and workers in a confused crowd.

"Do go home, Mrs. Tracy," urged Mr. Brand. "You can do no good by staying; you are risking your health and the child's too. I will surely see that you have the very first news of Mr. Tracy that can be secured."

Her teeth were chattering and her whole frame shivering, although she had not realized that she was cold. She felt that she could not go, but, after a glance at little Willie, who would not complain, she allowed herself to be persuaded.

Arrived at home, she was thankful for the care demanded of her by the sleepy children. But in due time the clamor of the little voices was hushed and then nothing remained for her but to pace restlessly to and fro—now feeling as though another moment of suspense would drive her wild, now shrinking in dread from the thought of what the end of that suspense might be.

He had left her in anger. She had, in her pettishness at his forgetfulness, refused him look or smile; she had been harboring bitter thoughts against him while he was exposed to danger, perhaps death. How far she had gone aside from the ideal she had formed of her duties as a true wife! How far failed in making for him the sunny home they had long ago pictured! And now, what if she should never more have opportunity to show him how dearer to her than all else on earth was his happiness and that of their children?

In her misery it seemed that hours had passed before she heard a footstep at the door. And then she sprang up in terror. Was it his step or that of another, come to tell her—?

"Amy—at last. Poor wife, did you think I would never come? But don't come near me yet, dear!"

But she clung to him for a moment, and then stood back in amazement at his appearance. Smoke-begrimed, drenched, and with ice clinging to his dress and hair—she would not have known him except for his voice. As she hastily brought him dry clothing and hot coffee, he gave her an outline of his experience for the past few hours.

"It was a tight place we were caged in," he said, in concluding—"freezing on one side and almost burning on the other. But we got the poor old man safe at last, and all my papers are safe."

"And would you really weigh any kind of property against your life, Harvey, even though it might belong to other people? Is that all you care for us here at home?"

"Well, Amy," he said, smiling at her half anger, "if it were deliberately placed before me to choose, I might, perhaps hesitate; but when all of a sudden you find that a sacred trust is in danger, what remains but to use your best endeavor, even though there may be risk in it, with faith in the kindly and powerful arm which has brought me out of it?"

His voice had taken on a reverent tone, and she could not say he was not right.

But she lay down to rest with a great thankfulness in her heart that she could yet reach him with looks and tones of affection, and an earnest prayer that the lesson of the last few hours might not soon grow dim and be forgotten.

### Tricks on the Track.

**Danger from which Engineers Save the Public and Themselves.**

[From The Railway Review.]

One who is accustomed to railway traveling can scarcely realize how much he is dependent for safety upon the engineer. Added to the responsibility of their station, engineers are also in constant danger of accidents caused by the tricks of jealous rivals. This rivalry, it is said, sometimes prompts to the doing of utterly mean tricks. A Nickel Plate engineer after his very first trip was laid off because he had "cut out" all the bearings of his engine. He was reinstated, however, after he proved that some rival had filled his oiling can with emery. Another new engineer was suspected for burning out the flues of his boiler. Through grief at the loss of his position he died, and then a conscience-stricken rival confessed that he had put oil in the tank so that it foamed and showed water at the top gauge when in reality there was scarcely a quart in the boiler!

These intense jealousies, together with the terrible anxiety incident to their work, has a terribly straining effect on the nerve, and statistics tell us that, though Locomotive Engineers may look strong and vigorous, they are not all a hearty class. Ex-Chief Engineer A. S. Hampton, Indianapolis, Ind., (Div. 143) was one of those apparently hearty men, but he says: "The anxiety, strain and jolting came near finishing me."

The Locomotive Engineers' Brotherhood has 17,000 members and 240 divisions. Its headquarters is in Cleveland, Ohio, where Chief Engineer Arthur for twenty years has exercised almost dictatorial sway. It was organized in August, 1863, by the employes of the Michigan Central. It has given nearly two million dollars to the widows and orphans of deceased members.

**Smith Had Misjudged Her.**

There were half a dozen of them holding down as many chairs in a suburban drug store the other evening, when the talk changed to traps, thieves and burglars, and Smith said:

"Well, now, but I'd like to try an experiment. I am a little skittish about these desperadoes, and Mrs. Smith knows it and takes advantage to brag about her own courage. She says she'd just like to find a tramp on the door step who refused to dust when she ordered him to."

"Well?" asked one.

"Well, suppose one of you rig up and go to the front door and demand some thing to eat, and be mighty impudent about it. It will give her a scare and stop her bragging."

The crowd fell in with the idea and one of the men donned an old hat and coat and fixed up as a tramp. Ten minutes later he was knocking at the side door, while Smith and his friends were posted across the street.

It wasn't over two minutes after the tramp's first knock before he came out of the yard. He came over the fence. He was in such a hurry that he ran thirty rods before he could bring up. When Smith and the others reached him he had his hat off and was feeling of his head and gritting his teeth to keep back a groan.

"Well, said Smith, 'what did you do? Told her I wanted a hot supper p. d. q.'"

"And what did she say?"

"She asked whether I would have bone turkey or fricassee chicken, and while I was trying to make up my mind she kicked me on the shin, struck me on the head with a club, and pushed me off the steps all at the same time."

And every one of the group looked back and saw Mrs. Smith on the walk in front of the house, apparently waiting for somebody's return, and each man gasped out:

"Well, I'll be kazooid!"

**BRIEF AND TO THE POINT.**

"Been to Washington?"

"Yes."

"See Cleveland?"

"Yes."

"Did he 'point you'?"

"Yes."

"What to?"

"Door."

"Did you see White strike Brown?"

"Can't be sure of it. The only thing I'm sure of, mister lawyer, is that my old woman came out with a pail of hot water and licked the hull crowd and had over two quarts left for next time."

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### Rules for Health.

The Philadelphia board of health have issued these hints in pamphlet form for distribution:

"Thorough ventilation of dwellings is essential to the health of the occupants. Observe strict cleanliness in your person and clothing. Bathe daily, if you have the convenience; if not, wash freely with cold water every day. Change your undergarments daily, or as frequently as your circumstances will admit. Be moral, regular in your habits of life, meal, exercise and sleep. Be careful to dress comfortable for the season, avoid the night air as much as possible, and when thus exposed put on an extra garment, and do not go into the night air when in a state of perspiration. Be careful to avoid the use of alcoholic drinks. Do not suppose that their use will prevent the recurrence of disease. On the other hand, those who indulge in the custom are always fair subjects for disease, and when attacked the intemperate are particularly in a condition to offer feeble resistance.

"Live temperately. Live regularly, avoid all excesses in eating, crude, raw and indigestible food, especially cabbage, salad, cucumbers and unripe fruit. A greater safety will be secured by boiling all water used for drinking purposes. Partake of well-cooked beef and mutton, rice well boiled, and avoid pastry and laxative fruit. Take your meals at regular seasons, neither abstaining too long at a time nor indulging too frequently. An overloaded stomach is as much to be dreaded as an empty one. Avoid bodily fatigue and mental exhaustion. Let all exciting causes be avoided. If you impress or impair the vital forces it is prejudicial to health. By excitement or violent exercise you increase the susceptibility of the system to disease.

"During the prevalence of cholera do not neglect even the slightest diarrhea, no matter how painless at first."

**Dr. Blister Gets Mad.**

Kosciusko Murphy will not send Dr. Blister in case of sickness. Dr. Blister was bragging about his profession and complaining that it was not properly appreciated.

"That's so; I don't think the press treats you doctors right," said Murphy.

"You are correct, sir. We get all manner of abuse from these would-be humorists of the press. Almost every paper contains some slur at the doctors."

"It is not the editor's sins of commission as much as it is his sins of omission that I am alluding to now. I refer to the outrageous manner in which you are systematically neglected."

"Neglected!"

"Yes, neglected. When a man is married the newspapers invariably give the name of the clergyman who performs the ceremony, but when he dies the name of the doctor who attends him is usually omitted in the obituary notice. The doctor does as much to facilitate things as the preacher, so I don't see why he is snubbed in that way."

"Texas Siftings."

THERE WAS a case of assault and battery before one of the justices the other day, and a witness with a black eye, several strips of court plaster across his nose and one ear badly lopped over, was asked by the defendant's lawyer if he saw Brown strike White.

"Can't say as I did, he replied.

"Did you see the whole affair?"

"Mostly."

"Well, how was it?"

"Well, Smith and me sat on the rearer talkin' evolution. Jones and Green sat on the grass talkin' religion. Brown and White sat by the edge of the straw-stack disputin on politics. Three or four boys was in the barn gettin' up a dog fight."

"Yes—go on."

"Fust I know'd, somebody called somebody else a liar. Next I know'd evolution, religion, politics and fighting dogs was a-rolling over each other on the grass, and every man kicking and biting and hitting away for all he was wuth."

"But did you see Brown strike White?"

"Can't say as I did."

**The Depth of It.**

"How deep is that hole?" asked an anxious inquirer of a laborer digging a well.

"Don't know; never measured it," was the none-of-your-business style of reply.

"How far would I go if I should fall in?" was the next question.

"To the bottom, I reckon, if you're heavy enough to sink," and the questioner didn't pursue his investigations.

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### Arbor Day in the Schools.

(Circular to Superintendents.)  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, HARRISBURG, Sept. 23, 1885.

DEAR SIR: The general observance of Arbor Day on April 16, in response to the proclamation of His Excellency, Governor Pattison, was most gratifying. Many thousand trees were planted, whose grateful shade and luscious fruit will add enjoyment to the lives of tens of thousands in years to come.

In some parts of the State, however, the ground was still frozen or otherwise in unfit condition for the planting of trees, while in many localities the schools had already closed. That the schools of the entire State of Pennsylvania may all have opportunity to begin this good work during the current year, we name Thursday, October 29, proximo, as a School Arbor Day, on which Shade Trees, Shrubs, Vines, &c., shall be planted by schools upon their school-grounds under the general direction and encouragement of Boards of Directors, Superintendents, and Teachers; on which also Fruit Trees, Shade Trees, &c., shall be planted about their homes by the individual pupils—boys and girls—by the teachers, and by all others who may be sufficiently interested in this important work.

The following suggestions from the Arbor Day circular of March 31 are equally in order for this Fall observance of the day:

"Select mainly such trees for planting on school grounds as grow well in your immediate vicinity—maple, hickory, walnut, sweet-gum, dogwood, buttonwood, ash, bass-wood or linden, birch, beech, locust, willows, tulip-trees, pines, larches, firs, and others too numerous to mention. For shrubbery and vines: Mock-orange, spiraea, the burning bush, deutzia, lilacs, wigwags, hardy roses, honeysuckles, Virginia creeper, wisteria, the clematis, and others, which will give variety and greatly increase the attractiveness of the school-building and its surroundings of grass plot and greenery."

"As to the exercises of Arbor Day, these may be quite informal, if that shall seem best—the essential purpose being the planting of Trees, Shrubs and Vines. But it will be eminently proper, where arrangements can readily be made for a formal programme, to make this also a prominent feature. The reading of a selection from the Bible, prayer by a clergyman of the neighborhood, readings, recitations and songs by the pupils, an address by the teacher or other citizen of the district interested in the work of the day, will afford variety and serve to render the occasion more interesting and impressive."

"Let every teacher organize his school for the work, and, in consultation with the Directors, have the grounds properly prepared, and holes ready for Trees and Shrubs, and Flowers, and Vines. Solicit the co-operation of the whole neighborhood. Should the day appointed prove inclement and unfit for the work, postpone it until the following Saturday. How the superintendent may be best able to communicate instructions to all his teachers must be left to his own good judgement. We would suggest the use of the local press as far as possible."

For additional suggestions as to planting and programmes for the day, see issues of the Pennsylvania School Journal for March, April, and May, 1885.

It is hoped that the encouragement of tree planting by individual pupils, as well as by schools in their collective capacity with proper school exercises—in a word, how to render most effective the observance of Arbor Day by the schools—may find a place on the programme of every County Institute held in Pennsylvania during the present season. It is suggested also, in this connection, that not less than two hours of the time of the Institute be given to the consideration of this very practical educational topic, in such manner as, in the discretion of the Superintendent, shall seem best. In order that the State Superintendent may have the proper data from which to make definite report of the results of Arbor Day work for the year, he will be pleased to receive by December 1 from each County, City, and Borough Superintendent a statement approximating as closely as possible the number of trees, &c., planted within his jurisdiction at any time during the year as a result of the appointment of the day.

Very respectfully,  
E. P. HIGBEE,  
Supt. Public Instruction.