

A Sleepy Little School.

A funny old professor kept a school for little boys. And he'd romp with them in playtime, and he wouldn't mind their noise; while in his little schoolroom, with its head against the wall. Was a bed of such proportions it was big enough for all.

"It's for tired little pupils," he explained, "for you will find how very wrong indeed it is to force a budding mind; whenever one grows sleepy and he can't hold up his head, I make him lay his primer down and send him off to bed!

And sometimes it will happen on a warm and pleasant day, when the little birds upon the trees go toor-al-lay, when wide-awake and studious it's difficult to keep. One by one they'll get a nodding till the whole class is asleep!

Then before they're all in dreamland and their funny snores begin, I close the shutters softly so the sunlight can't come in; after which I put the school books in their order on the shelf, and with nothing else to do, I take a little nap myself!"

—Malcolm Douglas, in *St. Nicholas*.

THE LADY WITH THE IRON BRACELET.

Hinton took the tickets as the train was running into the station; in hastily snatching up the change a half sovereign slipped from his fingers. It took us a couple of minutes to find it, and then the train was lost.

"Three-quarters of an hour to wait in this hole," Hinton groaned. "Better walk over the hills to Chorley. The train is due there at 9.15; we can do it easily."

We did it a little too easily; the train was in sight before we reached Chorley. We leapt over the railings and ran along the line; the train passed us at the signal box and we overtook it as it came to a stop.

The last carriage was a third class; a young lady leaning through the open window of the end compartment, looked towards us anxiously.

"Will you be good enough to open the door," she asked, as we drew near. We both stopped. Hinton brushed past me to tender the service; he was younger than I, his gallantry was boundless and the present appeal to it was made by one of singularly prepossessing appearance. It was not a common face that smiled down on us, showing a long row of dazzling teeth, a white, sensitive nose, an intelligent forehead, from which the hair was drawn back assertively, and a pair of dark gray eyes, capable of anything; not a common figure that stood revealed when the door was opened—all graceful, simply elegant, and dressed with faultless taste, and the first question that mystified me was how such a lady came to be traveling alone in a third-class carriage and at this early hour.

She stood at the open door in embarrassment that added a charm to her face. The platform did not extend to this carriage. The depth to the ground was considerable, the step awkward. She put out one neatly-booted foot and drew it back hastily; all the time she kept her hands close in her muff, which made the descent more impracticable. With a faint tinge of color in her pale cheek, and her fine eyes twinkling with vexation, she said:

"May I ask you to help me; I have hurt my hands; they are useless."

In a moment we were on the foot-board, one on each side, helping her to descend. As I glanced along her arm I caught the glimpse of a bluish-black metal inside her sealskin muff. She wore an iron bracelet! Was it an eccentricity of fashion, or a surgical appliance, I wondered.

It was to Hinton she smiled her sweetest acknowledgment, and when in parting she bowed to us both, her eyes rested last and longest upon him.

We stood by the open door watching her as she walked up to the platform with an elastic, graceful step.

"Now then, sir, are you going on?" called the guard, with his whistle raised.

At that moment the young lady turned round, and seeing us still standing by the door, smiled bewitchingly, made a short step forward, turned again and stopped, fixing her eyes on Hinton, who was scarlet to the roots of his hair. It was an invitation that my fiery young friend was not slow to accept.

"I shall come on by the next train, Jack," said he, and started at once to rejoin the fascinating lady.

The guard blew his whistle, and I stepped up mechanically into the carriage, closing the door, and never losing sight of my friend and the lady with the iron bracelet. He had his hat off, and was speaking to her as the train whisked me by. They were both so pleasantly occupied with each other that they took no notice of me. I continued to watch them until the train was out of the station, and then I sat down and glanced around to see if there were any other occupants of the compartment.

Good God! what was this at the other end, half on the ground, half on the seat. I started to my feet and drew near the dark mass, with growing terror as I perceived that it was a police officer who lay huddled together with one shoulder on the seat, and his head dropped down upon his breast. His helmet had dropped off; when I raised his face I found it perfectly colorless; only the white of his eyes was visible through the half-closed lids. There was no sign of any wound, no blood upon his hands or face. A white hand-

kerchief lay upon the seat. It seemed to me that the man had suddenly fainted. I tried to raise him from his supine position, but the dead weight, he was a large man, was more than I could manage.

The carriage was open from end to end—the compartments divided simply by backs. There was only one other traveler in the carriage—a navy in the next but one compartment, with his back to me, and his head was out of the window that the short black pipe he was smoking might not be objected to.

"Come over and help me," I called. "There's a policeman lying here—dead."

"Nought me," he said, his face settling with an expression of dogged objection. "I ain't goin' to have no truck wi' no dead policemen, no fear. I'm a poor man, I am, and they'd have me off to the station 'us soon's look at me if I get messin' myself up in that job, no fear," and with that he turned his back on me and sat down in an attitude of determined neutrality.

I made what effort I could to restore life to the dead man, to call the attention of the guard, to rouse up the navy to a sense of humanity, but all to no purpose. The train was express to London, and alone with my ghastly fellow-passenger I had to await the end of the journey.

As the train ran into the terminus I called loudly to a porter on the platform. It took the fellow a couple of minutes to overcome his astonishment. Then he did as I bade him and ran off for assistance. Three minutes more passed before he returned with a couple of policemen. By that time the navy with a pick and shovel under his arm had staggered off, and escaped the perils that attend the poor man in such circumstances.

While they were getting the dead man on to the platform the inspector came over. After he had heard my brief explanation he took out his notebook and pencil, saying he must have my name and address. I gave them, and added that I was to be found during the day at Guy's Hospital.

"If you are a medical gentleman you may perhaps be able to tell the cause of death."

"Heart disease, I should say."

"Where did you get in, sir?"

"Chorley."

"Was there anyone in the compartment besides yourself?"

"No."

"Anyone get out there?"

"A lady."

"Did she say anything about this?"

"No."

"There was no one else in the carriage?" he asked.

"There was a navy in the third compartment." I explained his behavior. The inspector smiled.

"He was right. I should have had to detain him. That would have been the loss of a day's wages, perhaps—couldn't let him off with his name and address. However, there's no sign of violence, and most likely what you say about heart disease is right. That will do, sir, thank you. I expect you will be summoned to attend the inquest."

The platform was empty; the ticket collector had come up again to satisfy his curiosity. As I was going away he said: "Your ticket, sir."

I gave him my ticket; as I turned the corner by the barrier I saw him showing it to the inspector.

My friend Hinton, on coming up to the lady with the iron bracelet, said:

"I have ventured to follow you with the hope that I may continue my assistance—your disabled hand—"

"It is precisely for that reason that I found courage to—to look back," she said. "I felt sure that you would not misunderstand my motive."

"Only tell me how I may serve you."

"I am ashamed to tell you that I have no ticket and I cannot get at my purse," she explained, blushing and smiling at the same time, "and if you would kindly get me some sort of conveyance—"

Hinton paid her fare; she said she came from Overbury—gave up his own unused ticket and opened the door of a fly that stood outside the station. When she was seated she drew herself to the side, holding her winsome head a little on one side and smiling an invitation. Hinton took the vacant place by her side in a twinkling.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked.

"Where are you going?" she asked in reply.

"I have to go to the city."

"Then I want to go to the city, too."

"City," said Hinton to the driver.

"I must show you something," she said, when the fly was rattling along. She raised her muff from her knees and added: "Slip my muff up my arm."

"I shall not hurt your hands?" he asked, with tender anxiety.

She laughed and shook her head.

Then, very gently, he moved her muff and, uncovering her hands, started back in horrified astonishment. The small white wrists were manacled together with a pair of iron handcuffs.

"Good God! what does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"Press the spring you see there and I will tell you."

He pressed the spring and the handcuffs dropped off in her lap.

"Late last evening, as I was leaving

a friend's house, I was arrested. The last train to London was gone. I was taken to an inn and confined there. This morning the policeman put those things on my wrists and led me to the railway station. In the carriage where you found me the policeman fell asleep; when we stopped at that station I saw my chance to escape and, thanks to your help, I am here."

"But why were you arrested?" asked Hinton, in wonder.

"Oh, I cannot tell you that," she replied, covering her face with her hands; "not yet later on, if I may hope to gain your friendship and confidence. I may unburden my heart of its secret. But look in my face"—she uncovered it and, laying her hand on Hinton's arm, offered her charming face to his examination. "Look and tell me if you can find there the sign of a crime that should be punished with this shame."

Hinton looked in that face and vowed he saw there nothing but suffering, love and innocence.

III.

My gushing young friend had got as far as this in his narrative when the hall porter ushered into our sanctum my old friend Kennet, a clear-headed, far-sighted lawyer.

"Now, you young fellows," he began, brusquely, "I've come to get you out of a mess if I can. I must know all about the affair in which you figured this morning. I'll hear your account first"—he addressed me.

I told him my story as I have written here. His first question surprised me:

"Can you bring any one forward to prove that you got into the train at Chorley, and not at Stevenham?"

After taxing our recollection to the full Hinton and I came to the conclusion that we could not find a witness to prove this. The station-master had closed the ticket-box the moment after giving Hinton his change; the door leading on to the platform was locked when we reached it; at Chorley we had not gone through the booking-office; the guard's van was in front of the train; the porters were on the platform, and we were not seen till the moment when we were helping the lady to descend. Kennet looked grave.

"Now give me your account, Mr. Hinton," said he.

Hinton went over the facts again, stopping where he had stopped before.

"Do you know where the young lady is now?" asked Kennet.

"Yes, but I must decline to tell you until I know your reason for asking."

"My reason for asking! That's simple enough. I wish to save you young fellows from the consequences of a criminal prosecution."

We gasped: "What crime has been committed?"

"Murder," was echoed aghast.

"The handkerchief that lay beside the dead man is found to have been saturated with chloroform."

"Good heavens, Kennet, do you think we carry chloroform with us?"

"You are medical students."

Hinton and I looked at each other in blank bewilderment.

"Of course you don't believe the young lady committed the murder," Kennet said, addressing Hinton.

"How on earth is such a thing possible? She had her wrists handcuffed and a muff on her hands."

"So much the worse for you. The man is murdered and the responsibility lies upon you two young men and that young woman. Of course I believe in your innocence, but that counts for nothing. Your fate will be decided by a jury and not by me. Now what is the evidence that will be laid before them? One of you is found in a third-class carriage with the dead man and gives up a first-class ticket from Stevenham, the station at which the policeman got into the train with his prisoner. The other young man gets the young woman out of the train at Chorley, pays her fare and whisks her out of the way in a fly. A handkerchief saturated with chloroform is found beside the dead man, and you two are medical students. What is the presumption? That you, seeing this attractive young woman put in a third-class carriage by a policeman at Stevenham, got into the same carriage with her. The young woman fascinates you and excites your sympathy. On nearing Chorley the policeman dozes and one of you, intending possibly, only to prolong his sleep, applies chloroform. The effect is more serious than you expected, and while one saves the young lady the other remains with the policeman to use such means of restoring him to life as your practical experience suggests. Well, upon my honor, such evidence as that is bound to convict you. However, you had better let me see this young woman at once. If we can prove her guilt your acquittal is assured."

"Then you shall not see that young lady," cried Hinton, in a fierce fury.

"Good God, sir, if you think I'm going to get out of the difficulty by shifting my responsibility on to the shoulders of a woman you are most damably in error."

"Then you may prepare for twenty years of penal servitude," said Kennet, brutally.

IV.

In all probability he should have got the punishment Kennet prophesied but for an event that never entered into our calculations.

The young lady with the iron bracelet had assured Hinton that in three days or four at the outside she could clear her character if only she was released from reaprehension in the interval. The infatuated young man sent her to his mother at St. Albans with a touching letter that appealed to the old lady's sympathy—of course she regarded her son as faultless in all things. The young lady was treated as an honored guest. The first thing she did was to send telegrams to two friends in London.

When the servant came down in the morning they found the street door, which had been carefully bolted over night, open and the plate gone. Later on they found that the lady with the iron bracelet was missing also.

In the evening a man was arrested on suspicion of having committed the burglary. At the examination I identified him as the navy I had seen in the carriage on the morning of the murder. A phial of chloroform was found in his pocket, and he was recognized by the police as one of a gang who, in conjunction with a young female of fashionable exterior and prepossessing appearance, had been concerned in a series of burglaries for which the "young female" had been apprehended at Stevenham.

The lady with the iron bracelet is still at large, and I trust my friend Hinton may never see her again, for nothing has cured him of his folly in regarding her as the hapless victim of a diabolical conspiracy.

A Bit of History.

History makes many mistakes in the appointment of its titles of distinction. Nothing could be more erroneous than the assumption that the establishment of absolute monarchy in France was the creation of Cardinal Richelieu supplemented by Louis XIV. The credit really belongs to Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip III, king of Spain, and queen of Louis XVII. Louis was induced by the artifice of Richelieu to suspect his consort of complicity in conspiracy. But the queen treated the charge with contempt. The death of the monarch and minister left Anne in undisputed possession of power. She selected Cardinal Mazarin as her minister, whose abilities she made use of without being in danger from his ambition. The minister's unpopularity excited an insurrection to which the Spanish pride of the queen was compelled to submit, but a civil war soon ensued between Anne, her ministers and their adherents on one side and the nobility and citizens on the other. The court secured the services of Turenne, through whose abilities the aristocracy, headed by the great Conde, were defeated, and the nobles and the middle classes were never afterwards able to raise their heads against the royal power until the great revolution of 1789. The queen, mother of Louis XIV, died on Jan. 20, 1666, at the age of 64.

Water in Australia.

Some years ago I ventured to assert in these pages that the future of Australia for the next thirty years rested with the engineers. The recent discoveries of underground rivers in the most arid portions of the continent have given these words a greater significance. The difficulty of Australia has always been the fact that the land will not support a large population. These discoveries of water dispel that fear. It now appears that the volumes of rain which fall about once in five years over the greater part of the Australian continent, covering with floods the island which for four years previously have not known more moisture than might be given in England by a good fall of dew, find their way through the porous soils into channels and chambers beneath the surface, where, at a depth of one or two thousand feet, they provide an inexhaustible store of the most precious commodity known to the Australian squatter. It is impossible to say at present how the use of these underground supplies of water may change the face of the Australian continent. The overflow from one bore, at a place called Kerriree, has already cut a channel of several feet in depth through the sand, and now forms a permanent river of several miles in length in what used to be an absolutely waterless country. It is only to be expected that as more water is brought to the surface, the clouds will take up more moisture by evaporation and the rainfall will increase. Then, with regular rainfall and inexhaustible tanks and creeks, even the Australian squatter might begin to be contented.

Coal at Hand.

A man named Shafer, living near Wilkesbary, probably has the deepest cellar in Philadelphia. The bottom fell out of his old cellar a few days ago, and his house now stands over an old mine. While there may be some difficulty in getting the coal into his kitchen he cannot complain of scarcity of fuel.

Prayer strengthens the spirit for its conflict with the temptation of the world, helps in keeping the eyes of the soul open to the spiritual ventures that we are in danger of forgetting in the midst of the toil and turmoil of this life, and sharpens the spiritual and moral instincts, that often get rusty for want of use.

THE SPIDER'S WEB.

An Interesting Account of How it is Woven.

Prof. Claves has recently been telling the readers of the *Swiss Cross* how that wonderful little animal, the spider, spins her web. It is all so full of interest, that we quote freely from it:

First, our spider begins to draw from out her spinneret a cord of as many of these strands as seem to her good, and fastens it to some leaf or twig, then runs on another leaf, spinning all the while; fastens again to that, and to another and another, continuing until a circle is formed inclosing as large a space as she designs for the outer boundary of her web. Then she passes back and forth over her work, adding fresh threads; and strengthening this outer line, which she secures to every possible object.

Finally she stops, fastens her thread with special care and begins to run around the circle, spinning as she goes; but now carrying her fresh thread carefully raised upon one hind foot, thus keeping it from touching the older strands and becoming glued to them. When half way round she stops, pulls her thread tight, fastens it very strongly and a firm line is drawn straight across the centre of the circle. She runs down this centre line to the middle, fastens another thread to it there, carries it to a new point on the outer edge, fastens it and now we see that she is engaged in making those lines in the web that look so like the spokes of a wheel. She repeats this operation again and again, until all the radii or spokes are formed.

When they are done she carefully tests each thread by pulling, to make sure that it is firm and strong, and, if one proves unsatisfactory, she either strengthens or remakes it altogether. Now that the main lines are built, our spider goes once more to the centre point and begins to spin again—this time in circles—fastening to each radius as she passes. At first these circles, or more correctly spirals, are placed quite close together, but she leaves ever a wider and wider space between as she approaches the outer edge. The outer circle and the radii were spun of a silk which becomes dry directly after leaving the spider's body, is of great strength and very firm; but these spirals are formed of a substance which differs essentially. When first drawn from the spinneret it is extremely glutinous—a most important property, as by this it is enabled to adhere tenaciously to the radii—and it is, besides, so highly elastic as to be capable of being pulled far out of place without breaking.

When the spirals are finished, the spider returns again to the centre and proceeds to bite off the points of all the radii close to the first encircling line, by which she must increase the elasticity of her web. It is in or beneath this central opening that the spider usually sits and watches for the coming of her prey. But while these circular creations are perhaps the most beautiful, they are by no means the only cobwebs.

You have probably seen, or rather felt, the long gossamer threads that sometimes draw across the face as one walks beneath the trees on a summer evening. At certain seasons they are very numerous. They float in the air, they fall upon the grass, they gather on the trees. These are all cobwebs. They are made by spiders, and in a manner so marvelous as to be almost incredible. The spider spins the silk from its spinneret, pushing it off into the air. It is so light that it does not fall. It rather rises in the air. It grows a longer and longer thread; until it is carried by some current against an object, often at a surprising distance, to which it attaches itself. The spider's slack rope is quite strong enough to serve the little spinner as a bridge, over which it can pass at its pleasure. Indeed, in the tropics spiders' webs are found of gigantic size, sometimes even spanning streams; and of a strength so great that humming birds are caught and held by them, as flies are by the cobwebs of our own land.

Look Before You Drink.

The shocking mistake made by a Reading woman who swallowed crystallized white vitriol under the impression that it was a dose of epsom salts, has many parallels. Hardly a week passes that the newspapers do not chronicle some blunder of the kind, and yet people continue to do the very thing they know by the experience of others to be fatally dangerous. To take medicine without looking at the label on the bottle, or to drink from a bottle or a glass in a dark room, is like trifling with death, and while some are fortunate enough to avoid a fatal error many become victims of their own heedlessness. Unfortunately the sufferers fail to serve as a warning to their careless fellow creatures. Like the woman who continues to kindle her fire with kerosene because nothing has yet happened to her, the people who swallow supposed medicine blindly will not be frightened by accidents to others because they have never had anything happen to them, and have an idea that escape from the perils of the past furnishes immunity from the dangers of the present.

Gobelin blue is again very popular. It is especially adapted to spirituelle girls.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

There is a vast deal of vital air in loving words.

We shall escape the uphill by never turning back.

People's intentions can only be decided from their conduct.

He who is proud of his work should be ashamed of himself.

Wisdom adorneth riches and casteth a shadow over poverty.

Your salvation is His business; His service your business.

As you learn, teach; as you get, give; as you receive, distribute.

One is never more on trial than in the moment of excessive good fortune.

It should be used as a shield for defence, rather than as a sword to wound others.

I have never found a thorough, pervading, enduring morality but in those who feared God.

Only what we have wrought into our character during life can we take with us into the other world.

When a bad cause is backed by great impudence, it is often believed to be the boldness of innocence.

To obtain perfection it is not necessary to do singular things, but to do common things singularly well.

Those who bestow too much application on trifling things become generally incapable of great ones.

The emptiness of all things, from politics to pastimes, is never so striking to us as when we fall in them.

Old age is the night of life, as night is the old age all day. Still, night is full of magnificence and for many it is more brilliant than the day.

Nothing betrays a greater ignorance of the world, the human heart and of good manners than the assumption of a self-sufficient, dictatorial tone of conversation.

Those who endeavor to imitate us like much better than those who try to equal us. Imitation is a sign of esteem, but competition of envy.

Riches without charity are nothing worth; they are blessings to him only who makes them a blessing to others.

What is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? It is the greatest of all evils; for it is folly, vice and madness, without tuition or restraint.

Unless a variety of opinions are laid before us, we have no opportunity of selection; the purity of god cannot be certain by a single specimen.

Wealth is a weak anchor, and glory cannot support a man; this is the law of God, that virtue only is firm, and cannot be shaken by a tempest.

There are moments when Nature throws a kind of heavenly mist and daziness round the soul; would fain make happy.

After we have got all a man's secrets out of him, then we either despise him or pity him, and to be pitied is no better than to be despised.

The mere wants of nature, even when nature is refined by education, are few and simple; but the wants of pride and self-love are insatiable.

Only the few favored by fortune can scale the rock of fame; but there is plenty of other work to be done by the multitude as good and true in its way, if not so enduring.

Such as are still observing upon others are like those who are always abroad at other men's houses, reforming everything there while their own runs to ruin.

We are members of one great body. Nature planted in us a mutual love and fitted us for a social life. We must consider that we were born for the good of the whole.

What the Bible brings to you will depend in a large measure on what you bring to it. You may have a crumb, or a loaf, or a granary full to bursting, just as you choose.

The end of poetry is to please; and the name, we think, is strictly applicable to every metrical composition from which we derive pleasure without any laborious exercise of the understanding.

Many favors which God giveth us ravel out for want of hemming, through our own unthankfulness; for though prayer purchaseth blessings, giving praise doth keep the quiet possession of them.

There is nothing better in this life of ours than the first consciousness of love, the first fluttering of its silken wings, the first rising sound and breath of that wind which is so soon to sweep through the soul, to purify or destroy it.

If we must have a confidant, let us choose one and one only—the most faithful, the most reticent, the one with the most tact and quickness of apprehension. Then let us trust him or her unreservedly, and to one else.

It is undoubtedly the sacred pride and selfishness of our hearts that obstruct much of the bounty of God's hand, in the measures of our grace and the sweet embraces of His love, which we should otherwise find. The more that we let go of ourselves, still the more should we receive of Himself. Oh, foolish we! that refuse so blessed an exchange.

Quaint old Matthew Henry points out that Abraham's slaves which he had gotten in Haran are called "souls." In these times servants are called "hands." A world of difference.

Hands—four fingers and a thumb to get as much out of as one can, and to put as little into, from the master's standpoint. And from the servants'—to pick up as much as they can and to give as little back again. When master and man can find in each other's relationship a soul—then only are the work and wages alike right.

Hope is often but a trifler, robbing us of energies and withdrawing us from our work that we may dream. But Christian hope is an armed warrior, grave and calm, ready for conflict, because assured of victory. Our hope, if it be perfect, will "teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight," will put vigor into us for service; will teach us scorn of all things foul and worldly. It will be as wings to lift us above cares and sorrows, and as weights to keep us down to common tasks. It will make us strong to do and patient to suffer, wise to understand and willing to accept all the will of our Father God.