

## Walter Gray's Lesson.

"CAN'T afford it, Maria."

"But you might if you would only think so, Walter," pleaded the young wife.

"I can't do it," the husband returned very emphatically. "It would cost ten or twelve shillings at the very lowest, to put up such a gate and the old bars will answer every purpose."

"No they won't, Walter. The neighbor's children very often leave the bars down and the stray cattle come into the garden. We may lose more than the price of the gate in one hour, if a cow should happen to get in while I am away."

"I should like to know who leaves the bars down," said Walter, very threateningly. "The same children might leave the gate open."

"But we can have a gate to close of its own accord, with a weight or a spring," suggested the wife. "John Niles has had a gate put up in his yard."

"But I ain't John Niles, my dear," Walter wished his wife to remember.

"But his family is as large as yours, and his wages are not so high."

"Never mind about that. I tell you I can't afford it—at any rate not at present." And with this Walter started off to his work.

Walter Gray was a young man of about thirty, an industrious mechanic, and had an interesting family. He meant to provide well for those who depended upon him, and in a measure did so. But there were many little comforts of which he felt obliged to deprive them, comforts which at times they really needed, and which in the end might have proved a source of saving. And more, too; it might have added to his own happiness had he felt able to grant these little requests. But he couldn't afford it; at least, so he thought, and whether he thought so with sound judgment the sequel will prove.

The gate which his wife had been so anxious to have put up was needed at the entrance to the garden back of the house, where there was only a short pair of bars. The children often came through there, and sometimes left the way open behind them. In fact there were many ways in which these bars were apt to be let down, and Maria Gray had very often to leave her work to drive out cattle that had got in. It was only by extreme watchfulness on her part that the garden was preserved. She had spoken to her husband several times about it, and he felt he couldn't afford it. She must keep her eyes upon the spot and see that the bars were kept shut.

Only a few days after this Mrs. Gray asked her husband if he was going to hire a pew in the church for the following year, and he told her he didn't think he should.

"But you can hire half of one. We can have half of Mr. Niles' pew for a guinea."

"I can't afford it," was Walter's reply. "I should get no great good from the service anyway."

"Don't say so, husband. Suppose everybody should feel like that. You certainly wouldn't wish to live and bring up your children where there was no religious influence. And if you reap the benefit of good Christian institutions you certainly ought to feel willing to support them."

"So I would be willing, if I could afford it, but I can't."

Mrs. Gray looked very serious, and seemed to hesitate, as though there was a subject upon her mind which she felt delicate about broaching; but it had occupied her thoughts too long and she determined to let it out.

"Walter," said she, a little resolutely, "you have two pounds a week."

"Yes."

"And how much of that does it take to feed us?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I only know that it takes all to feed and clothe us and pay up the interest on the house."

"I haven't had a new dress since last autumn, and I was reckoning up yesterday how much we had spent for the children, and I found it to be only £2 for the last ten months. I have worked over some of Cousin John's clothes for Charles, and Lucinda jumps into Mary's dresses as fast as the latter outgrows them."

"That's all very well," replied Walter, a little testily. "I understand my business and I know just what I can afford and what I can't. While I have payments to make on my house I must economize—I must economize," he repeated very decidedly.

"I would have you economize," returned the wife. "But do not forget that all is not economy which so many call so. I think that to hire half of John Niles' pew would be a great economy in comfort and lasting good. It would be a guinea laid out to good advantage—sure to return a heavy interest to us and our children. And I think

it might be a source of great saving to put a good gate up at the back—"

"Stop!" interrupted Walter with a nervous motion. "You've said enough about this. I know my means."

"Let me say one word," urged Maria. There was an earnestness in her tone that caused her husband to stop and listen. "If you will give me a guinea a week I will agree to furnish all provisions for the household, and clothe myself and children. I will do this for one year. That will leave you seventy pounds with which to clothe yourself and make your payment on the house. On the house we have only to pay twenty pounds, with interest for two years, which will leave you twenty-nine pounds for your clothes and—other expenses."

Walter was on the point of denying this result of the case, but was not sure upon a moment's reflection, that, from his wife's statement, the deduction was correct, so he denied the statement.

"You cannot furnish the food and clothe yourself and children for the sum you have named," he said.

Thereupon Maria sat down and made known a few facts to him that had been hidden within the mysteries of her own housekeeping. She was not long in proving to him that, during the past year, the item of expenditures within said limits have not averaged a guinea a week. Walter said "pooh!" and then added "nonsense!" and then he left the house.

"There must be some mistake," he said to himself after he had got away from the house; and he really believed there was a mistake.

"Have a glass of soda, Bill? Come, Tom, have a glass."

"Don't care if I do," said Tom and Bill. "Have some, Ned?"

And Ned said yes. So the clerk prepared four glasses of soda, for which Walter Gray paid two shillings.

"Let's have a game of 'seven up' for the oysters," said Bill, after the day's work was done.

The game was played, and Walter lost, so he paid five shillings for four oyster suppers—suppers which none of them needed, and which did more hurt than good.

"Have a cigar, Walter?" asked Tom. Walter said yes, and in return paid for four glasses of ale.

One evening they met after work, and Ned proposed they should "toss up" to see who should pay for the grog.

"Come, John—won't you come in?" he said, addressing John Niles who stood by.

"No, I think not," was John's reply.

"You'd better—it's only for the grog—for five, you come in."

"I can't."

"It's no use to ask him," spoke Walter in a rather sarcastic tone. "He don't spend his money in that way."

John's face flushed and his lips trembled but he restrained the biting words which were struggling upon his tongue, and turned and left the shop.

"He's a mean fellow," cried Tom, loud enough for Niles to hear.

"Tight as the bark of a tree," added Walter in a tone equally loud.

John Niles heard the remarks but he did not come back. The four remaining men "tossed up," and the lot fell upon Walter, who paid four shillings for the grog.

Walter started for home about nine o'clock, and on the way was overtaken by Niles.

"Walter," said the latter in a kind but earnest tone, "I want to speak with you—you have wronged me this evening, and I wish you to understand me. For the opinions of Bill Smith or Ned Francis I care not, but I do not wish you to misapprehend me. We live too near together, and I do not wish to lose your good opinion."

"Well, go ahead," returned Walter, who was sensible to the fact that his companion was one of the best and kindest neighbors in the world.

"You said I was mean."

"No, no; 'twas not I that said that."

"Well, you said I was as tight as the bark of a tree."

Walter could not deny this, so John proceeded.

"I refused to join in your little game for three reasons, either one of which should have been sufficient to deter me; first, I had resolved not to indulge in any such games of hazard; second, I did not want any grog, and third, I could not have afforded to pay for five extra suppers if the lot had fallen upon me."

"Couldn't have afforded it?" repeated Walter, with a slight tinge of unbelief in his tone.

"No," returned the other, "I could not. I used to be always ready for any such games, and I thought 'twould be mean to refuse; but I have learned to be better. Let me tell you how I came to see the folly of being afraid to spend my money for nothing. Shall I tell you?"

"Certainly," returned Walter, who already began to see something.

"Well," pursued Niles, "one noon as I was going away from home, my wife asked me for five shillings. She wanted it to buy some cloth with. I asked her if she could not get along without it. I had only fifteen shillings with me, and I hated to let one of them go. She said she really needed it, but if I hadn't the money to spare she could wait. I knew she was disappointed, but I thought she could get along and I went away. That evening I went into the saloon, and we had a fine social time. It cost me just seven-and-a-sixpence. I had paid the money willingly—without a thought of objection—and then I went home. When I entered the hall I heard my wife trying to pacify our oldest child. The little thing had expected a new dress, which had been promised her, and she felt badly because she had not got it."

"Well," urged my wife as the child sobbed in her disappointment. "Papa has not got the money now; but he'll have some by-and-by, and then you shall have a pretty dress. Poor papa has to work hard."

"The words smote me to the heart. I could not afford five shillings to dress my child, but I could afford any amount for the useless entertainment of others. The crown which my needy wife could not get when she asked for it, I paid away almost twice told for nothing; but it taught me a lesson. I opened my eyes, and I have kept them open. On the very next morning I offered my wife the crown, but I could not afford any more for the beer man. I had not dreamed how much I was wasting; but when I stopped up that leak and allowed my funds to flow in the proper channel, I soon found I could afford every reasonable comfort my wife and children needed. So I stick to the principle that has been so beneficial to myself and family. Ah! what's that? there's an animal in your garden."

They had reached the garden fence, and by the dim starlight Walter could see a horned beast trampling among his sweet corn. The bars had either been left down or hooked down and a stray cow had got in. They drove her out and Niles went home. Walter saw that the beast had done considerable damage, but he was not angry, for he had something of more importance to think of. He went and sat down beneath an apple tree and pondered.

"Bless me, if he hasn't put the case down about square!" he said to himself, at the end of some minutes of meditation. "Let me see," he pursued:

"There's five shillings for spirits—four and two pence for ale—four and two pence for soda. And that's within the last three days! Thirteen and four pence! Is it possible! Over twenty-five pounds a year! And yet I can't afford ten shillings for a gate, nor a guinea that my family may receive religious instruction for a year! Walter Gray—I think you had better turn over a new leaf."

And Walter Gray did turn over a new leaf. On the very next day he did two things, thereby astonishing two parties. He had a new gate made for the entrance of the garden, and thereby astonishing his wife; he refused to toss up for the ale, and thereby astonished a crowd of expectant thirsty ones. For a month he pursued this course, and at the expiration of that time, he could fully appreciate the new blessings that were drawing upon him. He discovered that he could afford everything which the comfort of his family demanded, and in arriving at this result he had only to relinquish those things which he really could not afford. It was a wonder to him how he could have been so foolish. When at the end of a year he had paid his note, and had twenty pounds left, he felt at first as though there must be some mistake; but when his wife went over their household expenditures with him and showed him that all they had needed had been paid for, he saw that for years he had been wasting his substance, and depriving himself and loved ones of the comforts they needed—not intentionally, but through the strange mistake that leads thousands in the same course. But he did so no more, for he had learned a lesson that brought happiness and comfort to his loved ones.

Sometimes now even Walter Gray says, "Can't afford it," and he says it very emphatically too. But it is not when his wife or children ask for comfort and joy, or when the needy poor ask for help and charity.

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Original contributions are solicited from all for this department. All contributions, answers, and all matter intended for this department must be addressed to

T. W. SIMPSON, JR.,  
Chiltenham, Pa.

VOL. I.

NO. I.

## 1. Numerical.

The whole composed of eight letters, is a light made of thick wicks covered with wax. The 1, 2, 3, 4, is delusion. The 5, 6, 7, 8, is a gay man.

## 2. Half Square.

A drunkard;  
Hardensome;  
To ally by kindred;  
Certain foreigners;  
Habitations;  
Dye;  
A verb;  
In "Comet."

Carson City, Nev.

"A. L. BERT."

## 3. Transpositions.

1. Transpose a city of Illinois into a "tree."  
2. A "bird," into an "artifice."  
3. A "bird" into, "to cleanse with water."  
4. A "genus of animals," into "a catching of the breath."  
5. An "animal," into "to change."

West Bethel, Me.

"EMULINE BOY."

## 4. Double Acrostic.

A parent; labor; equality.  
Primals down:—To drop bait gently into the water.  
Primals up:—To rob on foot.  
Centrals down:—A girl's name.  
Centrals up:—A girl's name  
Finals down:—The name of the black beetle.  
Finals up:—A kind of scepter.

## 5. Numerical.

The whole composed of nine letters, is a covering for the legs.  
The 1, 2, 3, 4, is a pitcher of waxed leather.  
The 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, is profits.  
Trenton, N. J.

"MAUD."

## 6. Progressive Half Square.

A letter;  
An abbreviation;  
To beat;  
A rope;  
A cur;  
A fish.

West Meriden, Ct.

"GRAHAM."

Answers in two weeks.

## A Novel Match.

JOHN MACKAY, the mining millionaire, has in his employ at Carson, Nevada, an expert named Maurice Hoeflich, who always offered to back his opinions by betting. This annoys Mackay, who does not like to be disputed, and is further fretted by the fact that Hoeflich usually proved to be in the right. One day Hoeflich was playing with an enormous grasshopper. It could jump over twenty feet, and he said:

"I'll ped you fifty dollars, Mr. Mackay, dot you can't find a hopper to pest him."

The rest of the story, as told by the *Appeal*, is as follows: Mackay sent a trusted emissary down to Carson Valley to secure a contestant. The man spent nearly a week catching hoppers, and reported that the best gait any of them had was seventeen feet. He doubted if a bigger jumper could be secured. The next day he arrived with about a dozen hoppers, and Mackay gave them quarters in his room as Vanderbilt would stable his stud. Each had a cigar box to himself, and every morning they were taken out and put through their paces. It was impossible, however, to get one to jump over eighteen feet. Mackay was in despair, but one morning a hopper sniffed at a bottle of ammonia on the table, and immediately jumped thirty feet. Next day Mackay announced to Hoeflich that he was ready for the match. The expert came an hour before the time with his pet hopper. Not finding Mackay in, he noticed the bottle of ammonia. A light broke upon him. Grabbing the bottle, he rushed to a drug store, threw away the ammonia, and ordered it filled with chloroform. Mackay soon arrived with half a dozen mining superintendents whom he had invited to see him have some fun with Hoeflich.

They were hardly seated when Hoeflich came in with the hopper in a cigar box under his arm. "I was a little late, Mr. Mackay, but I'm here milder hopper and der coin."

He laid down the money, which was covered promptly. Mackay got behind somebody and let his hopper sniff at the ammonia bottle, which held Hoeflich's chloroform. Time being called, the hoppers were placed side by side on the piazza, and at the word "go," each was touched on the back with a straw. Hoeflich's entry scored twenty-four feet. Mackay's gave a lazy lurch of some four inches, and, folding its legs, fell fast asleep.

"What miserable little eggs again," said a young housewife, "you really must tell them, Jane, to let the hen set on them a little longer."

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