

The Fireside.

THE MINISTER'S RESIGNATION.

"Let me see," said Miss Eleanor Banks, on the first afternoon of her visit to her aunt at Farmington village, "didn't you write to me last winter that your minister had resigned?"

"I guess perhaps I did," was the reply, in a somewhat absent-minded tone.

"It seems to me that I got the impression from your letter that the resignation did not cause universal regret," suggested the niece, after waiting a moment for her aunt to enlarge upon the theme.

"Maybe you did," said the old lady, who was apparently absorbed in learning how hard it may be for a thread to pass through the eye of a needle.

Presently she added, with the manner of one who, after all, is not quite willing to let the subject drop, "There were some of the people who thought that Mr. Pease had kind of lost his usefulness."

"He had been here a long time, hadn't he?" asked her niece.

"Yes, that was just it. Mr. Pease had been here going on thirty years; and as you might say, we'd got him learned by heart. We always knew what he was going to say next, and it's no use denying that he was getting to be rather dry in the pulpit. I didn't mind it so much myself, but your Uncle Andrew did, and that was worse. The preaching I could stand, but what with that of a Sunday, and Andrew's taking on about it all the rest of the week, I was beginning to get about beat out myself.

"Every now and then somebody would come around and want him to speak to the minister about resigning. Of course, if anything of consequence is to be done in the parish, it is always your Uncle Andrew that has to go ahead with it. They would argue that Mr. Pease was comfortably off, and his wife had property besides, and so it would be no hardship for him to step aside.

"But Andrew couldn't make up his mind to do it, so things went along, with the society fast running to seed, when all of a sudden, and without any help from anybody, the minister did resign.

"Well, I presume a good many felt to rejoice, but I guess nobody was quite so tickled as Andrew. For a few days it seemed as if he could not do enough to show how kind of grateful he was.

"He did the papering and painting that I had been at him about for two years, and he bought a new parlor carpet that I hadn't so much as asked for. Then he took it into his head that we must get up a farewell reception to the minister.

"Well, all the folks seemed to fall in with that idea, and if you'll believe me, they raised a hundred dollars in gold for a parting gift.

"Of course there was a general invitation to the reception, and we had to hold it in the town hall. Well, after we had all shaken hands with the minister and his wife, Andrew came up front and made the presentation speech.

"I do wish you could have heard him! Of course your uncle is gifted in speech, but I guess he surprised himself that night. Yet he didn't say anything but the truth. Mr. Pease had been a faithful minister—one that had visited

the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and been helpful in sickness, and stood by us all in trouble, and tried to comfort us when we buried our dead.

"But it was wonderful the way your Uncle Andrew worked all those good things Mr. Pease had done into his speech. It took hold of us more and more as he went along, until by the time he got through and handed over the hundred dollars in gold to the minister, about everybody in the hall was having a good hard cry.

"As for Mr. Pease, he could hardly speak at first. But when he found his voice I guess what he said made full as much impression as Andrew's talk.

"He said that he had been simply amazed at the feeling that had been manifested, and it led him to think that perhaps he had been hasty in the step he had taken. Perhaps it was his duty, after all, to spend the rest of his days as the pastor of his dear flock. He went on in that way for a while, and finally he asked all those who desired him to withdraw his resignation to rise.

"Well, there were some queer looks went over a good many faces, but in a minute all those that hadn't been standing before got up from their seats.

"There was to have been other exercises after the presentation. Adelaide Tinkham had written a poem appropriate to the occasion as she had expected it to be, but she slipped around to Andrew and told him not to call on her.

"And the choir had been rehearsing a very handsome song for a week, but it was all about parting, and they wouldn't sing it. When they were called on they whispered together for a while, and then announced that they would sing, 'Blest be the tie that binds,' and they requested all present to join.

"Then we partook of refreshments, and the reception broke up."

"So you still have the same minister," said Eleanor, with a smile.

"Why yes, in one sense we do. But, really, Mr. Pease has seemed like a new man ever since. It's wonderful how that reception seemed to freshen him up. He preaches a new sermon almost every Sunday, and the whole parish seems to be alive again. As for your Uncle Andrew, you'd think to hear him talk there was nobody like Mr. Pease. You see, he's bound to stand by that presentation speech. So in one sense, I suppose, we've got our change, after all."—*F. E. C. R. Robbins, in The Youth's Companion.*

MAKE HASTE.

"Some years ago," says Dr. Bonar, "when traveling through Palestine, we were nearly benighted. We had left Hebron in the morning, and had come leisurely along, passing through Bethlehem, and visiting the gardens of Solomon on the way. The sun began to get low ere we caught our first glimpse of Jerusalem, and, on reaching the plain of Rephaim, we had to increase our speed. In a little time the sun set, and we saw a man come out from the Jaffa gate and stand upon a hillock, shouting with all his might, as if forewarning of danger, and gesticulating wildly, as if to call our attention to what he was announcing.

"What is the man saying?" we asked our guide.

"He is shouting, 'Yellah! Yellah!'"

"What does that mean?"

"Come along! Come along!"

"We now found we were about to be shut out, and this messenger had come to warn us that the gate was about to be closed. We made haste, as we did not at all relish the thought of being kept all night outside the walls. We were just in time, no more. We entered, and the gate closed behind us. 'The door was shut (Matt. 25: 10).

"The lesson we learned was 'Make haste!'—a lesson which some of us never forgot. So near being shut out of the earthly Jerusalem! What if it were to be not almost, but altogether shut out of the heavenly city! No time to lose. Too much lost already!"

"A few days after a similar incident occurred, which furnished another lesson. We had been wandering all the afternoon on the Mount of Olives, not heeding the time. But at last we saw the sun going down. We hastened to the nearest gate, on the east side of the city. It was closed. There was no admittance. We hastened round the walls to the other gate, which we knew to be kept open a little longer. When we reached it we found ourselves excluded. The gate was shut. We were told, however, that possibly the gate-keeper might relent and let us in. Alas! the keys had gone to the governor.

"What were we to do? It was suggested that a piece of silver might soften the guard's heart, and bring the keys back again. So we thrust a suitable coin in at the key-hole and waited. In a few minutes the gate opened and we passed in. The bribe had prevailed. But our admission was against law.

"The lesson for us was, 'Be in time.' The gate stands open. The entrance is free. The way is plain. Lose not a moment. Upon one lost moment eternity hinges; and

"It is no trifle to lose eternity."

—*Common People.*

ENCOURAGE THE BOY'S HOBBY.

BY MRS. J. W. WHEELER.

There comes a time in a boy's life when he must have something absorbing to occupy the time spent out of school hours. Something upon which to exhaust that surplus energy which if misdirected brings sorrow and disappointment to his parents.

Some boys take to reading and sports, which are excellent when taken in moderation, but dangerous when carried to excess. I know many of the extreme cases, but two will sufficiently illustrate. One, an eleven-year-old boy reads, reads, reads, from morning until night; his parents encourage him, thinking him wonderfully clever to have read so many books; they buy him all the latest juvenile stories, subscribe liberally to periodicals and keep several library cards in active operation, but they are blind to his best interests; he seldom goes skating, sliding and playing at tops and marbles. He is small for his age, thin and white, and has earned for himself the nick-name of "little old man." His eyesight is becoming defective, and frequently he suffers from headache and indigestion. He is well on the road to invalidism, and we, by which I mean other mothers of the neighborhood, are trying to muster the courage sufficient to broach the matter to the mother of the boy. The other is so absorbed in foot ball, golf, polo, and fencing that he apparently has become lost to everything else; having adopted the ways and language of the professional sporting man, his manners have become extremely ob-

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jectionable, but I am glad to say his parents are waking up to the fact that they have allowed him too free a rein, and a reform is about to be instituted.

The majority of boys, however, turn to collecting, the hoarding instinct being to the all-round boy as natural as breathing. It grows with him; with his first trousers he is content to carry in three pockets only a modest collection, but later, especially upon arriving to the dignity of vest and jacket, with seven additional pockets, the hoarding instinct assumes much vaster proportions.

I wish I had space to enumerate the forty odd articles I found in master ten-year-old's trousers' pockets last night when I brought them down stairs for the "stitch in time." Such queer things! I wondered what he wanted with them, and where he obtained them (probably by barter). The most of them belonged by rights to the ash barrel, but they were the veriest treasures to him, and putting myself in his place, I replaced them every one, and as far as I could remember in their respective pockets.

There were stones among that strange collection, and pieces of glass and buttons; he always has some of these in his pockets; those small enough to carry around for minerals seem to be the hobby of this boy; he is always on the lookout for specimens—the beach in summer is his chief source of supply. He picks them from the coal bin, beautiful iridescent lumps. He never passes an odd or pretty stone; they are washed and polished to a nicety. He long ago braved the terrors of a monumental yard and cultivated the acquaintance of a stone cutter, from whom he obtained some fine marble and granite chips.

I have a strong suspicion that his Christmas jack-knife, which has not been seen for some time, went for a handsome piece of quartz crystal, but as his jack-knife money was given him, and as he is saving up to buy another,

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