

The Fireside.

WHEEL OR WEIGHT.

"Job Evans hez jest been in, complainin' as usual," observed Uncle Eben, leaning over the gate to talk with his neighbor. "He thinks now it might do him good to go down to Floridy in the winter, 'nd he's trying to persuade Marthy 'nd Seth to sell part of the medder lot so's he kin get to go. He sez the doctors don't understand his case, 'nd never have. That's because they all tell Job the same thing — to set to work, 'nd stop thinkin' about his diseases. His health is jest every bit ex good ez Marthy's today, yit you'll never hear her complainin' — no, sir! She hez strength enuff to be a mighty useful woman, 'nd that's all she asks for. 'I'm no better, 'nd no wuss, than I wuz ten years ago,' she sez to me the other day, 'nd ez long ez I kin do my work, I hev'n't time to coddle myself.' Now Job, he's so busy coddlin' himself, he hezn't time to work — there's the difference. 'Nd at the end, whenever it comes, Marthy'll hev something good to show fer every year of her life, 'nd Job — he won't hev nothin' to show but his medicine bottles 'nd hi sailin' old body that's he got to leave behind anyhow. Takin' care of yourself is all very well, if you're doin' somethin' important besides; but takin' care of yourself when your existence is perfectly useless ain't what kin be called a profitable job, to my mind.

"I saw a team goin' by here this mornin' that reminded me powerful of Job, and folks like him. It wuz a big affair fer haulin' stone, 'nd one of the hind wheels hed come off. The driver hed no load, 'nd so he put the wheel on the wagon, to balance the best way he could, 'nd he went along at a snail's pace, scrapin' 'nd rackin', but gettin' along somehow on the road to the blacksmith's. The four wheels wuz all there, you see, but one of them wuz a weight instead of a help. The other three hed to carry it, 'nd wuz thrown all out of gear to do it. It mayn't hev been a very good wheel; but if it hed been on the axle, where it hed ought to be, things would hev been changed fer the better.

"We're all meant to be wheels, not weights. Better to go creakin' on the axle all our days than to give up, 'nd add to the world's load. Keep turnin', keep goin' ahead, no matter of some spokes ain't ez strong as they hed ought to be — that's my philosophy. Ef we we give up, the other wheels hez got to carry us, 'nd our place misses us besides. Ef Job Evans, fer instance, hed been a wheel 'nd not a weight all these years, the whole family would hev been saved from strain 'nd laborin' along ez they've hed to do, in order to carry him ez a dead load. There's Zeph Foster, allers ailin' 'nd frail since he wuz a boy, 'nd yet he's worked his way along, 'nd helped his sister, too, when she wuz left a widder with four children. Them boys wouldn't hev hed an eddication if Zeph hadn't toiled to the limit of his strength, year after year, to help them along. He died before he wuz fifty — yes, but fifty years of bein' useful is worth eighty of bein' a burden. 'Nd the last year of his life, when he couldn't do nothin', how they all did nurse him 'nd look after him 'nd love him! When those that has allers borne their part of the load faithfully hez to be carried fer a while at the end, 'tain't a burden, but a privilege, to do it.

"Tain't only in the fam'ly thet some folks is weights instid of wheels, either. Ef every church member wuz a wheel — my! but the chariot of salvation would go forward, 'nd no mistake. Trouble is, thet most of 'em never make even one turn on the axle. They're jes dead weight, 'nd they're proud of it. They don't b'lieve in 'enthusiasm,' 'nd 'revivals,' 'nd seekin' the lost, 'nd gatherin' in the little children — no, indeed! Thet kinder jolts 'nd disturbs them. What they want is to be carried right along over a smooth road to the gates of heaven, 'nd to pass the time criticisin' the wheels thet do the carryin'. There's Joash Wilkins — he's been in the church ever sence he wuz twenty, 'nd the most of work he's done is to hand the plate. But to hear Joash criticise the minister's sermons, or see him shake his head over Deacon Lawrence's hasty temper, you'd never guess that they were holdin' the church up 'nd takin' it forward, while all he does is to sit in the front pew 'nd complain, 'nd keep folks from jinin' by bein' sech an onpleasant example of discipleship himself.

"Wheel or weight — we've all got to be one or the other. Under the load or on it is the only choice. 'Nd when a man's bent, bound, 'nd determined to be a wheel, he allers helps the world along, no matter how weak he may be in body. Ez fer women — well, there's many a woman that could go to bed as an invalid, if she chose, that does the housework, 'nd brings up the children, 'nd helps in the church, 'nd cheers up her husband when she feels twicet as bad herself, never stops or gives up to the end. Thet kind of woman, to tell the truth, is so common thet we hardly expect anythin' else from the sex. But if they weren't so common — well, the world would stop goin' ahead, that's all," and Uncle ben smiled and nodded at the porch across the road, where a pale-faced mother sat rocking her teething baby.—*Priscilla Leonard, in Epworth Herald.*

HER FATHER'S BUSY DAY.

Everything nowadays must pay tribute to modern business methods. Even a father may consent to his daughter's marriage according to the business code, as the following dialogue indicates:

"Did you call on her father this mornin'?" asked the friend.

"Yes, I did; and my head is whirlin' yet."

"Didn't use violence, did he?"

"Violence! I guess not. I got into his office all right. I had written asking for an appointment, and he at once pulled his watch on me, and said:

"I can give you just seven minutes. Talk fast."

"Well, that rattled me so that I could only stammer.

"Y'ou want to marry my daughter, don't you?" he abruptly asked.

"I said I did.

"Anything else?" he roared.

"That's all, I hastily said.

"He made a hurried memorandum.

"Did you put your request in writing?"

"I told him I hadn't done so.

"How irregular," he snarled, and made another memorandum.

"When?" he yelled.

"When Miss Amy is ready," I replied.

"She says June," he sported, and made another memorandum.

"Where do you want to go on your wedding journey?" he cried.

"Wherever she wants to go," I murmured.

"She's going abroad," he said, and worked away on another memorandum.

"One first-class suite on steamship Adriatic, June 25. I'll order it today. Anything else?" he growled.

"No thank you, sir," I said.

"Then he put out a clammy hand.

"Glad to know you," he said. "Come in again some time when I'm not so busy. That's all. See you in June, I suppose. Good day."

And I found myself gasping outside the door.—*Epworth Herald.*

FILIPINO FUNERALS.

One of the most striking things to be seen on the streets of Manila is a Filipino funeral. If the deceased was wealthy and had hosts of friends, the funeral will be headed by a band playing selections from comic operas. The body of the deceased follows in a hearse covered with black cloth arranged in a grewsome design and drawn by six black ponies, each bedecked with headgear of long black feathers. The hearse will be followed by men on foot wearing knickerbockers and cocked hats, and after them follow innumerable vehicles of every description. If the body is to be interred, the gravediggers will proceed the band, with their tools over their shoulders.

Most Filipino funerals, however, are more pathetic. The father of a few weeks old baby will trot out to the cemetery entirely alone, with the little white coffin balanced well on his head, and if a man had not the price of a vehicle his remains will be carried out on bamboo poles by four Chinamen, and the coffin will be one that has seen service before.

The natives have different ways of burial. Some bodies are put into the ground, while the larger majority are placed in niches in the walls of the cemetery. A slab cemented into the opening of the niche contains a brief biography of the deceased.—*Clipping.*

IT NEVER MISSES.

Here is a very interesting method, clipped from the *Church Progress*, of learning, without being told, the page and line where a certain word appears:

Open a book at random and select a word within the first ten lines and within the tenth word from the end of the line.

Mark the word.

Now double the number of the page and multiply the sum by five.

Then add 20.

Then add the number of the line you have selected.

Then add five.

Then multiply the sum by ten. Add the number of the word in the line.

From this number subtract 250, and the remainder will indicate in the units column the number of the word, in the tens column the number of the line, and the remaining figures the number of the page.

A forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note, torn in two, and burned up, so that it can never be shown against the man.—*H. W. Beecher.*

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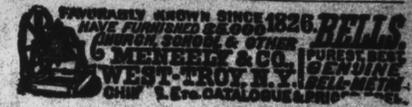
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A CURIOUS TREE.

There is a tree in the West Indies that the natives say "grows in dishes!" It looks like an apple tree. They call it the calabash.

It bears very queer leaves and large white blossoms that grow right from the trunk and larger branches. After the flower comes the fruit, just as our apples or peaches do. But this fruit is in the shape of a gourd, only stronger and much larger, sometimes a foot in diameter.

Now, see what a use the people of that country make of this fruit. The shell is so hard that all sorts of big and little dishes and drinking cups can be carved out of it. Even pots and kettles are made and used over the fire, but of course they cannot last as long as our iron ones. Is not this a serviceable tree? No wonder the natives are proud of it.

ABEAUTIFUL RESOLUTION.

It makes no kind of difference who said it, but some sensible man or woman wrote:

"Let us resolve, first, to cultivate the grace of silence; second, to deem all fault-finding that does no good a sin, and to resolve, when we are ourselves happy, not to poison the atmosphere of our neighbors by calling upon them to remark every painful and disagreeable feature in their daily life; third, to practise the grace and virtue of praise."

Did we ever read anything more appropriate for these times? But we will forget it if we don't take care.