

The Fireside.

COUSINS TO FALSEHOODS.

"Bought your winter's wood yet?" asked the doctor one evening last fall.

"Yes," I replied, "have engaged all I will need."

"From whom?" he asked. Wood just then was an important topic, as several of us were out, and burning chips.

"Benson," I replied.

"Oh!" and the doctor went on down the street laughing as though it were a great joke.

Several other men asked me about my wood, and when I told them Benson was going to haul me some Tuesday every one of them laughed. The only explanation I could get was "wait."

I waited. No wood came Tuesday, none Wednesday, and Thursday we were still burning chips. I met Benson Friday. He had broken his wagon, and was having it fixed, he said. Would be in Saturday with a load, sure. Monday I hunted him up to know why the wood did not come. The baby had been sick with the colic, and he had to go for the doctor just as he was ready to hitch up to haul me the first load, Friday of the next week came, but no wood. I hunted Benson down this time and demanded to know why my wood was still bearing acorns instead of cooking my supper. One of his horses had got into the barbed wire fence and was so lame he could not use it.

Three months later he came in and wanted to know if I did not want to buy some wood. I told him no. His excuses were all good—quite sufficient to keep me hot, but they would not warm up my house. What I wanted was wood, and not reasons why wood could not be hauled.

No man could say Benson told falsehoods. He professed to be a man of his word. Of course, he could not haul wood with a broken wagon, a lame horse, or when the baby had the colic. Yet whenever his promise was mentioned men laughed.

We engaged a washerwoman who promised excellent service. She needed the work. The first week the washing came home on Thursday instead of Wednesday, as promised. There was a good excuse. The next week it came on Friday, and a still better excuse. It dropped back to Thursday for one week, stuck to Friday for three more, then landed on Saturday the fourth. There was a most excellent excuse. The next week our washing did not get home until the week after, but with it came about the best excuse I ever heard. We made inquiries and found it was always thus. We had to make a change.

No one would say that woman was untruthful, yet no one believed her when she made a promise.

One of our merchants promised to order some goods within two days. A week later he confessed he had forgotten it. Another week passed, and this time it was the travelling man who had forgotten it. The third week disclosed the fact that the house was out, and he would have to order from somewhere else. I learned from others that merchant frequently did business that way.

Perhaps he told the truth each time. Nevertheless the goods did not come, and in the future I could never trust him with important business.

Our church wanted a pastor. A minister sent an appointment. A large congregation was disappointed when he did not come. The day after we got a letter saying he had missed his train, but he would be on hand next Sabbath, sure. A fair-sized congregation was disappointed that day. About the middle of the week we received a letter saying he had been called away to conduct a funeral, but desired us to make another appointment for him. We made it, but there were very few of us present that day, and we were not disappointed in the least when he did not come, for we did not expect him. I doubt not he had a good excuse, but now his affidavit would not draw a congregation large enough to sing "Old Hundred."

Excuses are cousins to falsehoods by blood relation, and half-brothers by reputation. They grow on one. When you make one it is easier to make the next one, and the more you have of them the scarcer you are in reliability. The better they are the worse. One is worse than none, and two are much worse than one. They have little moral worth, and no market value.

This is the best rule: Never promise anything but the possible, and then never allow anything but the impossible to prevent you from fulfilling it.—*Selected.*

The INTELLIGENCER'S reliance for extension of its circulation is on its friends, who believe in what it teaches.

THE EVERYDAYNESS OF MOTHERS.

"Peggy?"

Mother's voice had an anxious upward inflection.

"You're dusting very carefully, aren't you, dear?"

"Each minute and unseen part!" responded Peggy, digging into the convolutions of an old-fashioned carved rose with the corner of her dust-cloth.

"For the Gays see everywhere," added mother, innocently capping Peggy's quotation.

"True, if 'tis poetry!" laughed Peggy, merrily. The two were fond of working together, partly because of the novelty of it. Peggy was just home from college, and it had been years since they had had the privilege. In the hurrying, scurrying, summer vacations there had always been too many people to see and too many things to do to have much "hominess," as Peggy called it.

"How many times a year do you have to polish up these atrocious little dust-catchers?" queried Peggy, after a sober minute or two. "And—and all the other things we've been doing this morning?"

"It all has to be—ought to be—done every day," said mother, with a little sigh dedicated to all the three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and the extra one for leap year.

"Done every day!" echoed Peggy, her eyes round with horror or something comically like it. "Done every day!" she repeated, as if the thought were too big for her, and instead of "taking it in," she could only hold it off at arm's length and look at it. "And you mean to tell me you've done it—oh, yes, you have! I know you. You always do what you 'ought to.' Well, mother; all I've got to say is that I've found out at last what I ought to be grateful to you for, and 'tisn't the great big things

—the birthday parties and the Christmas stockings and the new dresses and the times of taking care of me when I was sick, and all those! That's what I always thought of when I set apart a day of thanksgiving—or fasting—to be sorry and thankful in—the big things that make a show! And I am, mother, of course I am. But I tell you now, solemn and true, that they aren't the biggest things! It's the everydayness of the care that you mothers and fathers give us that we ought to thank you for—and love you for—and hug you for and be everlasting grateful for—so there! Done every day! You miserable old carved rose, you! You've taught me one good lesson!"

"Why, Peggy!" ejaculated mother, laughing and shining-eyed under her tousled sweeping-cap. "I'm not used to being kissed in so many spots!"

"You'll have to get used to it!" said Peggy, nodding her head emphatically. "It's something that has to be 'done every day,' like all the rest of it."—*Anna Burnham Bryant, in Congregationalist.*

A DRUNKARD'S FATE.

Said Mr. Gough: "A graduate of one of the universities of Great Britain came to me shaking and trembling. He said he had 'come to me as he would go to a physician.'"

"I said, 'You must stop drinking.'"

"I cannot."

"You will die."

"I am afraid I shall. I give it up? I cannot."

"My wife and two gentlemen were present. I said, 'What good does the drink do you?'"

"No good."

"Why do you drink?"

"I must have it."

"Thinking that, being an educated man, he might give me some ideas, I asked him, 'Will you tell me how you feel before you begin to drink, and afterwards?'"

"I shall never forget. He stood up, and said, 'All I can say is, I *must* have it.'"

"Why?"

"I feel as if there were *insects in my veins!* Oh, it is horrible! horrible! I touch my coat, I touch my hands, and I jump! Oh, I shall go mad! mad! mad! If I could not get it without having a strong tooth drawn from my jaw, bring the instrument and wrench it out; I must have the drink. So I get it. And then I stand still, that I may not disturb its effects. That's what I want; I want relief, and I feel it. Quick! quick! how it sends the blood through my veins! The insects are gone, and I begin to perspire. Yes, I am better, better, better! It's what I want—it's coming, it's coming, it has come to me—relief—like a flash of summer lightning, and it has gone, and I get another."

"Then," said I, "you shall die."

"I am afraid I shall. Can you save me?"

"Not unless you stop drinking."

"I cannot die; I have not offered a prayer to God for sixteen years."

"You must give it up."

"I cannot."

"I said, 'God will help you.'"

"No, he won't."

"I will, said I; 'my wife and I will take care of you for four days, if you will. I have just four days to spare for you.'"

"We took him, though we could get no promise from him. We nursed him night and day. The third afternoon he sat up with me, his hand in mine, and I spoke to him of God, and Christ, and eternity."

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"He said, 'I am a man of some common sense, I believe; and am very well aware that I can never be happy in another world.'"

"He then went out, and cut his throat from ear to ear. Oh, my friends! shall we not try to save our fellowmen from such a fate?"

HOW TO KNOW A LADY.

I have read many articles purporting to show how a lady may be known. In one of these articles it was asserted that "a lady may be known by her boots;" in another, that she may be known by her gloves," "by her neck-wear," etc. A writer who claimed to be a close observer said that if you gave him but a glimpse of a woman's handkerchief he would tell you whether or not the owner was worthy to bear the title of lady.

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