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The "MIRAMICHI ADVANCE" is published as Chatham, Miramichi, N. B., every Thursday morning in time for despatch by the earliest mails of that day.
It is sent to any address in Canada, or the United States, for one year in advance, at the rate of \$1.00 a month per year. The matter, if space is secured by the year, or season, may be changed under arrangements made with the publisher.
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About the House.

LITTLE FEET.
Two little feet so small that both may nestle
In one caressing hand;
Two little feet upon the untired border
Of life's mysterious land;
Dimpled and soft and pink as peach-tree blossoms
In April's fragrant days,
How can they walk among the briary tangles
Edging the world's rough ways?
Ah! who may read the future? For our darling
We crave the blessings sweet,
And pray that He who feeds the crying ravens
Will guide the baby's feet.

TRAINING YOUR BOY.
The second of men's seven ages which may be reckoned as beginning when he puts on long trousers, is the most critical for the boy and the most responsible for the mother, writes a correspondent. During its course the youngster is subjected to many temptations, feels the awakening of many thoughts and ideas before unknown to him and catches his first glimpses of the world's evil. His attitude toward these new factors in existence, be they subjective or objective, is a matter of much greater influence than appears to him at the time. Nor is it an easy matter to point out the true character and relation of the new forces with which he comes in contact. He is impatient of advice or restraint. Having been permitted to toddle unsupported he fancies that he can run alone. It is this fact that makes the mother's task so difficult, and calls for the greatest exercise of tact and loving judgment. There are two general methods, two schools, one may almost say, of treating boys during this age. The more prevalent method, the larger school, is that which shields him from every temptation from every evil association, and from every unrighteous act and thought. Judging it by the large, and in the light of its results it has observed them, I must say that in my opinion it is a failure. It may be successful while it is possible for the treatment itself to continue, but it bears ill fruit later on.

Sooner or later, usually all too soon, the boy must come to the knowledge of the temptations which surround him, not in two forms nor in a score, but in a thousand. If his eyes have not been trained to see clearly, he will be misled by the pleasing exterior, if he knows not the principles on which to base his choice, if he cannot receive and parry subtle thrusts, if he has not been trained as if he were prepared for the battle of life as would have been a knight of old going out to mortal combat clad in mail.

There is no time when a boy's moral fiber and early training are more thoroughly tested than when he goes away to school or college, or when he leaves home to enter some business establishment. There he is certain to meet temptations of all kinds, and he must stand alone, with no reliance but that which his early training has given him. If his home training has been ignorance of all that is unpleasant or evil in its consequences the boy is to be pitied. He is likely to be called a "softy" by his comrades, and he will be no delight known to the hardened youth so great as that of shocking or tormenting or destroying the illusions of a "softy".

They themselves know, perhaps, when to stop, when to draw back, when to turn away, but they do not think to point out the danger line to their untutored companion. It seems so unnecessary. He shrinks back at first, perhaps, but the surface takes the plunge, and when he does he plunges far.

There is an intoxication in first knowledge, he is good or bad, and it comes at first hand. Therein lies the "softy's" peril, for it is marvellously easy for him to go beyond his depth, to lose his bearings, and to govern his gear and safety valve of humanity. It is true, as proved by all experience, that nobody can go to the devil in such a long time as the days of these "softies." Nobody can sow a larger and more deadly crop of evil to the world than boys whose ears have been shielded from the very mention of all that such a sowing involves. The other method of youthful training, which is less in favor now than formerly, consists in encouraging the boy to know the apple of evil by its taste. It is the Spartan method. It says that your strongest foe is the one who survives it will make him stronger for the next contest.

This plan might succeed admirably if it were not for the fact that the boy, that vice is a monster hateful at first view. Unhappily, it is true that the gay trappings of vice are often and attractively attractive to the young. The first slip may not seem to them the appetite for deeper draughts.

It seems to me that the most successful plan to follow is not a combination of these two, but a compromise between them. The boy should know what he must expect, what he must meet in life. Show him to what he should cling and of what he should be wary. Caution him against sin and folly, not commanding, but reasoning. Point out how they will warp his nature and spoil his life. Unfortunately, every community affords living object lessons for such instruction. Remember that he has reached an age of independent intelligence and that your strongest foe lies in appealing to his intelligence.

If you find that he is committing some venial fault, is doing something that he would not have known, do not upbraid him; reason with him—strongly, intelligently, convincingly and reasonably. Some persons may say that this can be of no avail. Their belief is the doctrine that wickedness is inherent, but it is not. If you have done your duty well and have led your boy to have a high and thorough respect for the competence of your judgment and the thoroughness of your own knowledge, you can convince him and direct him and help him over a few of the roughest places in life's roadway.

WHERE FASHION FAILS.

To look her best is every woman's duty, old and young, and the plain and the elderly ought to make the greatest effort. The trouble is that most of us begin by wanting to be in the fashion, and unfortunately the fashion often takes away every chance of bettering our appearance and increases all our defects.

For instance, just now, when the fashion takes its model, as a witty woman has pointed out, "from a feather duster," we are made painfully aware of how few women have beautiful figures and how badly many of us walk. To have a close sheath drawn over our hips and a mass of ruffles and bows and bows and bows cannot take a free step, and then with an aching arm to hold up the awkward thing as we walk, is ruinous to grace or beauty.

CHILDREN'S EYES.
The Danger of Over-Strain Pointed Out—Increase of Myopia.
Of all the ready methods of measuring the health standard of a people, there are few on which reliance can be more safely placed than on the number of those whose vision is impaired. Judged by this rule, the average health of school children is far below what it should be. The use of glasses is not in itself objectionable, but the increasing demand for glasses among those who have hardly passed their first youth is a matter which calls for serious consideration. Much of this mischief is caused by the conditions of school life. Imperfect light, bad print on unsuitable paper, impure atmosphere, faulty ventilation, overheated and crowded school rooms, unwholesome water supply, lack of suitable recreation halls and ground, ill-fitting school furniture and too long continuous study hours are among the most fertile causes of the impairment of the muscular tonicity so indispensable for acute visual efficiency. School children, to be cheerful and healthy, must have plenty of light and good ventilation in their schools; and it is owing to the frequent absence of these that the general health of the children is far below what it should be, and consequently that myopia, or near-sightedness, increases with the attendance of schools. The desks should be arranged so that the light from the windows falls upon them from behind, and a plenty of light, and the windows should be so large that the air can be materially diminished or obstructed by the walls of tall buildings immediately adjoining. The paper of text books should be of pure white or cream white and without glare. They should be clearly printed in plain type, with very black ink. A shiny blackboard is an abhorrence. It is often allowed to become so smooth as to reflect light almost like a mirror, when viewed at certain angles. This glare should be remedied by lifting them from the book and looking at distant objects, or closing them for a few minutes. The school work should be also broken up in ten or fifteen minute periods, with rest breathing or exercises. This prevents the strain of study being too continuous, besides relieving the eyes. Finally, all school children should be examined by a competent oculist, and facts of vision should be remedied by means of glasses, which adopted thus early, may save much trouble in after years. Most people imagine that those who do not require glasses with advancing age have very strong eyes. This, on the contrary, is proof positive of the existence of myopia, although as a rule in such cases, it is hard to convince the patient of the fact.

LITTLE CIVILITIES.
If, as the old saying has it, civility costs nothing, it certainly gains much, both in the way of liking and of kindness; therefore, it seems a great pity that so many people dispense with it in small matters of daily life. There are, no doubt, very few people who are unkind, and to some degree soft-hearted, but there are, on the other hand, many who are, if we may use the term, passively impolite. They do not, that is, commit any overt wrong, but they omit a vast number of little civilities.

A LOST RIVER.
One of the most remarkable freaks of nature occurs in Mexico. It is a river that is not a river. The bed of it lies in a valley between the Rio Grande, and Pecos Rivers. It is not a dead or dried-up stream. It is simply lost. Numerous big tributaries flow into it from the neighboring mountains. Immediately, however, they disappear from sight. Thus, for some reason or another, a river which should be 300-miles in length has no existence which could be proved.

BATTLES AND RAIN.
It is a curious fact—well known, however, to weather experts—yet being firing will generally cause rain, even though the sky was clear before hand. At Waterloo rain came down in torrents. The tremendous concussion shakes the little globules of water which are always present invisibly in the atmosphere together, and so brings them down.

MRS. GRAY'S VISITORS.

If there is a time trying to housekeepers it is the period called spring-cleaning.
Farmer Gray's wife was no exception—good, motherly soul that she was. She was up with the lark day after day, and gave little rest to those working under her supervision. But as paint which never showed signs of soil came with new gloss and even the possibility of dust was removed from her eyes no traces of dust could be found, her eyes brightened, and a happy thought would go flitting through her brain.
"It will be all over, everything ready, before Reuben comes home," she thought.

Reuben was her pride—the boy who, utterly regardless of the clean, sand-floored, would walk boldly in where no other foot dared tread, leaving his imprint in mud to mark his course—the boy for whose future she had woven such wonderful air-castles.
He must be a lawyer, a great man, one whose name she should some day see in the public prints. This seemed to her the height of ambition.
Reuben was coming home—a college graduate — to spend with them his vacation, and then back to the Metropolis to earn fame. Was it any wonder the floors, the walls, the ceilings, must give evidence of their mute delight?
Trudging along at a slow jog-trot, occasionally speaking a word of encouragement to the tired mare, Farmer Gray was nearing home. But a troubled look rested on his face, very different from the bright cheeriness generally found there, and ever and anon his eyes wandered stealthily to a little figure perched on a high seat at his side.

One could see only the face—a pinched, worn little face, from which two great brown eyes peered out, and seemed to take in every blade of grass by the roadside, every leaf upon the trees, as some wonderful heaven-sent vision accorded her.
"You mustn't mind, my dear, if Mrs. Gray seems a little put out like, when she first sees you. It's house-cleaning time, and she don't much like strangers bother her; but she'll soon find out you won't be in the way, and when she sees the roses coming back to your cheeks she'll be happy enough. Only don't let her hear if at first she's a wee bit flustered."
"Oh, I'm sorry you brought me, if she won't like it," answered the child.
"There, there, now! She will like it, I tell you; and when she once sees you, and feels sorry for you, you'll find how kind and good she is," said the farmer, striving, with the remembrance of his own wife, to reassure his sinking heart as he came in sight of his own pasture-land.

He had gone bright and early that morning to the doctor's in the market town, to tell his old friend of the honors his boy had won, and that soon Reuben was coming back to them; and he had looked forward to a warm hand-shake of congratulations, the doctor had added:
"I was thinking of you, wishing for you, and when she once sees you, and feels sorry for you, you'll find how kind and good she is," said the farmer, striving, with the remembrance of his own wife, to reassure his sinking heart as he came in sight of his own pasture-land.

"It's house-cleaning," answered the farmer, and a world of meaning was in the words.
"Both men looked grave, but the doctor spoke again:
"We can't let the girl die if it is. I tell you, Gray, is starting for the country air, for green fields and the music of the birds. Let her go. Mrs. Gray won't turn her out."
So it was decided. But Farmer Gray's "Whom" rang out a little less loud than usual, as he reined up the old horse at his own door; but the doctor's words were ringing in his ears, and it brought her speedily to the door to bid him welcome and see that his boots were fit to tread her spotless floor.

"What have you got there, Seth Gray?" questioned she, in tones stern and sharp. "Company, I declare, and it's house-cleaning!"
"Then, as the farmer tenderly lifted down the girl in his strong arms, she continued:
"A child, I declare! Well, all I can say, Seth Gray—you must stay at home and look after the house."
She turned away, forgetting, in her indignation, even her floors.
"Never you mind," said the farmer, "but you must be sure to sweep and scrub in the large brown eyes, and trembling, while the delicate mouth quivered, she must say, 'The doctor's word is my law, dear.'"
"You'd better show her the spare room," interrupted the shrill tones of the doctor's wife.
"Then, as her husband returned alone from his errand, his wife's wrath broke its bounds.
"Are you mad, Seth Gray, to put any more care on my shoulders at this time? You can take another ride to town to-morrow, and take the child back where she came from. My hands are full enough."
The doctor said he would save her the bed of the stream that wouldn't let her die for the want of trying.
Mrs. Gray said no more, but that evening, when she was washing her face, she remembered the doctor's words, and a little figure, stealing up beside her, whispered: "Let me help you," though she answered, "Such as you can do, my dear, I'll do it all myself, and I'll be there, and soon the little fingers were deftly wiping the smoky dishes, and, with careful haste, putting each in its appointed place.
"Somehow, as the days wore on, Mrs. Gray found she had more time to sit and rest; that, instead of added care, it seemed lessened, while a little fairy-like figure fitted here and there and everywhere, like a burst of sunshine.
House-cleaning was over now; her voice had lost its harshness, her brow, its frown; and as Hope—who had rushed to her own room at the sound of her mother's harsh tones, and who had seen her boy and saw her happy, tear-dimmed eyes, the girl wondered how she could first have regarded the woman with such dread.
Hope's own eyes did not seem so big now; a faint peach-bloom had stolen into her cheeks; her figure had lost its angular lines in rounded curves, and all day a thanksgiving seemed to come bubbling to her lips in song.

INDIAN MAGIC.

Wonderful feat performed before the late Lord Lytton.
The following story of Indian magic was told me by the person to whom it was told by the late Lord Lytton, says a writer. I give it in my own words, for the excellent though humiliating reason that I have mislaid the MSS.
When in India, Lord Lytton often sought out conjurers but never saw any but the usual sorts, such as the mango tree trick and the basket trick. The method in each case is known, and at all events, plausible explanations have been given by Mr. Maskeleyne and other experts. On one occasion Lord Lytton liked something in the looks of the conjurer who was performing in the open space before his house. After the ordinary exhibition his Lordship asked the magician if he could not do something more out of the common way. The man said he would try, and asked for a ring, which Lord Lytton gave him. He then requested an offering to be made of a handful of seeds—some sort was sesame. The name of the other sort my informant did not know. Holding these seeds, he was not to reappear, and he was to go to the corner of the compound. He was to dispose of the seeds in a certain way, in the depths of which he was to throw the ring. All this was done, and then the mage asked Lord Lytton where he would like to see the conjurer reappear, and he answered "in his dispatch box," of which the key was attached to his watch chain, or at all events he had it with him on the spot. The dispatch box was brought out, Lord Lytton opened it and there was the ring. This trick would be easy if the British officer was a confidant of the juggler's, and if he possessed a duplicate key to the dispatch box. In that case he would not throw the ring into the well, but would take it into the house, open the box and insert the ring. But this explanation involves enormous improbabilities, while it is unlikely again, that the conjurer managed to insert a duplicate ring into the dispatch box beforehand. Lord Lytton then asked the juggler if he could repeat the trick in a certain way, and he answered "Yes, my lord, I can do it." Another officer took it, with the seeds, as before, and dropped the ring into the well and the conjurer disappeared. The conjurer's name was Juggler. The conjurer in the pause which followed, something, he said, had gone wrong, and he seemed agitated. Turning to the second officer he asked: "Do you arrange the seeds as I bade you?" "No," said the officer, "I thought that was nonsense, and I threw them away." The juggler seemed horrified. "Do you think I do this by myself?" he said, and, packing up, he departed.

The well was carefully dragged, and at last the lady's ring was brought to the surface. That ring, at least, had certainly been in the water. But had the first ring been as faithfully consigned to the depths? Experts will be of various opinions as to that—yet the hypothesis of confederacy and of a duplicate key to the dispatch box is difficult.

"Why, who's that, mother?" questioned the tall, handsome young man, as he turned his laughing blue eyes on her. "That's my little girl, and she's the little figure fitting among the flowers."
"She's a child! Dad brought me home in house-cleaning. I wasn't over-glad to see her but I think I shall miss her when she goes."
An amused smile overpowered the listener, and he could appreciate that welcome at so inopportune a season as house-cleaning time.
Reuben wondered, as the days lengthened and the weather grew warmer, how had never been so pleasant before.
"Too, began to think he would miss Hope when she went away. Somehow the parlor had lost its air of stiffness, and even had an look of habit, with its fresh flowers in every available receptacle.
"Well, I suppose we have done all we can for Hope," said the farmer one day. "Poor child! she's an orphan, and will have to win her daily bread. But she's got back some of her strength, and the color has found its way back to her face again; and you must be tired of having the care of her"—this with a quizzical expression, while he narrowly watched his wife's face.
"You'll do no such thing, Seth Gray! Just like a man—when the girl's beginning to pick up to whisk her off to the town again. She's learned her ways now, and she's some princess, clad in shining robes, is waiting for Reuben."
"It seemed, as at in the queering of the roof arbor that sat side, she listened, with downcast eyes and a happy, tearful smile, while he told her how her father's home had seemed since she had earned it, and how in solving the enigma, he had discovered his love for her.
"But what will mother say?" asked the sweet voice, for, since Reuben came, she had learned to say "mother," too. "She has such great and wonderful dreams for your future and she who has smiled upon my boyish folly will not frown upon the first wisdom of my manhood."
"So hand in hand, as the sun was sinking in the west, they entered the house together, and he led the shrinking girl to his mother's side.
"We have come to ask your blessing, mother," said Reuben, in his honest, manly tone. "Hope has made me very happy by promising to be my wife."
In mute bewilderment Mrs. Gray looked at them both, a sense of her own folly smiling her as with a sharp sword, and bringing with a crash all her castles to the ground.
But she looked from the calm, resolute face of her son to the sweet fair girl whose hand lay in his, and drawing Hope down, she kissed the young man, and then uttered no word of her disappointment.
Farmer Gray heard the news with a shake of the head and a twinkle of the eye, but he said as to what he had predicted it from the first.
But when the good doctor came, later, to tell them that they had not, as they had supposed, given their son a dowryless bride, but that he, her guardian, represented a snug little fortune for her—though, in his proud and young ambition, Reuben would almost have wished it otherwise—the farmer whispered to his wife:
"Blessings in disguise sometimes come even in houses of sinners," he said, and there is no one in the world so dear to her as Hope, her son's wife, and the little girl, at liberty to roam, bring dust or dirt, without reproach, upon the still spotless floor.

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