

Sunday Reading.

HIS LUCKY BLANK.

Why Tom Amber Made His Resolve that He Would Keep to the Old Way. There was a look of eager expectancy on Tom Amber's handsome face as he came into the half-filled train that morning.

'Something gone wrong, young man, asked a voice in front of him, and with a blush Tom glanced up into the kind eyes of the unpretending stranger he had noticed when he came in.

'Tom was not in the habit of making confidants of strangers, but there was something in his neighbor's face that disarmed suspicion, and he answered politely, 'Well, yes. An acquaintance persuaded me to invest in a little business concern out West, but instead of receiving the big cheque I had been expecting, I have drawn a blank.'

'And yet it may prove the most valuable lesson of your life. 'This is nothing or less than a lottery ticket, called by another name in order to cheat the government, which has excluded all such fraudulent matter from passing through the mails.

'I fail to see why when you have invested your last dollar in it,' returned Tom. 'I think I have paid dearly enough for the privilege of losing that.'

'You forget that you have only yourself to blame for the risk you took,' replied the gentleman gravely. 'You knew that you were running a risk when you invested the five dollars and you had chanced to draw what you call a lucky number, you would have become a party in defrauding others, who, like yourself, have drawn blanks.'

'Had you been able to-day to have put a large sum of money in your pocket, you would have become so infatuated with your success that all honorable means of earning a livelihood would have been abandoned.'

'It is a remarkable thing in regard to little people that it is almost never too early to approach them with religious suggestion,' writes Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D. D., in the October Ladies Home Journal.

'Perhaps you are right,' admitted Tom, looking confused. 'But I never looked upon things in that light.'

'I thought not; I thought not,' said the stranger. 'It was the first departure from the line of right, but if you had been successful, it would not have been the last. If you had found out that you could increase your earnings a hundred fold by chancing on a lucky number, you would never have contented to go back to the slow, old-fashioned but honest way of earning your bread in the sweat of your face.'

'So much the worse for him, poor fellow,' returned the kind-faced man, shaking his head gravely. 'There is nothing that pays so badly in the long run as dishonesty. Remember that. The way of the

transgressor is always hard. There are snares and pitfalls all around him. Even if he chances to escape them, and get money and keep it, do you think he can have any true satisfaction in its possession?' 'No, sir, I don't,' Tom answered earnestly. 'I believe that you mean to live honestly, now, whatever happens,' said the stranger. 'And though we may never meet again, I wish you every success.'

HOW TO KEEP YOUNG.

Avoid the Constant Wear and Tear of Mind by Judicious Use of Time.

If the thousands who take their annual holiday that a few weeks every year judiciously used would keep health of mind and vigour of body till a green old age, what needless misery, what unnecessary pain would be saved.

'Health is the first wealth,' and yet to see how utterly regardless the majority are one would think that health was of no consequence whatever. Then, when too late, what valuable time is spent in bemoaning our lot.

'We easily assume that if God be for us, He will clothe us in purple and enable us to fare sumptuously every day; but He makes great use of bitter herbs in the spread of His providential table. A new zest comes from thir tree use. In this bitter provision we are not to think some strange thing has happened to us and that the whole order of life is to be changed.'

'Forward! Forward!' The way out of the human difficulty is to turn square about; the way out of a providential involution is straight forward. In God's order there is no reversal of the standards; He leads out of any trouble by an advance through.

'What should a Preacher Be? He should stand, as it were, on the watch tower, like the Hebrew prophets, exhorting and reproving, breaking down and building up, boldly rebuking and patiently suffering for the truth's sake, helping to sway the destinies of the nation by uplifted banner of righteousness.

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'Often hast Thou sent me a peace that passed understanding. It came where it had no right to come—on the steps of poverty, down the ladder of humiliations. It came when life was low, when fortune was low, when hope was low.'

'The infant's eyes are full of light waiting to be greeted by the light of the sun as soon as its lids are lifted. The heart of the child is tuned to the things of God, and its strings are ready to become musical so soon as they are touched by a hand that knows how to stir them into resonance. It is a good while before the child and the earth come very close to one another, but on the contrary—Heaven lies about us in our infancy.'

'I am afraid I should not,' Tom admitted, and then as to partially excuse the mistake he had made, he added, 'I am only an errand boy in a firm that does not pay big wages and is slow in advancing its employees, and as I want to make something of myself, I thought I might get a lift in this affair as did my friend who advised me to take the risk. He drew a five hundred dollar prize on the first dollar he invested.'

HUMAN DIFFICULTIES.

The Involutions of Providence All Lead the way to Better Things.

There are troubles which come to us through human perversity; there are others which are Divine visitations; they come to us in the order of Divine Providence rather than from any misstep on our part. Persecution may arise from our adherence to the principles of the Divine Economy; the prophets and martyrs suffered wrong and died at the hands of an evil generation.

God ministers through evil things as well as good. 'Shall evil betell a city and the Lord hath not done it?' In the individual as well as the public life we have to take account of this ministry of evil. In many passages of their lives it is God's will to perfect His people through suffering. He purposely brings them into straight places to test their faith, to their patience or to demonstrate to men the superiority of His grace in the individual soul.

'The route of Moses and the hosts of Israel to the Red Sea was indicated by the Divine finger-points; the pillar of fire and clouds led them into the place of greatest danger. The sea was in front, the armies of Pharaoh were in the rear. We may not wonder that the faith of Moses, for a moment, wavered. If God were on their side, how could they be in so evil a case?'

'The order of God came to Moses: 'Speak to the people that they go forward.' There are times when it is more important to act than to pray; there must be no delay even for the most sacred duties when the order comes from the movement of the column. But how can we move in the face of the deep sea? There is no sea so deep or so broad God cannot dry it and make a way through it for his people.'

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this ethereal inward world to which I belong, will purpose, reason, affection, principle, reign as supreme all animating powers. And I, being as I am, have no part nor lot in that great and terrible wilderness masked with a shimmering mirage of beauty that rings me round. Nay, I am myself more real than anything without. That desert world is a dream for aught I know, but as for me, I live—and oh! for a universal life, that in it I may live and move and have my being!—J. Allanson Pietou. M. A.

FOR A BETTER LAND.

Our Dreams and Longings on Earth Will Not End in Disappointment.

'But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly,'—Heb. xii., 16. In the language of poetry and rhetoric, man is very frequently described as a wanderer, a stranger without a home, and his life on earth is spoken of as a pilgrimage of but a few days, and these few days are said to be as sad as they are brief. But these poetic figures, beautiful as they are, do not contain the whole truth. The children of Israel were wanderers through a desert, but they were not marching along the lines of an aimless pilgrimage. They had not set forth on a peradventure. They started out with a settled purpose. 'They went out to the land of Canaan.'

'The pillar of fire by night and the tremulous cloud by day led them on through devious paths, but by a right way to "a city of habitations." So it is a pilgrimage, it is a pilgrimage with a purpose. And fair and beautiful as the pilgrim path maybe, the heart of man yearns for something better. The writer of this letter to the Hebrews described a group of the men and women of the world's young morning who became heroic by the mighty power of personal faith. All these died in faith, as if they had lived by the power of faith. Of them Paul says, "The world was not worthy." And another characteristic of the Old World saints was this, that long before the revelation of immortality by that great teacher who "brought life and immortality to light," there burned and flamed in the hearts of each of these pilgrims a "desire" for "a better country, that is heavenly."

'Far away back, when the world was young, the gleaming hope of a life beyond the bounds of time are found stirring the souls of men! We talk in these days about instincts that if not substantial arguments were at least freighted with great power. Whence came these instincts of eternal hope? Who set adrift those torches of hope that radiate all the life, that no despair can quench? If, as seems most natural to believe, God has lighted those torches of hope, we may be sure he will take no joy but in their blessed fulfillment. To implant such desires only to disappoint them would be cruel to the utmost bound of cruelty. God is not mocked. Much less will he mock the creatures his hand has made. He who gave us such dreams of a better land will bring us at last to the happy shore.'

'Some tell us that child-piety is not reliable; that churches make a great mistake in receiving children an early age into full communion; and that we must wait until there is a more mature judgement and assured Christian life. However plausible this position may seem, facts are on the side of youthful piety. A more careful, intelligent and observant witness on this point cannot be found than the late Charles Spurgeon, and he gives this remarkable testimony: "Out of a church of 2,700 members, I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child." He who comes at the earliest period of intelligent comprehension to Jesus, and then grows up in the church, rarely backslides. Jesus has his eye upon the children, and if, during the formative period, they are under the right influence and training, the sooner they claim their covenant rights and enjoy the church's fostering care, the better and truer Christians are they likely to become.—Presbyterian Observer.'

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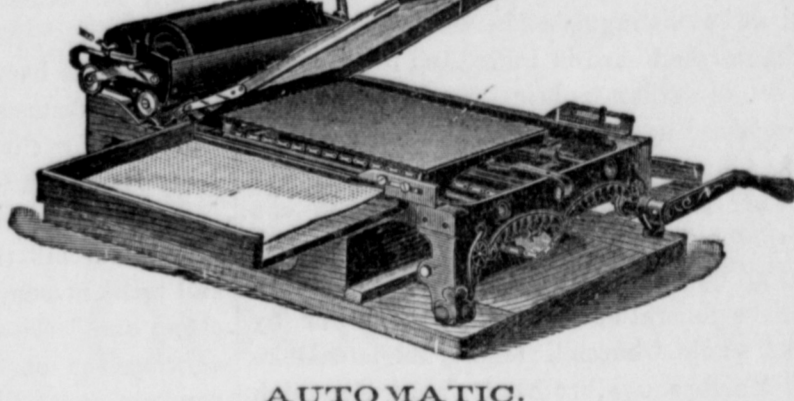
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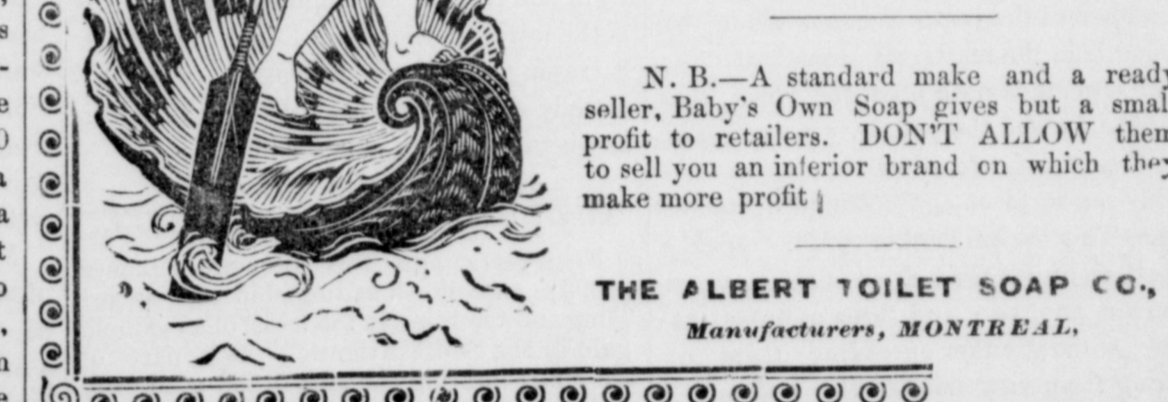
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not with reverent spirit to ponder the lesson that is told in grass and tree and flower, and that feels no benediction in the bright air and the palpitating sky. He may be just to his neighbor, industrious, and virtuous, yet he does not understand the meaning of Jesus in the fields of Galilee pointing to the birds and lilies, and telling of our Father's care.—H. N. Powder.

'To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the last judgement. Familiar as the voice of mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men said but what they thought.—R. W. Emerson.'

'The famous cedars of Lebanon bear little resemblance to our cedars. These famous old monarchs of the forest at Tenet-el-Abd-are zealously guarded by the Algerian government, and their wood is prized for cabinet work.'

'After Victor Hugo died, more than 10,000 isolated verses were found scattered about his room, written on little slips of paper. He used to write incessantly, even while he was dressing himself in the morning.'