

Sunday Reading.

TOUCHING OTHERS.

God never puts his children in a place where it is impossible for them to help others, and often their silent influence is effective far beyond their dreams. The following experience told to a city pastor shows that even when we seem most shut away from chances of doing good we may still be touching other lives with blessing, and advancing our Father's kingdom.

A young man called not long ago upon the pastor of a thriving church in a Western city, and expressed the determination he had reached to follow Christ and acknowledge him before the world. There was so much decision and earnestness in his words and manner that the clergyman wondered what influences had persuaded him to take this important step. Not being able to recall his visitor he asked, 'Have I seen you at the church service recently?'

A slight flush rose to the young man's face.

'No, sir,' he answered. 'It's been over two years since I heard a sermon, and I haven't been into Sunday-school or attended a prayer-meeting since. I was a little boy.'

'You have been reading some helpful book perhaps?' suggested the minister. 'They are often the best preachers, for they have a chance to speak to us when we are most in a mood to listen.'

'No, sir. It wasn't a book that helped me,' replied the young man. He hesitated a moment and then continued, 'I'll tell you what decided me to be a Christian. You see I deliver goods for a grocery near here, and I see the inside of a good many people's homes, and their character too, for that matter. There's one place I go to every day where there's a young woman who has a pretty hard time to all appearances. Her mother's sick, and there's no one to help the girl with the work, and she doesn't look strong either.'

'Well the first thing I noticed was that she never seemed fretful or out of patience. She would have nothing but gentle words for the children even when they were fussing around in the way that would put most folks in a temper directly. I saw her some days when the stove wouldn't draw, and then again when the water-pipes were frozen, and I began to wonder what made her different from other people. I noticed that she always wore a little silver cross at her neck and someone told me what that meant. Then she had a calendar hung out in the kitchen with a scripture verse for every day in the year, and sometimes when things went wrong I saw her turn toward that as if she was looking for help. She kept her Bible, a well-worn one it was too, on the mantel beside the clock—to have it handy, I judged, to pick up in a leisure moment. Often when I came up the steps I heard her singing hymns in a low, earnest sort of voice that made them sound like prayers.'

'No, sir, she never said anything to me about being a Christian, but it wasn't necessary. A man can't see that sort of religion every day and not want it for himself.'

THE BOY WITH THE LIONS' CUBS.

There are Lions More Dangerous Than the Story Ones.

There is an interesting picture before me. An African boy with a good-natured face is holding in his arms two pets pronounced lion's cubs. They look like kittens, and yet peculiar kittens, while the face of one is distorted by an angry snarl. I wonder how long that little fellow safely kept those savage pets, supposing it were a scene from actual life. Savage pets, I say, for of course the old wild-woods, blood-loving, murderous nature is there, and if not stoutly boxed up, those growing beasts would without mercy box up the boy in a fashion not to be desired. How many lion-cubs, though, young people may play with! The worst thing about the matter is that they are inside the human breast. Let me mention three lion-cubs each beginning with 'a.' Take that lion-cub appetite. 'What are you up to?' boy is asked. 'Nothing,' says the boy 'only a little fun I am getting out of this cigarette.' And he puffs and puffs and puffs. By and by a doctor with a very stern countenance bends over a handler of lion-cubs and says the smoker has been hurt. 'Only a little fun am I having,' says a young man sipping beer and then wine and finally his glass of whisky stiff and straight. He too finds he has been toying with the lion-cub appetite, and the cub has grown, the baby has become a big beast, and it has sprung upon him, and its victim is shrieking in a fit of delirium tremens. Another lion-cub is ambition. Appetite

troubles this poor, tempted, beast-beset nature, earlier and oftener than ambition, but this second cub will be heard from. It is nestling in our arms. Everybody knows something of its power, while there are lives in which the full-grown beast ravages among many things fair and hopeful. Ambition; let us see how the dictionary describes this lion cub. 'Ambition, an eager and sometimes an inordinate desire of preferment, honor, superiority or power.' There it is, teeth, claws, and cruel spring! And yet you may not see the lion-face in the desire that a boy or girl may have in some way to outstrip for honor's sake every other boy or girl in an honor-race. Tooth and claw may not seem to be in that desire to fill a young people's society-office that will give a certain power over other young people and for power's sake. Beware! That cub will grow and spring and bite.

Another lion-cub is avarice. And how does the dictionary describe this young beast? 'An excessive or inordinate desire of gain; greediness after wealth; covetousness; cupidity.' Ah, the lion is there! And yet how harmless seems the desire of possessions manifested in a boy's or girl's gettings. So small! just a cub! Look out though. The desire grows. If you notice the Bible's words, nothing is more abhorrent to God than the selfish grasp after the things of this earth, the clutching and hugging. He despises it. He denounces it. And then with the greed of money may go such other sins. A young man wanted money. Looking from his window across the street, he could see into another window, and a man there was counting money. How the first man longed as he looked! It all started in a look. Just a cub! The cub grew. One day, a man was found weltering in his blood, and money was missing. What did it mean! That the cub had become a lion with merciless, deadly spring, and the covetous man had become a robber and a murderer.

Look out for the three lion-cubs whose names begin with a—appetite, ambition, avarice. Ask God to look out for you. Put yourself in His hands. Make Christ your example and Savior. Given to him, governed by him, pure and unselfish will be your life.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF DISCOMFORT.

Everybody has the Power to Create Discomfort for Others.

No one ever felt better, either mentally or physically, for dwelling on his discomforts, and few of us can hear others complaining constantly over trifles without yawning to struggle to keep our own cheerfulness at high-water mark. It may be that some of our girls need the following warning, since, without really being aware of it, they may be radiating discomfort instead of happiness.

Clara is a pretty, pleasant-mannered girl of sixteen, amiable, obliging, and with all the qualities to make her attractive except one. That one is not easily explained in a word, but a wise friend of hers came very near expressing it when he said, 'She radiates discomfort as a stove does heat.'

If Clara is too warm or too cold every one near her knows it, and is made to share her sensations as far as possible. 'Oh, dear! how hot it is!' she will cry. 'You don't know how uncomfortable I am. It doesn't seem as if I could live if I didn't get cooler.' But the change of season brings no relief to Clara's family and friends, for on the first frosty morning she is certain to declare herself 'half-frozen,' and her complaint lasts as long as the cold weather.

One of Clara's headaches is a household affliction. It is not enough that her mother bathes her head with camphor, and her sister brings the smelling-salts, and father and brothers move softly and speak in hushed voices. She is not content unless she is telling someone how she feels, and just where the pain is located. 'You can't imagine how it hurts,' she assures one sympathetic auditor after another, for it is one of Clara's peculiarities to assume that no one but herself has any way of estimating bodily suffering.

When something goes wrong at school, Clara makes haste to share her woes with each of her young friends, and then with the family, from her father down to the

cook who is supporting a consumptive daughter in a Western state, but who nevertheless finds sympathy to spare for Clara's grievances. The aught of her pretty girlish face, with the flush of health and the brightness of youth upon it, should suggest the pleasantest associations, but instead one waits to hear her say, 'Oh, dear! or, 'Isn't it a shame!'

Clara evidently feels that no one suffers from heat or cold or some slight physical ailment as she does. In a sense this is true, for such discomforts gather strength in proportion to the thought that is given them. But still more serious is the fact that this young girl has created about herself an atmosphere of discomfort affecting all who come in contact with her, and making life a little harder and drearier for those she loves most dearly.

TRANSFORMED FAULTS.

How Even Glaring Blemishes may be Made Into Virtues.

In one of the famous collections of rare curios to be found in the museums of New York city there is a very fine specimen of Chinese carving in jade—a tiger crouched ready to spring, with glaring eyeballs of wonderfully natural appearance, that look as though cut from a different material and cunningly set in the animal's head. Yet such is not the case. The unknown artist found in his piece of jade two white spots surrounded by reddish circles—flaws that a less inventive workman might have thought unfitted the material for use.

But he, instead of casting the stone aside as worthless, saw in those blemishes the possibility of two fierce eyes, and straightway set about transforming them into something unique and valuable.

A similar instance is found in the story of an Italian worker in precious stones to whom a gentleman took an onyx to be carved. The stone was a remarkably fine one, perfect in all but one place where it had a peculiar, brownish, mottled appearance. The owner was fearful that this flaw would interfere with the carving of the stone, but the old lapidary smiled and said, 'Leave that to me.' When at last the cutting of the stone was completed, the gentleman was delighted to see upon it the beautiful figure of the goddess Diana standing upon a leopard skin. The blemish of the stone had become its crowning beauty.

These instances bring to us the thought that in some such way as this the faults of our human natures shall, under the direction of the Great Artist, be transformed into graces, traits of character which give to the individual his greatest worth. The hot, hasty temper which is always getting its owner into trouble, once surrendered to the ruling hand of the Master, becomes a powerful force to move things in the right way. The idle disposition is roused from its indolence and becomes genuinely eager for service. The suspicious nature learns to think no evil. The uneasy, exacting character becomes one zealous to accomplish much for others. The impatient one is transformed into gentleness and the proud spirit no longer 'gloried in the things of itself.'

Only under the Master's hand are these transformations possible. Then shall we not hasten to place ourselves where the blemishes of our nature shall be changed into beauty? Shall we not gladly surrender the worthless that it may be made exceedingly precious?

Between the Loads.

The boy who is bound to succeed will do so in spite of unfavorable surroundings. The story of successful men is usually the story of a fight with obstacles. When we find a boy who will do well in the place where he is and will improve every chance to learn, we know that he will rise sooner or later.

George was a farmer's boy; he was obliged to work hard all the summer and could go to school only ten weeks in the year. But he was the best scholar in town at twelve years of age, and was ambitious to go to college. I had an errand with his father one day and found George with him at work filling a cart. When the load was ready the father drove it into the field to unload, and each time George had ten



minutes' rest till the cart returned. No sooner did his father start than George was out of sight. I followed him to a rude shed that he had built of boards beside the barn, and found he had a stand there with his books ready; and for ten minutes he studied with all his mind on the pages before him; then he was back to work like a man till the cart was full again. He was the happiest boy I knew and the best boy to work also. I had no doubt then, that he would get to college somehow.

WON AT LAST.

The Spirit of Love is Bound to win Many Souls to Christ.

The spirit of love, which through all the ages has been associated and identified with our thought of Christ, is a mighty power for winning souls to him. Even the hardest of hearts and the most stubborn of wills have been won over by this gentle influence. A striking instance was related by Rev. E. C. Smyth, medical missionary from Chouping, North China, at the annual meeting of the Missionary Society in London.

Among our members, he says is a woman who was formerly very bad. She had a son, a Christian, with whom she lived alone. She was blind and somewhat infirm, but in one of her fits of temper able and strong enough for anything. The son often prayed to God that his mother might be converted. One night he removed from her room the idol gods, that she might not worship them. She found it out, picked up an axe and struck him over the head, making an ugly wound. What was he to do? We told him he must forgive her and still pray for her. Things went on in the same way for some time, till at last, won by the power of the Spirit, she gave her heart to Christ. She came to us, and after eighteen months' probation was received. At that time, although seventy years old, she was able to repeat twenty hymns, and nearly the whole of the Gospel of St. John. She had never been out of her own village, and had very small feet, yet she traveled fifteen miles to the place of baptism.

Bad Weather.

Children, as well as older people are apt to complain of the weather to count those skies best which smile on their plays and pleasures, and to scowl at the clouds and storms that interfere with them. As we have nothing to do with arranging the weather and cannot have, it is plainly the best way to be satisfied with it, and to be sure that the clouds which trouble us are equally pleasing to somebody else. Do not fret about bad weather! Tom was on the ball team and counted on winning glory for the school in the coming match game. It was to be on Tuesday, or, if Tuesday was rainy, on the next day. There had been a week of fine weather, Tom thought very sunny and warm; and Monday was fair. But during the night it began to rain, and all Tuesday was spoiled for ball playing. Wednesday was like Tuesday, and the match game was not played. Tom could not get over his disappointment. He growled about the rain, was disagreeable in the house and tormented his brothers and sisters till his mother sent him off on an errand to his grandfather's farm.

Tom found his grandfather in his barn looking out on his corn opposite with great pleasure.

'Hallo, Tom!' he said. 'Look at that field! Two days ago the stalks were all curled up; the ground was parched and cracked, and if the dry weather had lasted much longer, the whole crop would have spoiled. Bless God for the rain!'

The Convenient Season.

It is quite customary when the work of the winter is crowding upon us, and some neglected duty pushes itself upon our attention, to say to ourselves, 'I really haven't time for this now. Next summer when I am at leisure I will attend to it.' Yet the summer is nearly over, and how few of those deferred tasks have been performed!

'When I have a convenient season,' is one of the most dangerous phrases to have on the tip of one's tongue. It is, like 'by and by,' almost a synonym for 'never.' The leisure hour that has no claim upon it never arrives. You may wait till you are white-haired, and not come to the point where inclination will fail to urge the postponement of many a duty. The convenient season, after all, is the present. The only time of which you are

sure is now. Begin to-day to do the neglected task instead of putting it off till another season shall bring claims of its own.

Twenty Years of Tooth-ache.

Speaking of peculiar people, I know a woman who has had the tooth-ache for twenty years; right straight along, you see, day and night, week-days, holidays, and Sundays. The total amount of pain she has suffered, if you could condense it into one pang, would kill an elephant in five minutes. The original tooth that the ache started in has rotted out long ago, yet the pain in the jaw stays there just the same. She puts things in her mouth all the while, and so keeps the pain dulled down a bit, but is never rid of it. And it may sound like an odd thing to say, but upon my soul I don't believe she would know what to do with herself without that old familiar tooth-ache. And all because she hadn't the courage to have that tooth out, away back when it first began to trouble her. What I say is literally true; I can give you chapter and verse for it. Tooth-ache or some other sort of ache. Goodness gracious! What a lot of people are pulled and hauled about by needless pain. They may manage to bear it, and do, but it is very, very bad for them.

Here, for example, is a lady who says, 'Although I was able to go about I was constantly in pain.' She didn't lack the courage to take remedies for it; she did everything, until at last—But wait. 'In the early part of 1889,' she explains, 'I began to feel weak and ailing, and wasn't able to make out what ailed me. Without having worked any harder than usual I nevertheless felt weary, tired and languid. Then I felt dull, too, and heavy in mind; I could not rouse myself to take my former interest in things. It was, in a sense, like being under the influence of a narcotic drug. My appetite grew less and less until I ate scarcely anything, and even that seemed to do me no good. There was pain and weight in the chest after it, and a curious feeling of tightness around my sides.'

'My nerves were so upset and I got very little natural rest at night. Instead of arising refreshed and bright, as a person properly does after a good sound sleep, I was even more weary and tired in the morning than on going to bed. All this time there was a foul taste in my mouth, and a general sense of illness and disorder, as you may say, over my whole body. Although I was able to go about I was in constant pain.'

'As you will suppose, I did not undergo all this weakness and suffering without making an effort to obtain relief from it. I tried one thing after another, but received no benefit from any. After having been in this distressing condition for about three years, and nothing to anticipate but a continuance of it, my uncle told me one day of what he had heard of the success of Mother Seigel's Syrup in curing cases of the same kind. In hopes that what the Syrup had done for others it might do for me, I procured a bottle from Mr. Herbert, Chemist, Great James Street, Lissen Grove, and after taking it I felt much better; and when I had taken four bottles I was free once more from disease and pain. Since then I have enjoyed good health, which—as I have assured my friends—I owe to Mother Seigel's Syrup. (Signed) (Miss) L. Smith, 35, Hall Place, Paddington, London, W., January 22nd, 1895.'

The ailment which dragged this intelligent woman through three wretched and painful years was the same that afflicts the vast majority of her sex—indigestion or dyspepsia. Why so many of them have it I will try to show on another occasion. Enough now to say that no malady is capable of producing a greater aggregate of misery, bodily and mental. It is death in life. Very little work, and no real enjoyment at all, that is the verdict people give after an experience of it. It is worse than prolonged tooth-ache, or any mere local pain. And if Mother Seigel's Syrup cures it—as there is plenty of proof to show—why shouldn't we announce the fact everywhere by tongue and pen?

No man likes to be told that he is looking old, but it is a popular joke.



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