

Sunday Reading.

TWO MOTHERS.

'It is too bad that I have to spend so much time in drudgery, when I was once so capable of higher things,' and Mrs. Wilson drew a deep sigh as she hung up the last tea towel before the fire to dry.

Then she went into the dining room and gazed earnestly at her normal school diploma which was framed and occupied a conspicuous place upon the wall.

'To think that I, who was once so well versed in all those 'ologies,' should have turned into a household drudge, and if things go on this way I shall soon be fit for nothing else.'

Again she sighed deeply and drew towards her a large work basket full of stockings, one of which she began to darn. Before very long the door opened and a little girl of ten hurried in, exclaiming in an eager voice:

'Mamma, Miss Webb says I can say a piece at our entertainment if you will find one for me; will you mamma?'

'Find a piece for you after all my hard day's work! I think it is her place to find it, and you can just tell her so with my compliments.'

Little Fanny's face clouded over, and she would have burst into tears, but just then her brother came in, exclaiming:

'Mother, how do you pronounce P-e-g-a-s-u-s? I had five marks taken off my reading for saying Pegas-us; the teacher said it should be Peg-asus.'

'Don't ask me; I've no time to keep up with the new-fashioned pronunciations; and again her sharp answer brought a cloud to her child's brow.

The two children sat down and began to study their lessons, and more than once would have appealed to their mother for help, but were prevented from doing so by the memory of their first repulse.

More than once during the evening Mrs. Wilson drew the same martyr-like sigh, and then would go on with her darning in a most discouragingly unremitting manner.

At about nine o'clock there was a click at the front door, and the two children sprang up to meet their father.

'Frances, guess who has taken the next door house,' he called, while taking off his overcoat in the entry.

'I have no idea,' she said, in the same tone in which she had answered her children. She was in a very aggrieved mood this evening, and considered that her hard day's work exonerated her from any intellectual effort, even that of guessing.

'That sounds as if you did not care, either, but I guess you will when I tell you,' and Mr. Wilson entered the room, his face all aglow with fresh air and the anticipated pleasure of giving his wife a surprise.

'It's your old friend and schoolmate, Ellen Wood, now Mrs. Loder.'

'Ellen Wood!' exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, actually refraining from darning for the space of a whole minute, 'I thought she lived in the oil regions.'

'So they did, but there was no good schools there, and they've sold everything and are coming down here. I suppose her children will go to school with ours.'

'I wonder how many she has, and whether she has had to work as hard as I do.'

'Work! I should think she did! Up there, they could not get any help for love or money. As for the children, she has half a dozen, more or less, I believe.'

Mrs. Wilson tried to resume her darning but she could not make much headway. She was wondering whether Ellen was the same that she used to be; but how could she be with half a dozen children and all the work to do! Work! how it dulled the heart and mind, and unfitted one for enjoyment of any kind. If I am so dried up and withered working for three, what will she be with seven to take care of? and again she drew a sigh which was this time partly for herself and partly for her old friend.

A few days brought all the excitement of the next door moving in; Mrs. Wilson actually left her own work to lend a helping hand, though she said she could not have spared the time for any one but Ellen Wood.

The two friends had some snatches of talk in that first week, but it was not until everything had settled down into its accustomed grooves that Mrs. Wilson had a chance to discover how different her friend's aims and purposes were from her own.

'You don't mean to say that you have time to help the children with their lessons,' she said, when she went in one evening and found Mrs. Loder with a large dictionary before her.

Mrs. Loder laughed.

'This is my recreation, and I don't mean

that my children shall get ahead of me if I can help it.'

'We never had any teacher but mother until we moved here,' said Charlie, a bright boy of eleven.

'How did you ever get time to teach them and do the work, too?' exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, almost out of breath at the idea.

'Simply because I made up my mind it must be done. The children would have grown up in ignorance had I not set aside a certain time every day in which to teach them, and I never allowed anything but sickness to interfere with it.'

'And their teachers all say they have been well taught, said Mrs. Loder, looking up from his newspaper with a proud and happy smile.

'Except in the 'diacritical marks,' and I am studying them up so as to explain them to Charlie.'

'Oh, maybe that was what my Fanny was asking me about one day, and I told her we never had them when we went to school,' said Mrs. Wilson, a little ashamed as she remembered her child's hopeless look at finding that her mother could not or would not help her.

'I am puzzling it all out with the help of these words at the bottom of each page' said Mrs. Loder, pointing to a long line of everyday vowel sounds were all marked with the proper sign.

'I don't think it can be necessary when we never had them, said Mrs. Wilson.

'But just think how useful they are in helping to find the correct pronunciation of a word by the dictionary—and besides there are so many things taught now that we never thought of when we went to school, and I think we ought to try and keep up with the times for our children's sake as well as for our own.'

It was quite a new idea to Mrs. Wilson, who hitherto thought that the children's teachers should be quite sufficient for their education, without any supplementary aid from the worn-out mother at home.

When she went back home that evening she hunted out an old portfolio from the upper shelf of a closet. From it she took a printed newspaper slip containing a list of girls' names; it was the names of her own graduating class some fifteen years back. Yes, there was her own maiden name only third from the top, and there way down past the middle was that of Ellen Wood. There seemed to be some mystery about it that she could not fathom.

'I, only third from the top, and she, nearer the tail than the head; she certainly could not have been born brighter than I; wonder how it is she seems so now, and not a bit worn out in her brains, though she must have worked even harder than I have; and Mrs. Wilson was still pondering the mystery of it when her tired head touched the pillow.

For a week or more she found herself making a profound study of her old friend and schoolmate, and at last, when the problem vexed her more and more, she carried it to the fountain-head for solution.

'Ellen,' she burst forth one day, when the two had an unlooked-for opportunity for a confidential talk, 'I wish I knew how it is that you have improved since you went to school; I mean, you were not near the head and I always was, and now, you seem to have gone away ahead of me somehow.'

'When my husband and I moved to the oil regions, I knew I would be cut off from a great many ways of improving myself, and I made up my mind to make the most of every means I could possibly lay hold of to keep me from getting rusty.'

'But what possible means could there be away up there?' asked Mrs. Wilson, with incredulous interest.

'There are always some means, if you are on the look out for them. I took with me the astronomy we used at school and which I hated there, because we had such a dull teacher; but I went all over it with the stars for my teachers and found it delightful. Then I studied little pieces of poetry over the wash tub and ironing table, and by the time the children came I had quite a little store laid by for their amusement and instruction. When I began to teach the children I sent for a good educational jour-

nal, bristling with ideas connected with the 'new education.'

'I don't see how you ever did it,' said Mrs. Wilson in a discouraged tone which her friend's ear was quick enough to detect. 'Here am I, who used to be considered smart at school, degenerated into a household drudge, and I am afraid my children will soon know more than I do.'

'It seems to me like this,' said her friend musingly, 'I never felt that I had what might be called a talent, but whatever I had I used it and used it, and it grew and grew, and I think it is always so, but if a talent is allowed to lie idle, it just shrivels up for want of use.'

'As mine has,' said Mrs. Wilson, in the same discouraged tone.

'My dear Frances, don't talk that way; you are young yet, and can begin over again is you only will; if you will just make up your mind to it, I will be glad to do anything I can to help you.'

'Will you, really?' said Mrs. Wilson, for there was such an earnest cordiality about her friend's offer that she could not take offence at it.

'Yes, indeed, I really miss the children at the time I used to teach them, and if you could come in here from ten to eleven, when the younger children are asleep, we might read some improving book together and study up the 'new education' which is always progressing and never at a standstill.'

'Do you really think I can spare a whole hour every day, with all I have to do?'

'It all depends on whether you make up your mind to it and arrange your work accordingly,' answered Mrs. Loder with the calm assurance of her own experience.

'Then I mean to try it,' answered Mrs. Wilson in a determined tone; and try it she did, and with such success that the children found her quite a different mother when they appealed to her for help in the evening.

Her mind seemed suddenly to have awakened from the half-torpid state in which she allowed it to fall, and she soon found that the hour spent under the kindling influence of Mrs. Loder's cheerfulness brightened up the whole day for her.

And who can doubt that her own cheerfulness affected that of every member of the little household? And that the talent, no longer hid in a napkin, should soon begin to resume some of its original lustre? —M. G. Connell, in New York 'Observer.'

THE BOTTLE OF WINE.

Why a Little Child Resolved Never to Touch Liquor Again.

I want to tell you about something which will help us all to realize better what is the use of signing the pledge or joining the Loyal Temperance Legion. I know some of you think that it does not signify much, but little Janie W—— found that it did.

She is the daughter of a poor blacksmith who lives near my home, and her mother died last year, so Janie became a comfort to her father, and learned to keep house cleverly. When Christmas drew near John W—— went to pay his account at the grocer's, and the shopkeeper was so pleased at getting the money promptly and honestly that he gave John a present of a bottle of wine. The blacksmith did not care much for spirits, but he carried home the bottle and placed it in the cupboard. Some days later John returned to his house after a hard spell of work and called to his little girl, who generally met him at the door; but no Janie answered. The fire had gone out, and everything looked dreary and deserted.

Poor John searched the kitchen all in vain, and then turned to go upstairs, wondering where the child could be. Then a cry of horror came from his lips, for there lay Janie senseless and helpless, her breathing heavy, her limbs quite powerless. The father lifted her in his arms and carried her to bed; he poured water on her forehead, and tried every means to restore her to life.

By this time his sons had come in, and he was just going to send for the doctor when Janie's eyes opened and her lips moved.

'Thank God!' cried John, 'she won't



die now. What happened to you, my darling?'

Janie could not speak for some moments, but at last she whispered, 'The bottle, father, the bottle poisoned me!'

John drew back with a shudder; his little girl had been intoxicated, not ill!

She had found the wine when preparing supper, and tasted it, as children will taste anything strange. Then, being thirsty, she took a good drink, and soon lost consciousness.

'I'll never let another drop of liquor into my house as long as I live!' cried John, and I hope he has kept his word. No wonder he was shocked at seeing what real poison alcohol is, by its effects on his child.

Now I want you to notice some things about Janie's state when John found her. First, she could not come to her father, even though he called her. Did you ever see a drunken man or woman yet who was on the way to our Heavenly Father? Does not every step towards the public-house and every glass of liquor bear such people further away from Him, and nearer to the great enemy of us all, who loves to see men drown themselves in destruction and perdition?

Second, she could not hear her father. I have read of a man who was in a house on fire, and might have escaped, but, though his friend called again and again, he never heard; he was quite drunk, and perished in the flames. Do you remember little Samuel, who caught the sound of God's voice so quickly as he lay on his bed and said, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth?' I am sure when people deaden their ears by drink they cannot hear the voice of our Lord, and, what is still sadder they do not care to listen to it. Satan has caught them in his net, and though you may break through its fine meshes easily in youth, you will find them grow stronger and stronger, like great ropes at last, if you do not free yourselves at once and forever from the habit of taking spirits, which fastens the first knot.

Third, Janie could not see her father. God says, 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth,' but those who become slaves to drink bend their eyes downward, not upward. Their steps are so unsteady that they have to catch their feet, and they shuffle along, with stooping back and hanging head, until they fall down helpless, and sink into stupor. Jesus says: 'The light—or lamp—of the body is the eye; if we put out that lamp "how great is the darkness," (Matt. 6: 22, 23). Dear children, do not risk the step which may lead to foolishness, deafness, blindness. Let your ears be open to hear what words of love our Father will speak, and your eyes bright and clear, gazing right up towards heaven, that happy home in which no unclean thing can enter (Rev. 21: 27; Eph. 5: 18).

I think Janie learned by her experience how dangerous it is to meddle with poison. Will you not take the warning which her story ought to convey?—The Christian,

USES FOR RATTLESNAKE SKINS.

A Pennsylvania Factory Working on a Supply Said to be Inexhaustible.

Down at West Pike, on Pine Creek in Pennsylvania, is the only factory of its kind in the country. There slippers, neckties, belts, and bicycle caps are made from rattlesnake skins, and next season waistcoats will be turned out from the same material.

The firm had been making horsehide gloves and mittens for motormen and railroad men for several years, and last spring it began to utilize rattle skins, for which there was no market. The skins come to the factory salted and with the heads cut off. The operatives will not touch a skin that is not free from every scrap of the head in which the poisonous fangs are concealed. Sometimes the rattles are still attached to the tail. The skins are tanned and scraped, the operation requiring thirty days. The operation removes all the disagreeable odor of the raw skin and brings out the brightness of the black and yellow mottle.

Two men and three girls are employed in the work, and by the 1st of November the supply of skins on hand will be worked up. The raw skins come from the northern tier of Pennsylvania counties, from the Lake George region, Colorado, Wyoming and Michigan. The skins bring from 25 cents to \$1.50 each, according to size, those of the black and male being the most valuable. The biggest skin received this season measured seven feet one inch. That big rattler was killed on Phoenix Run in Potter county, and made music with a string of twenty-six rattles. The rattles

are converted into scarf-pins and sold at fancy prices. Orders for the output of the factory have been received from nearly every big city in the United States. The supply of rattlesnakes is practically inexhaustible, as they are found in large numbers in a dozen States and multiply rapidly.

Pretty to Look at; Hard to do;

Poems have been written about it and pictures painted of it. I mean of cutting hay. It's a pretty sight to see—a dozen men swinging their scythes and keeping step and time as they lay low the tall grass but it is one thing to see the spectacle from under the shade of a big tree and quite another to swing one of those scythes in the hot sun. It is a hard job, and puts a strain on every bone and muscle of the man who does a day's work at it. No wonder then that once in a while we should hear such a story as this:—

'In the summer of 1889,' says a well-known market gardener of Cheshire, 'whilst cutting hay I overwrought myself; and from a strong, healthy man I began to feel weak and easily tired—my work being a burden to me. My appetite fell off, and I had no relish for food of any kind. After meals I had fulness and pain at my chest, also a gnawing, grinding pain at the pit of my stomach. I was constantly belching up wind and felt so uncomfortable that I got no proper sleep at night; and in the morning I felt more tired than when I went to bed.'

'Then I had a dreadful sickening pain which affected my spine from top to bottom. When working or stooping the pain was unbearable. Even when I lay on my back I got no relief from it; in fact it was worse if anything.'

'I kept at my work, but it was a struggle to do it. Being in constant pain I felt as miserable as a man can well feel. Three doctors attended me (time and time), and I took all sorts of medicines, but I got no more than temporary relief from them.'

'The last doctor whom I consulted said I had indigestion of the spine, and that there was no cure for it. He said I should have it as long as I lived. In much suffering I continued up to March of last year (1893), when I made up my mind to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, which I had heard of by means of a book that was sent me from Lewis's in Manchester. "I got the Syrup from Messrs C. Carrington and Sons, Limited, The Stores, Heaton Lane, Stockport. After using one bottle I felt much relief. My appetite was better, and my food agreed with me. I kept on with it, and in five months was strong and well as ever—the pain in my spine having entirely left me. Since then I have had good health and enjoy my meals. You can make this statement public if you think proper. (Signed) James Chantler, Outwood, Handforth, Cheshire, September 21st, 1894.'

The human body is like a big steel spring; it will stand a certain amount of pressure and no more. Beyond that it breaks. Our good friend, Mr. Chantler—to whom we are obliged for his frank letter—happened to put on that extra pressure during the toilsome, hay-cutting season. Indigestion and dyspepsia, with resulting nervous prostration, set in. The symptom which the doctor called indigestion of the spine, was one of these results. The spine contains the great nervous chords which, with their branches, connect the brain with all the rest of the body. The entire system was thus poisoned and deranged by the products of torpid stomach. Any student of medicine will assure Mr. Chantler that he had a fortunate escape from chronic nervous collapse. In this respect his doctor was right.

Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup worked a cure by purging the blood and correcting the digestion. The lesson is (to our friend and to us all) that we mustn't ask too much of ourselves.

A Frank Reason.

Yabsley—Mudge, what makes you laugh at your own stories?
Mudge—Why shouldn't I? If they were not worth laughing at I would not tell them.

An Advertisement

This is an advertisement which tells the truth about Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills.

PEOPLE WHO SUFFER

from sleeplessness, dizziness, shortness of breath, smothering feeling, palpitation of the heart, pains through the breast and heart, anxious, morbid condition of the mind, groundless fears of coming danger, anaemia or impoverished blood, after effects of la grippe, general debility, etc., should

TRY THESE PILLS

as they cure these complaints. Every box is guaranteed to give satisfaction or money refunded through the party from whom the pills were purchased, and we authorize them to do so on the strength of the above statement. This offer is limited to the first box used by any one person. T. MILBURN & Co., Toronto.

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