

## Sunday Reading.

### Grandma's French Birthday.

May and her mother had been to a picture gallery, and May was delighted with one of the pictures, where a lovely old lady sat in a beautiful parlor and ever so many children, besides ladies and gentlemen, all crowded about her, giving her presents and bunches of flowers. Even the baby was held up by its mother to give something pretty to the old lady. The picture was called 'La Fete de Grandmere.'

'What does a fete mean, mamma?' asked May.

'Well, it means a festival, but in this case it means grandma's birthday,' said mamma.

'Oh, mamma,' said May, 'let us give dear grandma a French birthday.'

'Now I think of it, your father's mother is seventy years old next Saturday,' said mamma. 'We'll speak to papa about it.'

'All the aunts and cousins must come,' said May. 'It must be just like grandma's fete day in the picture.'

When papa came home they told him, and he said that it would please his mother very much, and if it was a French fashion it was a very pretty one, and he would give his mother a watch. So mamma sat down and wrote notes to all the aunts and uncles, and everybody promised to bring something handsome. Then they would all go together to grandma's to surprise her.

Saturday evening came. In their pretty little house grandpa and grandma reading his paper. Suddenly grandma took her handkerchief from her pocket and began to wipe away some tears which had risen to her eyes. 'I do feel so low spirited, William,' she said, 'just as if my heart would break. Just think of it, I'm seventy years old today.'

'You look very young for it,' said grandpa. 'Dear me, how time does fly. But don't cry, Catherine; very few people have been left to each other for so long. We've kept all our children, and they are all doing well. Why, I feel as if we were very happy people.'

'I don't,' said grandma, crying a little more. 'I brought up all those children and gave them a good set-off when they were married, and here not one of them cares anything for us.'

'Why, Catherine, you know they do,' said the old gentleman.

'No, they don't,' said grandma. 'Not one of them remembers that I am seventy-years old today. They are all thinking of anything but their old mother.'

'Well, well they are good children,' he said, 'but of course they might come out oftener. As for that, I ought to have remembered your birthday and given you a present.'

'Well, you didn't,' said the old lady. 'I don't believe anybody cares anything about me.'

Just then 'clang' went the door-bell. 'Clang, clang, clang!' three times.

'It's those boys that rang the bell for fun last night!' said grandpa. 'They will catch it this time!'

He caught up his whip from the corner, ran to the door and pulled it open, but he saw no bad boys.

A crowd of people were coming up the steps, and the first who ran in was his little granddaughter May.

'Here we all are!' she cried. 'Mamma and papa and uncle Ben and aunt Sarah and aunt Eliza and uncle Harry and all of us; and we've come to give grandma a French birthday like the one in the picture.'

'Well, there, and I thought you'd all forgotten it,' said grandma. 'I was just now feeling very low-spirited, but you did remember it.'

'It's a French birthday, grandma,' said May.

'Is that any different from a Yankee one?' asked grandma.

'It's prettier,' said May. 'Now, it must be like the picture. You sit down in the rocker and we all come up with our presents.'

'Presents! Why, I wasn't expecting presents,' said the old lady. Then she sat down, and first May gave her a bouquet of roses, and then put a lovely white silk shoulder shawl about her. Then May's papa, who was son John to grandma, gave her a watch and chain, and mamma a black satin dress pattern. One of the uncles had a lovely silk umbrella and the other a brooch with everybody's hair braided together, and there were pretty things of silk and lace, and bronzes for the mantel-piece, and a tete-a-tete set of china and more flowers, and baby gave a present with her little hand like the baby in the picture, and there were more flowers and lots of kisses and nice speeches. The old lady was as happy as a queen.

Then all sat down in a circle about the fire and they chattered. Then one of the aunts opened the piano and they played, and all the children sang a song they had been drilled in. It was this:

"Way down upon de Suance ribber."

Then some of the aunts brought in a basket full of good things, and grandma had some coffee made, and it was after twelve o'clock, when they started for home.

'Haven't we got good children, pa?' she asked.

'Didn't I say we had good children,' grandpa answered, 'when you said "No"?' 'Well, I thought they had forgotten us,' said grandma, 'and I felt hurt.'

'Isn't a French birthday nice?' little May was asking at that moment, 'and grandma was just like the picture when we all gave the things. I believe everybody ought to give their grandmas French birthdays every year.'—N. Y. Ledger.

### GOING OVER THE BOUNDS.

Some Old Customs From Which We May Learn a Great Deal.

There is a custom of going over or along the bounds of towns or parishes. A long name for the latter, crooking the mouth to say it, is that of 'parochial preambulations.' We find traces of the custom in this country when the town-fathers start out to trace the boundaries of their petty little province. In the old country, in England, we find at one time a very formal and elaborate way of tracing and traveling over such boundaries.

Amusing stories are told about those boundary demonstrations. If on a boundary-line a house has been built, then a procession faithfully following the line, claimed that they had a right to go through it!

There was a house that had an oven that just passed over the boundary-line. When a procession reached the spot, it was the custom to put a boy into the recess and that acknowledged and also kept up the integrity of the boundary-line. One year, the procession entered the house and lo, the good dame presiding over the kitchen was about to bake, and the oven crowded with flames might have suggested the furnace that Nebuchadnezzar once kindled to a white heat. The boys, though, were not going to omit any part of the ceremony. As one Tom Smith was with them, they screamed, 'Tom Smith is the boy to go into the oven!' Tom was panic-stricken! He thought roasting was before him. He shrieked. He ran. He did not stop running till inside his home. Somebody else, though, a boy was made to crawl over the obstructing oven, and that was deemed sufficient to say the line had been followed.

Once a procession, about the opening of our century, in travelling over the bounds of a London parish, came to a nobleman's carriage, and it stood plump on the boundary-line! What was to be done? My lord's coachman was asked to start up his horses. 'I won't!' he shouted. 'My lord told me to wait here, and here I'll wait till his lordship tells me to move.' The procession was not disposed to submit to any trifling. Officers of the parish were in the column, boys from the streets too, sweeps and scavengers. Besides, the church warden, who had requested the stuffy driver to move on, was himself a 'my lord.' He pleaded no longer. He threw back the carriage door. In he went, following the boundary line, and out he came at the other door! The entire retinue followed, down to the scavengers and sweeps, while Stuffy, the driver, could only look on aghast!

These old customs, while their peculiarities may amuse us, yet present features that provoke any thoughtful mind to serious reflection. Boundaries, the lines that separate what belongs to one party from that belonging to some one else, must be respected. We want to know our own; let us be sure that we don't invade another's privilege. A lot of trouble in this world grows out of the fact that people don't always realize the difference between two words—'mine' and 'thine.'

Not Without Good.

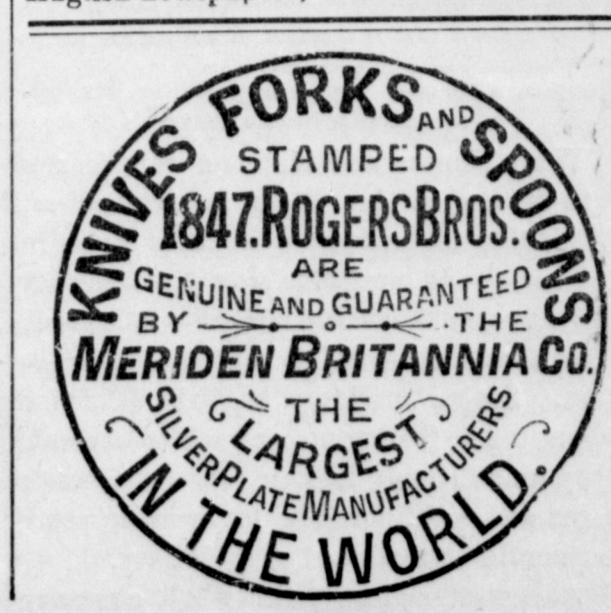
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real nobility that may survive in the heart after years of sin.

A prisoner in a criminal court, who with a companion was convicted of crime, begged the judge to allow him to bear his companion's sentence in addition to his own. He said there was no excuse for his own share in the crime, but his companion was a hard-working man, who had been tempted by extreme poverty, and, as it was his first offence might reform if he escaped the stigma of convict. He pleaded so earnestly, that the judge released his companion without adding to the pleader's sentence.

### HER POINT OF VIEW.

Aunt Maria Gathered Helpfulness From her Surroundings.

There are some people who seem to extract helpfulness from all their surroundings, as a bee gathers honey from the most unlikely flowers. Such a one was a quaint old lady living in a New England town, and known to her neighbors as 'Aunt Maria.'

'Doesn't that practicing annoy you?' a caller asked her one afternoon, as the sound of the piano next door came in distinctly through the open window.

'Annoy me?' repeated Aunt Maria briskly. 'Bless your heart, no! Why should it?'

The caller looked surprised. 'Why, it's monotonous enough, I'm sure. The same thing over and over, scales and finger exercises. Besides, evidently the child is just beginning, and she is constantly making mistakes.'

'I get a good deal of comfort out of Josie's practicing,' returned Aunt Maria, with a benevolent glance at her visitor over her spectacles. 'It's the same thing over and over, as you say, but that's just like life. I get up in the mornin' and start on the day's work as I've done for forty years, and sometimes it seems kind of monotonous. Then after a while I hear Josie's piano, and I think, "If that child can keep at those everlasting scales week in and week out, just so she can learn to play tunes, why shouldn't I be willin' to practice a good while, so as to bring the music out of my life as the Lord meant me to?"'

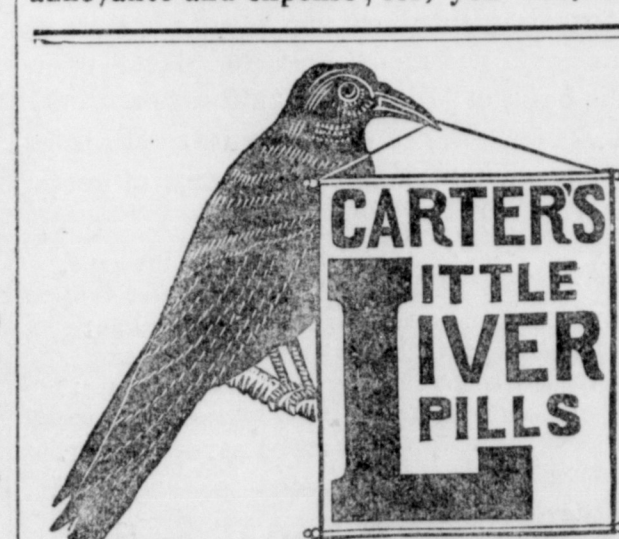
The visitor was silent, and after a moment Aunt Maria went on: 'Then her mistakes teach me something. Often when her teacher's there I hear him say, "That's wrong, Josie. Try again." His voice is just as kind, and I know he's fond of the child, but for all that, he keeps at her till she gets it right. Well, that reminds me of the way our Father does with us. He expects us to make mistakes of course, but though he's so tender and lovin', he ain't satisfied to let us keep on in them.' And when we keep on tryin' till we've corrected our mistake, he says, "Well done." Oh, yes!' said Aunt Maria, nodding her head gently, 'Josie's practicin' has been a sight of help to me, and has taught me a lot of things.'

And the visitor reflected that this world would be a very different place if all of us looked upon our trials and annoyances from Aunt Maria's point of view.

### STOP AND REASON.

He was Intelligent but Would not Listen to Reason.

He was a boy of sixteen or more, and was quite intelligent—but the trouble was, he didn't stop to reason. If he had, the tire on his bicycle would not have burst, and he would have been spared not a little annoyance and expense; for, you see, he



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was a good many miles away from home. And now had the mishap occurred? In this way.

The young cyclist had stopped to rest for awhile by the wayside, the day being very warm, and had thoughtlessly left his wheel standing out in the hot sun, and the fine pneumatic tire had been split, so that the air escaped. You can easily imagine his dilemma—miles away from home and without money.

But he might have been spared all this trouble if he had merely stopped to think. In the first place, he should have known that it is not a good plan to let any vehicle whether a carriage or a bicycle, stand out in the broiling sun. A moment's reasoning would have told him that on general principles. But he should have thought still further. The pneumatic tire was pumped full of air, and was stretched to its utmost limit. Now, the blazing sun beating upon it would certainly warm the air within, causing it to become rarer and therefore making it expand, and expanding air must have more room, unless the material enclosing it possesses great strength. Hence the rubber tube had to give way at some point to the severe pressure within, and in this case it did give way.

Why should not a boy who had attended a good school and had studied physics have reasoned the matter out, instead of leaving his wheel exposed to the sun's rays? Many, many 'accidents' are not accidents, after all; they are the result of some known law which we have failed to obey or take into consideration.

It would not be a bad motto for all young people—always to stop and reason. Why has God given us brains? Because he wants us to use them, and not stow them away as if meant only for ornament. If you are tempted to begin a course of wrong-doing, just stop and reason. Where will it end? How much will you gain by it? How much may you lose? Will it make you wiser and better, or the reverse?

There are people who are always committing blunders, or meeting with misfortunes, and then they complain about having 'such bad luck,' whereas the real difficulty is, they do not stop to reflect, but dash into everything in the most reckless fashion. 'I didn't think,' is the poorest excuse you can offer for a careless deed. It is your duty and mine to think. God has given us minds for that very purpose.

### AN INCIDENT AND A SEQUEL.

How a Brave Scotch boy Overcame all Difficulties.

One of Dr. A. J. Gordon's favorite sayings was that God never makes a half providence any more than a man makes a half pair of shears. A good many years ago a little Scotch boy, four years old, was caught in a threshing machine, and his right arm was torn off. That was a terrible accident in every sense of the word, for the boy not only lost the use of his arm, but was deprived of a future livelihood. He was a farmer's son, and it was supposed, could himself be nothing but a farmer. Now what would happen to him when he grew up?

This problem the boy's mother took to her heart. There she held her mutilated laddie, and, prayed that God would make him a prophet. As his service on the farm was out of the question, she prayed that he might be used for a noble husbandry. Thus the boy grew up, with his mother's prayers of dedication ringing in his heart, and in spite of himself, they formed his life. He

could not evade them. Her prayers shut him in with God.

The lad grew and studied, and was admitted to the University at Edinburgh. He is the student of whom the story has been often told, how Doctor Blackie asked the country boy to rise and recite. Geggie—for that was his name—arose and held his book awkwardly in his left hand.

'Take your book in your right hand, mon!' said the teacher, sternly.

'I hae nae right hand,' answered the youth, holding up his stump.

There was a moment's silence, which was broken by the hisses of the class. Tears of mortification were in the student's eyes. Then Doctor Blackie ran down from his desk, and putting his arm about the lad's shoulder, as a father might, said:

'I did not mean to hurt you, lad. I did not know.'

Then the hisses were changed to loud cheers, and Doctor Blackie thanked the students for the opportunity of teaching a class of gentlemen.

It was about that time that Major Whittle came to the university, and in the great awakening that followed. Geggie was the first to give himself up to the service of Christ.

Some time afterward Doctor Gordon was telling this story to his congregation in Boston. There was an impressive stillness, and after the service had closed with more than usual solemnity, a stranger walked up the aisle. The congregation noticed that he had only one arm. With a feeling of peculiar presentiment, Doctor Gordon came down the pulpit stairs to meet him.

'I am your Geggie,' the stranger said, with great emotion.

Doctor Gordon, with a ringing voice, called his congregation back and told them that his illustration was before them. The student was asked to speak. He related the story of his accident, his mother's prayers, and how he had now consecrated his life.

As the congregation left the church that morning, the thought came to more than one: 'Every man's life is divinely planned. If adversity is inevitable, God makes the misfortune fit the plan. Many a youth, without knowing it, is working out the life to which his mother's piety devoted him; and her vows and the infinite Wisdom are parts of a perfect providence.'

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### She Found Out.

A Boston lady stood on the deck of the little bump-nosed Ocklawaha steamer in Florida, note-book and lognette in hand, asking ponderous questions of a darky roustabout.

'Is the alligator amphibious?' was one of her questions.

The darky scratched his head; he was a bit puzzled, as there had been more corn pone than dictionary in his bringing up, but his quick wit and natural logic did not desert him as he replied:

'I reckon he am, mis'; he done bite yo' shuah ef yo' monkey wid him.'

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