

Sunday Reading

Nan's Sympathy Bureau.

Nan was in the cosy sitting-room, her rosy face resting in her hands, watching the bright tongues of flame in the cheerful fireplace, now darting up in spiral beauty, only to fade away again in a tiny volume of smoke.

'I'm just like them! she exclaimed slowly. 'I try to do something to be useful, and—well, I'm just like the little flames; somehow I can never accomplish anything.'

The last was said aloud, and as Nan threw back her curls she noticed Grandma Allen standing in the doorway.

'Tut! tut! my little girl,' reproved grandma, gently; if we do the best we can, we are not the ones to measure the good we do—we can't!'

'I suppose—so,' said Nan, slowly, 'but then, what can a girl no older than I do? If I had money I might establish reading-rooms for the poor, or lunch counters, where poor working-girls could get a nice warm lunch without paying anything for it, or something else really worth doing; but, grandma, it takes means, and all that I have in the world would hardly buy one magazine, or a single plate of doughnuts.'

'Never mind, child, there are things you can do just as worthy as those you mention—things, too, that perhaps nobody else could possibly do.'

Just then the warning bell rang, and with a good-bye kiss Nan gathered up her books and hurried away to school.

All the morning she kept thinking of grandma's remark: 'Things that perhaps nobody else could possibly do.'

'I wonder what they can be,' and Nan rested her serious little face in her hands, with her elbows on the desk.

As she was standing near the cloak-room door at recess, she overheard Maud Atkins refer to Beth Johnson's grief at her mother's death.

'I pity her,' said Maud, 'but I don't feel that I can do anything for her; she's not of our set. Her mother has done our washing for years—that's how I happened to know of her.'

Nan turned, and as she did so she saw Beth who hadn't left her seat at recess, with a mournfully pinched face, fondly regarding a tiny plain gold ring, worn dangerously thin.

'Her mother's,' thought Nan.

Quietly slipping to her side, Nan took one little hand in hers, and when the girls came back to their seats at the ringing of the bell, Beth's face wore its first smile since her mother's death.

All the remainder of the session Nan felt happy. 'I guess its what grandma meant,' she thought.

The next day, and the next, she found some little way to help, all unconsciously, somebody about her. The old colored janitor felt pleased all day long at the smile with which she greeted him as she passed him in the entry.

'Bless her honey child!—she's a sunshine ray for sure,' he murmured, as he closed the door behind her.

Miss Norcross, the teacher, as Nan took her hand and bade her a pleasant good-night, felt the cares of the day grow lighter and her work less irksome.

'I tell you Nan,' said her brother Ted one morning, as she whispered to him not to mind the weather, for another day would surely come in which he could try his new bicycle, 'you do a fellow good just by your sympathy. I'd advise you, little sister, to put out your card—Sympathy Bureau! Conducted by Nan Armstrong, who is always ready to sympathize with any one in trouble. Office hours, from morning till bed-time.' And as for pay—

'Pay! O Ted,' interrupted Nan, smiling, 'that comes without asking. Ever since I've tried to be kind and helpful to others—'

'You've found,' broke in Grandma Allen, 'a joyful, contented little self all the time—and that there are some things that nobody else could possibly do!'

'Yes; and what you said, grandma dear, led me to find out what they are,' said Nan, sweetly, giving grandma a loving kiss as she spoke.—Zion's Herald.

A Welcome Intruder.

I wish you would try to see a sick woman on—street, said the pastor one morning. They say she cannot live long, but for some reason her husband will permit no visitors. I called, but was turned away from the door without much ceremony. Perhaps you would have better success.

It was a forlorn-looking home, and the man's face as he opened the door was certainly forbidding, but he made no objection

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as the deaconess slipped inside. The sick woman on a bed in the corner was evidently near death's door. One child lay in its cradle and another, a frightened, neglected looking creature, gazed in childish wonder at the visitor.

She spoke of the children, of the wife's sickness and the prospect of her recovery. Presently the woman asked for a drink, and when the man had gone for it, she turned to the deacons a look of anxious appeal. It needed but a word of sympathy and the poor creature poured out her heart in breathless gasps.

'I used to be a Christian—we both were—and members of the church—but we've had trouble—and been so poor—and we thought nobody cared.'

'But there was One who cared,' said the deaconess, passing her hand over the hot forehead. 'Poverty and trouble need not have separated you from Him.'

'But it has—I want to live—for the children's sake—But I know I can't—and I'm not saved.'

The husband had come back with the water, protesting that she must not be disturbed, and little more was said, but the deaconess knelt in prayer and commended the wandering soul to the Good Shepherd. As she rose the man drew his shirt sleeve furtively across his eyes. 'I ain't so bad as folks think, he said, but I've had a lot of trouble.'

The visitor left with an invitation to come again, reinforced by the eager look from the sick woman's eyes. She went carrying a glass of crimson jelly, a gift from the pastor's wife. Very cautiously the important subject was renewed and eagerly met by the sick woman. By promise and prayer the crushed but hungry and seeking soul was led back to the Saviour. A few weeks after she passed over the river in peace.

A Heart-Broken Mother.

'It is breaking my heart,' were the pathetic words of a widowed mother who was called to the witness stand to swear to a painful complaint she was forced to make against her son. He was her only child, and it should have been his delight to work for and make happy his good mother, his best earthly friend. Instead of working and providing a good home for her, he squandered at the saloon the little that he earned; she had to work hard to give him a home. His habits grew so bad that at last she determined to have him committed as an habitual drunkard hoping that he would reform.

When called to the witness stand to testify against him, she said, 'It is breaking my heart,' and told dead with the words on her lips. What a lecture for any mother to deliver!

Boys don't let it be said of you that you are bringing grief to your mother's heart. Let it be your aim to make her happy. You can do it by little loving acts every day of your life.

'God Claims Me.'

When the late Earl Cairns was a boy, says an English paper, he heard three words, which made a memorable impression on him:

God claims you. Then came the question:

What am I going to do with the claim? He answered: I will own it, and give myself to God. He went home and told his mother: God claims me.

At school and college his motto was: God claims me.

As a member of Parliament, and ultimately as Lord Chancellor, it was still: God claims me.

When he was appointed Lord Chancellor he was a teacher of a large Bible class, and his minister, thinking now he would have no time to devote to that purpose, said to him:

I suppose you will now require to give up your class?

No, was the reply, I will not: God claims me.

SHIFTED FROM CAR TO CAR.

System of Broadway Cable at the Battery Causes a Man to Feel His Head.

The drug store is a sort of haven for people in distress, whether their affliction be mental or physical. Especially true is this of strangers in the city. As long as a man can see a drug store he feels that he is not utterly alone. There is no more reason why a pharmacist should be a bureau of information than there is why a banker should be, but the fact remains that an inquiring mind will go blocks out of the way to ask a druggist all sorts of questions. All N. Y. information is as true of Broadway as it is of an interesting street in Harlem. The man who thinks there is nothing odd or curious or funny in Broadway below Wall street can have the conceit dispelled by stalking down that way any day in the week.

It was in a drug store in lower Broadway that a N. Y. Sun reporter saw a man who said:

'Can I look at your thermometer?' The man who came in was bareheaded. The floor-walker of the chemist shop pointed to the atmospheric indicator. After the man had examined it he said to the shopman: 'It isn't as hot as I thought it was.'

'It hot enough for me,' was the reply.

The bareheaded man mopped his brow and asked: 'How hot does it have to be before a man has wheels?'

'Depends upon the man.'

'Well, I want a little information. It's like this: I came over from Staten Island and walked from the ferry to Battery terminus of the Broadway cable. I am right about the Broadway cable having a terminus at the Battery, am I not?'

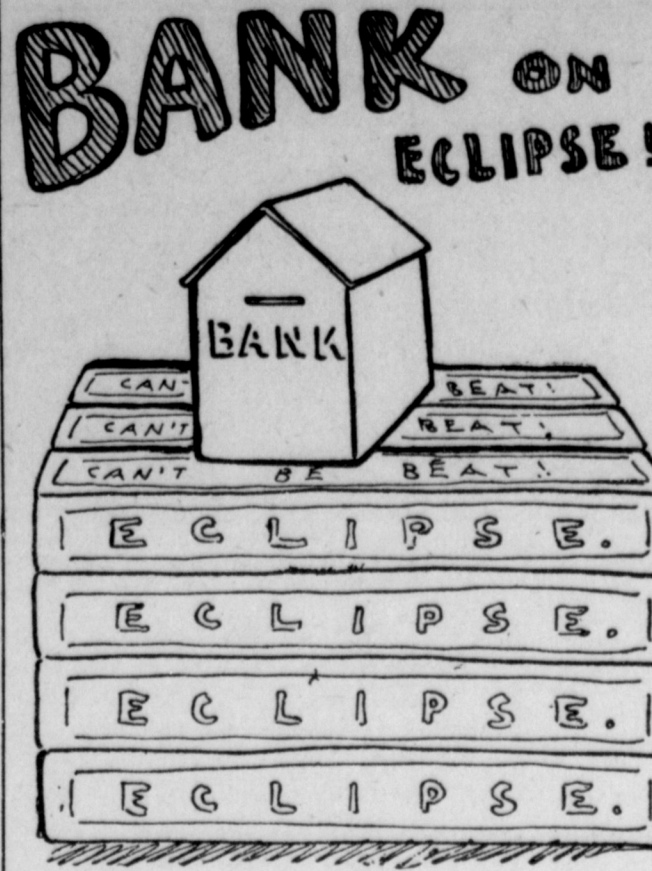
'It was so the last time I was there,' said the chemist.

'That's what I thought. So I went up to the car labelled Columbus avenue. I know I can read, and I read that sign on the car. Blue and white signs. There goes one now.'

The chemist looked out and saw a car with a blue and white sign. Columbus avenue it was.

'I boarded the car, but to make it coarser I asked a man who was a dispatcher if I was on a Columbus avenue car. He said I was at that moment. I supposed he was one of those funny men in disguise and said no more. The car shot out like an arrow for a moment and then slowed up at Bridge street. There it came to a dead stop. The gripman looked back and I thought he looked like a driver in the country when he is lost. His perplexed countenance gave me courage to assure myself and I ventured to ask him if I had a seat on a Columbus avenue car. He said there was no certainty about it. What could this mean? I felt of my head. While I was trying to decide about my condition or the situation, another man in a uniform rushed up to the car and called out: 'This car for Broadway. All out for Columbus and Lexington avenues.' I got out in time to see the man whirl the Columbus avenue sign out of sight, and turn on the Broadway. I waited on the corner, and saw four Columbus avenue cars go by, crowded, of course. I finally boarded one later, and just as I was squeezing in the conductor came along. 'Columbus avenue?' I asked, to be sure at the last. 'No, Lexington,' he replied. 'How long since?' I asked. 'Bout a half a minute,' he replied. Just as you stepped on,' he added. So I walked up here.'

'Well,' said the chemist. 'What is it you want to know?'



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'Was I on a car?'

'Randall's Island,' called the chemist to the boy in charge of the telephone.'

THE DEACON'S GROWING STONE.

Carried in His Pocket When a Boy and It Now Weighs Sixty Five Pounds.

The most interesting thing I saw down in Maine was a growing stone that belongs to H. H. Hammond of Smith's Cove, near Winter Harbor, and lies upon a granite post beside the steps that lead to his front door. It is egg shaped and of perfect symmetry, with the exception that it is somewhat flattened upon the side which rested upon the ground.

Thirty years ago or more William Hammond, a brother of H. H., who now lives in San Francisco, picked up this remarkable stone upon the edge of the cove. He was then a boy 10 years old, and was attracted by its regular shape and smooth surface, which, contains a good deal of mica schist and sparkles in the sun as if it had been sprinkled with diamond dust.

The boy took the stone home in his pocket, for it was very small in comparison with its present size, and could have been easily slipped into a quart cup. He played with it in the yard for several years, and it lay upon the mantelpiece in the house during the winter months, but as he grew older he lost interest in the plaything and it rolled under a lilac bush beside the front door. There it remained for fifteen years or so. When young Hammond returned from San Francisco, he recognized it, but was much astonished to find that it had increased in size and weight to a most remarkable degree. When he was a child, as I said, he carried the stone in his pocket. When he recovered it, as a man. It was larger than the crown of a stovepipe hat and weighed at least twelve or fifteen pounds more than when he saw it last. H. H. Hammond became so much interested in the phenomenon that he removed it from the ground beneath the lilac bush and placed it upon the granite step at the right of his front door, where the sun rests upon it the greater part of the day.

Shortly after it was placed there, about six years ago, Mr. Hammond got the meat peddler to put it on his scales, and its weight was forty-one pounds, which was marked with a pencil upon the stone itself with the date. Three years latter it had grown to fifty pounds. On the 12th day of May last the stone was weighed again by the same scales and tipped the beam at sixty-five pounds. Mr. Hammond then made a series of measurements and will preserve them for future comparison. The circumference of the stone by tape measure, the longest way, is 3 feet 2 1/2 inches, while at the widest part the narrow way it is 2 feet 4 1/2 inches.

Mr. Hammond is a respectable farmer, is a deacon in the Baptist church and was borne in the house where he lives. Even if he did not have so high a reputation for truth and veracity, the facts about growing stone have been known to everybody in the neighborhood ever since young Hammond came back from California and found it under the lilac bush. Mr. Hammond has been offered large sums of money for the curiosity, but will not part with it for any price.—Chicago Record.

Spend your Holidays A-Bed.

'There's much to be said in favour of the rest-cure,' said a family doctor to the writer, 'and as a medical man I can cordially recommend it to people whose lives involve an undue strain on the nervous system. Without it I am inclined to think the social wheels would move but slowly. Many of the leaders of West End society make a point of spending one day in ten at least in bed, where they seclude themselves from the world and all its demands. The effect is magical; for the jaded nervous system which calls aloud for a respite, recovers its tone, and is ready to face another round of social dissipation. There are many people who would benefit much more from a fortnight spent in bed than from the same time devoted to a wild rush through the continent. No wonder your City man returns

from his holidays unrefreshed, when, instead of relaxing the brain for a time he has increased even its normal tension. To such a man the time spent in rest and seclusion would do infinitely more good. Let him (and the advice applies even more strongly to the woman who is worn out by social demands or domestic cares) go to the country or seaside, and straightway lie in bed. Let him shut himself from the world, write no letters, and read as few as possible; take simple and nourishing food, abjure stimulants of all kinds, even tea and coffee, and read a little light literature by way of recreation; and I can assure you he will emerge from his shell with his nerves soothed and braced for another year of hard work. If you doubt my advice, try it before you condemn it.'

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Letting Him Down.

'I met Howard to-day. He was surprised to know we were married. Says you told him once you wouldn't marry the best man living.'

Mrs. Jones: 'Well, the fact is, I did say so to him.'

Jonas: 'How did you come to change your mind?'

Mrs. Jones: 'Well, the fact is, I didn't.'

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