

The "Best Gifts."

[Vide Jeremiah 29:13; Matt. 6:33.]
He cried, "I will have wealth!" and day
by day
With eager grasp he clutched the golden
sands.
Naught recked he of earth's beauty. Even
the ray
Of heaven he heeded not, lest through his
hands
Some tiniest grain might slip. So higher
grew
The heaps of treasure in his coffers piled,
That gloating off he bent above, nor knew
How soon their lustre rust should have
defiled;
That even then with darkly brooding eye
Without the robber lurked soon to des-
poil.
On such swift wings earth's cherished
treasures fly!
Then what reward for this too arduous
toil?

"Ho! Pleasure I will choose!" another
cried,
And lightly sped with never-sated zest,
Through sun-lit valleys, up the mountain-
side.
Now here, now there, and pause! not in
his quest;
As children sporting o'er the flower strewn
ed plain,
Chase the bright butterfly whose gaudy
wing
Eludes their grasp, so he ofttimes in vain,
A phantom fancy followed, nor could
bring
It down from airy heights. Or if, to seize
Essaying, he at last grasps the gay sprite,
Behold, within his hand dismays he sees
A dying moth, its beauty vanished quite!

"Fame! Fame!" he whispered, and with
close-set lips
His eagle eye fixed on the snow-crest,
Casting on those below no faint regret,
Up the steep mountain side he dauntless
pressed.
Above he sees the crown of glittering gold,
While even now below he hears the cry
That wells with loud acclaim; so brave, so
bold,
Why from his lips escapes that heavy
sigh?
Ah, on these mountain heights, so bleak, so
cold,
Alone his feet the rugged path must tread!
And when the crown he seizes, lo! its gold
But hides the cruel thorns that pierce his
head.

"I will have learning! Priceless is its
lore!"
And this one dives deep in exhaustless
mines,
Adding each day some jewel to the store;
And still for "more" unsatisfied he pines.
In many a dusty tome of ancient sage,
Through realms of science or philo-
sophy,
He seeks for treasures, and on poet's page;
By night he scans the stars. Fain would
he see
Somewhere, in some of these, what may
give peace,
For there are heights and depths beyond
his bound.
Oh, who can bid his deep soul-longing
cease?
Who can unvail those mysteries profound?

"As the hart pants after the cooling stream,
O God!
So thirsts my fainting, longing soul for
thee!"
Naught else gives comfort here on earthly
soil;
Can't he beside give peace eternally?
Then fell upon his spirit as the dew
Such benison of blissfulness divine,
His soul to higher, nobler stature grew,
His face with heaven's lustre seemed to
shine.
And so he sang when busy at his toil
From day to day, and work brought its
reward;
The Owner of earth's gold, its leagues of
soil,
Gave to him largely, "steward of the
Lord."

And joy was his, too deep for tongue to tell.
For thousands called down blessings on
his name,
Who, wise, his Master's substance used so
well;
Unwitting, thus he won the crown of
Fame.
His reverent mind enshrined his loftier
soul,
And learning at his feet grew strong and
broad.
Thus gained he even Wisdom's fatherest
goal—
"Looking from Nature up to Nature's
God."
META E. B. THORNE, in Herald.

The Witness of Elsie Lyle.

ELSIE LYLE, an attractive girl of
seventeen, sat between the red plush
cushions of a railroad car at the be-
ginning of a long day's journey. It
was to be a pleasure trip long planned
and looked forward to; and the best
of it had been that her father could
go with her, and she need have no
care for the changes of the way.
The day before she was going to
start, however, her father had been
summoned elsewhere, and she must
give up the journey, or go alone.
"It is quite time that my girl
learned to travel," her father said,
as he kissed her good-bye.
It was not a difficult journey from
Quinsogue to Boston, except that it
involved two changes. Elsie would
not have dreaded it at all, if her an-
xious mother had not overburdened
her with directions and forbodings.
Just as the train started, Mr.
Wardlaw, Elsie's pastor, took the
seat by her side for a little while.
"I am glad, Elsie," he said as he

rose to go at the next station, "that
you are to have a holiday. I value
opportunities of travel, because they
are opportunities of witness-bearing."
The words lingered in Elsie's
memory, and gave a new turn to her
thoughts. She had been thinking
that she needed help, but Mr. Ward-
law thought she ought to offer help
to others. She wondered whether
any opportunity of witness-bearing
would come to meet her on her
journey.

The seat in front of her was taken
at the next station by a poorly-
dressed woman with three children.
The oldest was a boy, about nine,
clad in a worn jacket with embroid-
ered collar, and sleeves much
too short, over a wrinkled
blue shirt-waist, spotted with
yellow triangles; and all this faded
splendor surmounted by a broad
freckled face, and a fringe of red
hair under the straw hat. He was
evidently a good-natured boy, with
smile enough for two, and, when his
mouth was open wide, you could see
little else but that—and freckles.
The other children filled the mother's
seat, and the freckled lad drifted in
with Elsie.

Now Elsie was fastidious, and she
was not fond of boys. She had no
younger brothers, and she felt, I
think, that ragged, half-grown urch-
ins were wild creatures, whom she
did not know how to tame, and so
avoided. It was not pleasant to
have this boy's frayed garments and
dusty boots so near her own dainty
self; and the big warts on his hands
made her shiver with disgust.

He, too, looked at her as if she
had been some strange wild creature.
What did he think of her? she won-
dered. She must persuade him to
think kindly, if possible; for, when
she considered, he had as much right
in the world, and to his half of the
seat in the crowded car, as she.
And then, she was Christ's disciple,
and must be careful how she treated
one of His little ones.

I do not say that it was easy for
her; but obedience has its own re-
ward, and soon she grew interested
in the child. He was as restless as
a sparrow. What would he do next?
And all the time he did not speak a
word. Elsie had no more idea how
to talk to a boy than to a monkey,
but she was saved the trouble of be-
ginning.

Suddenly he pointed out the win-
dow and called out: "Oh, say! See
that feller fishing!"
"Do you fish?" asked Elsie.

"Well I guess!" was the answer.
"I caught a string of trout down in
Beclat that would make your eyes
stick out!"

As it happened, Beclat was a
town which Elsie knew by heart.
Her grandmother lived there, and
she had spent happy weeks in the
old farm-house. She had herself
caught trout in Beclat. There was
no trouble about conversation after
that.

Indeed, she soon found that the
whole family had put themselves
under her protection. They, too,
were going to Boston, and she be-
came at once an authority upon the
route and all its changes. It amused
Elsie to find herself talking like
an experienced traveler, as, indeed,
she was, in comparison with this
woman, who was making the first
real journey of her life. She shared
her lunch with Tommy and his sis-
ter, and drew pictures of horses and
sheep and railroad trains. It was
she who led the way when changes
were to be made, and found seats
for all on the shady side.

Altogether, Elsie was surprised
when the journey came to an end,
and carried off the paper-covered
novel, which her brother Will had
tossed into her lap, unread. She
was tired, but not half so tired as
she had often been on a much short-
er journey.

As she reviewed the day, however,
after a jolly evening with her
friends, one cloud of trouble passed
across the sky. "Mr. Wardlaw said
that travel was an opportunity of
witness-bearing, and I have not
spoken a word for Christ all day."

But the true story of the day was
not yet ended. A fortnight later
Elsie received a letter from Mr.
Wardlaw.

"I have good news to tell you,
Elsie," he wrote. "Do you remem-
ber Mr. Smith, the lawyer, who sat
on the other side of the car that day
you left home? I have often won-
dered why he was not a Christian.
Yesterday he sent for me. I found
him shut up in the house with a cold.
He apologized for the trouble he
had given me, and added, 'I have
sent for you to teach me how to be
a Christian.'

"You can imagine that I was glad;
but I was happier yet when he told
me how he had reached this decision.
Can you imagine what you had to do
with it, Elsie?"

"It seems that he had been fight-
ing with his conscience until that
day when you set out for Boston.
'I traveled half a day,' he said, 'with
Elsie Lyle. I knew that she had
just made a profession of her faith,
and set myself to watch her. I
knew what young girls are like—
I have had daughters of my own. I

will see, I said, if I can discover any
sign of a changed life in this young
girl. 'And if you do,' said conscience—
'If I do, I answered to myself, I
will believe in Christ. I wanted
her to fight my battle for me. It
was cowardly and unfair I admit,
but I did it.'

"Just then a whole platoon of
disagreeable children pounced down
upon her; and a boy—such a boy!—
perched beside her on the seat and
overturned all her belongings. A
shadow crept over her face—a little
shadow of ladylike disgust. This is
your love for the brethren, I said;
love at arms' length. I was hard
upon her. I would have been dis-
gusted if such a disagreeable child
had crowded in upon me. And then
I looked once more, and there was a
new expression in her face. She
had positively forgotten self and was
thinking of the boy; and presently
she had won his heart, and for half
a day she proved herself an angel of
mercy to that worn-out mother and
her three fretful children. I went
a hundred miles out of my way to
test and cross-examine her. And it
was genuine. She did not do it as
if it were a bore, as I have seen men
handle duty. From the beginning
to the end she was not thinking of
herself at all. I had made my chal-
lenge, and was beaten. There was
nothing left to do but to surrender.
And I wanted to surrender. What
the spirit of Christianity had done
for Elsie Lyle, I wanted done for
me."

"And the best of it all is, Elsie,
that he is a Christian, and I want
you to share the joy."—REV. ISAAC O.
RANKIN, in Congregationalist.

A Lack of Courtesy in Women.

In any scramble for seats in a
public car, a courteous man is
bound to give precedence to a wo-
man. But when a man has paid
for, and is occupying, a seat in a
car, whether it be a parlor-car, an
ordinary passenger-car, or a street
car, he is not bound to vacate that
seat in favor of a woman who after-
wards enters the car. The duty of
providing a seat for other passen-
gers rests on the railroad company,
rather than on the passengers who
have already taken seats. As a
matter of special courtesy, however,
many a man is always ready to rise
and proffer his seat to any woman
who may enter the car where the
seats are all occupied. A woman
who accepts such a courtesy has a
duty to acknowledge it as a cour-
tesy, and to return her thanks for
it. Yet, as a matter of fact, many
women never think of saying a
word of thanks in recognition of
such a courtesy as this. If a man
were to be given a seat by a younger
man, it would be a rare thing if he
did not give hearty thanks for it.

If a woman attempts to get on
or off a crowded street-car, a man
standing on the platform of the car
is quite likely to step off and stand
in the street—sometimes in the rain
in order to make room for her. For
this act of courtesy, as for every
other, specific thanks are due from
the woman to the man. Yet such
thanks are rarely given by a woman,
although it would be a strange
thing if a man were to fail of thank-
ing another man who showed this
courtesy toward him.

Similar illustrations of this truth
might be multiplied. But enough
has been said to call the attention
of parents to the duty of training
their daughters, as daughters, to
courtesy; for the hope of the cor-
rection of such an evil is in the bring-
ing up of a new generation in a
better way than that of the present
one. Girls ought to be trained to
courtesy in every direction; to be
watchfully considerate of one an-
other, and deferential towards their
seniors; to be prompt to rise and
give their seats, when occasion
calls for it, to women or to elderly
or infirm men; and to be explicit in
their thanks for every courtesy of
any sort which is proffered to them
by any person whatsoever. There
are girls who are thus trained, and
who give evidence of it continually.
When such training is more general,
there will be less reason than now
for complaining of any lack of cour-
tesy among women.—Sunday-school
Times.

A Story of Addition.

The new "Temperance Arithmet-
ic," by Messrs. J. McNair Wright,
has some most valuable lessons for
everybody who wants a little cot-
tage home. The chapter on "Addi-
tion" has this little story as a pre-
face:

I passed one day a very lovely
little cottage home. The windows
were bright, the white walls were
draped in drooping vines. Flower-
beds bordered the walks. There
were bee-hives in a corner of the
vegetable garden. A grape arbour,
a row of currant bushes, and cherry
and apple trees, gave promise of
fruit. The little children played in
the arbour. The elder boy was set-
ting off to school. In the clean
kitchen, the mother made bread for
her household.

"This house must cost a good rent
to you?" we said.

"We own it," said the mother.
"Ah! It's price must have been
a large sum."

"We got it—for ten dollars," she
replied.
"Pray, how was that?"
"On our wedding day, my old
grandfather, a poor man too, gave
us ten dollars, saying: 'If you will
put this in bank, and firmly resolve
to lay by something to add to it each
week—if only a penny, you will own
your home before you know it.'

"To our ten dollars each week we
added—now one dollar, now five,
now a quarter of a dollar, again only
a dime—once or twice during illness,
only a cent. But we added. It was
weekly, add, add, add. In five
years, we got this little house; four
bare walls in a bare quarter of an
acre. We still worked on the rule
of addition—every day, in work or
money, we add, add, add. It is
strange how large a sum one gets,
when you add together many littles.
We could sell this house to-day for
twelve hundred dollars. But we
shall not sell. We will go on, and
add, add, add, to the worth of our
home."

A Hint for Preachers

The widow of a clergyman writes
to the Albany Journal: When I
with my husband, was living in a
city not far from here, I noticed
that a member of our church, a poor
woman, was not regular in her at-
tendance, and finally did not attend
at all. I called upon her, and she
said to me with the utmost frank-
ness that her husband was inclined
to be hard with her, that he did not
go to church, and that if she was not
home on Sunday in time to have his
dinner for him very nearly at twelve
o'clock he was abusive. She said
that my husband preached such
long sermons that she could seldom
get home until after twelve o'clock,
and that rather than have unpleas-
antness at home she had refrained
from going to church any more.
She said that she would not have
spoken of the matter but for the
fact that three other women of her
acquaintance were also kept from at-
tendance by similar circumstances.
She gave me the names of the other
women, and I called upon them and
found her story to be exactly true.
I laid the facts before my husband,
and he determined to make a change
in the programme. Instead of
reading all the hymns, he merely
read the first verse
of each and he began the service at
precisely 10.30, whether the congrega-
tion were on hand or not. He
shortened his prayer to eight min-
utes instead of fifteen. His ser-
mons were commenced by eleven,
never later than ten minutes after,
and always concluded by 11.45.
Within three months after he had
made this change there was a re-
vival in the church, and one of the
first persons brought in was the
husband of the woman whom I
first met.—The Christian Union.

Keep Up Your End.

When I was a boy in the lumber-
ing region, said an old doctor, the
fellow who would not hold up his
end of the log, but let the weight
sag on the others, was looked upon
with contempt by all the camp.
Wherever I go now I think I see
logs carried—one end held up by
hearty, willing hands, and the other
dropping off of lazy, selfish ones.

When I see an old father toiling
to give his son the education that is
to help him through life, and the
boy yawning over his books, trick-
ing his teachers, smoking cigarettes
and swearing, I feel like calling out:
For the sake of your own soul, boy,
grip your end of the log and hold it
up!

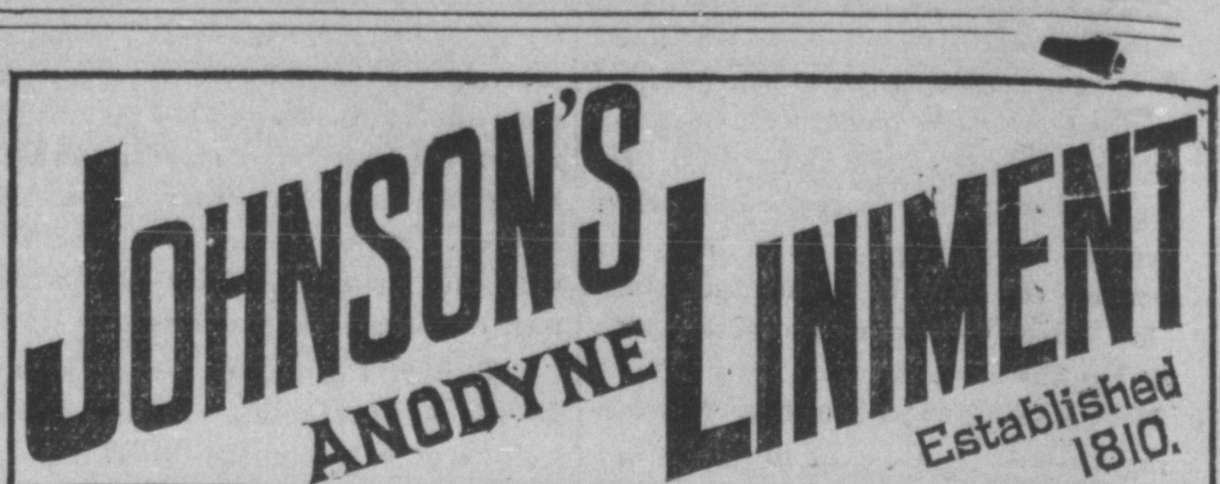
Sometimes I see a man working
hard all day, and too tired to rest
at night, while his wife and daugh-
ters read novels, embroider and gos-
sip with women as useless in the
world as themselves. Do they keep
up their end of the log?

Or, quite as often, it is the wife
who stints and saves until her life
is barren and bare as the dusty road
at noonday, while the husband
spends his time at saloons and pool
rooms.

Or, I see one bright courageous
member of a family—usually a wo-
man—working, joking, hopeful,
while the others crawl along, groan-
ing, complaining, dropping every
day and hour their burden of pov-
erty, disease, toothache or bad weath-
er on her shoulder. She has all the
log to carry.

Again, it is a human being for
whom God has done much in birth,
rank, education, friends, who, for
the love of a glass of liquor or a pack
of cards, allows his life to drop into
the slough. Paul bids him work out
his own salvation; and I feel like
telling him to hold up his end of the
log.

What does the reader think of
the doctor's homely lesson! What
is his burden in life? Somebody
shares it with him; no man bears his
burden alone. Does he carry his
part with hearty good-will, or does
he drop it on weak and willing
shoulders.



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