

He Could But Cannot.

He was one of the fellows
Who could drink or leave it alone,
With a fine, high score for common men
Who are born with no backbone.
"And why," said he, "should a man o'
strength
Deny to himself the use
Of the pleasant gift of the warm, red wine,
Because of its weak abuse?"

It could quote at a banquet,
With a manner half divine,
It'll fifty things the poets say
About the rosy wine;
And he could sing a spirited song
About the lips of a lass,
And drink a toast to her fair young worth
In a sparkling generous glass.

And since this lordly fellow
Could drink or leave it alone,
He chose to drink at his own sweet will,
Fill his will was overthrown.
And the lips of his lass are pale with grief,
And her children shiver and shrink,
Or the man who once could leave it alone
Is the pitiful slave of drink.
—Mrs. George Archibald in Union
Signal.

THE APPLIED COLLECT

An after Easter story.

BY CELESTE.

The Easter holidays are a season of delight to those who can go home from school or college to snatch a few day's pleasure from the grind of the term's work, but to those who have to stay behind the holidays are one long, continued bore. Clara Hamilton's home was a day's journey from the Celestial city, and a tiresome day's journey at that, and with Normal School taking up its work again on Monday it was impossible to think of going home.

No doubt some of the girls who did not go home managed to have a good enough time in town, but Edith's chum had gone, and all of the girls who boarded in the same place, so she was left strictly to her own devices.

Good Friday was spent in church and over-hauling her effects in general, and setting everything to rights. Some of last year's gowns looked faded and forlorn in the bright spring sunshine, and she made up her mind that it would be impossible to get along without a few new ones. But how is one to get anything made in a boarding-house? She asked herself, and a good dress-maker's charge of five dollars for each gown, was out of the question.

On Saturday there was absolutely nothing to do, but to return a call or two; and call-made in the spirit of being the last resort of unmitigated ennui are not likely to be a success either to the called upon or the caller. However Easter Sunday would certainly be a bright, joyful day, and the very promise of summer in the air would brighten Clara up.

Sad to relate Easter Sunday was not a bright day; far from it. The clouds were leaden in colour and heaviness, the wind blew cold from the river and Nature was in anything but an Easter mood. It seemed too bad. Clara was dull enough herself, but this dull weather was the last drop in her cup of bitterness. If she had sat down and had a good homesick cry, it might have proved a clearing up shower, but no; she held her lips hard together, blinked a very few times, tickled herself a little to try and provoke a smile, and then spent all the available time in getting ready for church.

The church itself looked cold; there were not as many flowers as usual; the alto voices in the choir drowned the sopranos; and things were generally miserable. Clara took her part in the services, knelt when the rest knelt, read the responses and repeated the creed outwardly like everybody else, but inwardly in a mood not at all worshipful; and even after hearing the beautiful Easter collect she said to herself bitterly "as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect." And what is going to become of you, if you have no good desires in your mind? Altogether the service was a failure as far as Clara was concerned, and the only good impressions she carried home were those of the sweet face of the young lady in front of her, a cheery, contented face; and the wee demure maidens on the front seat, bowing their heads in childlike faith and reverence at the name of Jesus.

The rest of the day was passed somehow or other, and was not much of an improvement on the morning. After church in the evening Clara was looking over the very few books that Mrs. Baxter's small bookcase afforded, and stumbled across one entitled "The Study of Sociology by Herbert Spencer. This was something new: a little variety from the Pansy and other books of the average Sunday School book character. Clara never stopped to consider how the book came into Mrs. Baxter's hands, or whether that busy matron was much given to reading books of that character,

but took it down. After a fashion of hers she looked over the last chapters and one headed "Discipline" attracted her glance. This book advocated a culture of a broad kind only begun or hinted at in Normal School and it interested her. She read on and on until she became conscious that it was growing late, and she resolved to shut the book when she had finished the paragraph. At the end were these words: "Not by precept, though heard daily; not by example, unless it is followed, only by action, often caused by the related feeling, can a moral habit be formed."

Clara shut the book. Up to her last waking moment she kept repeating "only by action can a moral habit be formed."

In the deep darkness of the night one little mouse biting at the base-board awakened Clara, and as soon as she was broad awake the thought came back to her: "Only by action, can a moral habit be formed" and joined to that the whole collect "Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our mind good desires, so by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who loveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

The good desire had come; the desire for action. But it was still only a desire: no definite purpose for a particular form of action.

Even Easter Monday is subject to the same interruption in the form of the family washing and consequent washer-woman as any other Monday; only this washer-woman was a little more interesting than most. In answer to a kindly question or two from Mrs. Baxter she told what a struggle she was having to get along. She had lived in the country until her husband died, but the fear of her five children obliged her to come to town for work; and when fifty cents a day for washing and ironing and scrubbing she was bravely trying to bring up her family. To Clara who was listening the purpose presented itself.

That evening Clara climbed the rickety outside steps of Mrs. Jones' shanty on Checker Board Avenue. Under her arm was a big bundle, and in her mind was an Easter spirit developing itself.

The presence of a man who appeared to have some remote connection with the family was rather an embarrassment, and the fact that Mrs. Jones' children were chiefly boys, with the exception of one diminutive girl, cast a doubt over Clara's mind as to the appropriateness of her gift, but as soon as she had taken out her gown and made her little speech of presentation, Mrs. Jones forcibly expressed delight set her mind at ease.

"Why never mind Miss if it won't fit the children; it'll just do for me," holding the skirt in front of her, she continued "Look Miss, it's just the right length. And I can wash it easy enough; and then it'll look as good as new and them shoes is just fine, Miss, and thank you very kindly Miss. I'm very thankful to get them."

Clara had never seen quite such small rooms before, nor quite such ill lighted ones. She went away with some material to give zest to her further Study of Sociology.

Bringing out the Grain.

"No, I didn't forget exactly, but the truth is, I'm tried of always having to say things just so. I don't see why I and all the rest of the boys shouldn't have names shaped just alike, or eyes the same shade, or precisely the same tone of voice, as that I should always be expected to say and do things just as some other people do, because it's 'polite.' Suppose it wasn't polite to have red hair, must I dye mine?"

The tone in which Rob asked this was an aggrieved one. Indeed, he thought himself a much abused boy, that the rules of good-breeding should be so often mentioned in his hearing. He rather prided himself on having his own way of saying and doing things, and thought that the way that came easiest to him was something that ought not to be interfered with—like the shape of his nose or the color of his hair. Perhaps there have been other boys like him who have the habit of saying, "O, that's just my way and I can't help it," as an excuse for actions that were really rude.

"If you have time now, Rob, said Uncle Marshall, "suppose we go out to the shop and pick out some timber for that sled I promised to build you."

Rob was more than glad to do this, both because he was interested in the sled, and because it would give him an opportunity to escape the hated subject of manners.

"All right," he said, "I'll be along."

You're going to the mill for some lumber I, suppose."

"I thought of using this," his uncle answered, handing down from the joists of the unceiled shop some rough pieces of split timber.

"Not that way!" Rob said, in an astonished tone.

"Why, you see, this is just the way they grew—their natural way. You couldn't expect them to be in the shape the timbers in all the other sleds are, could you?"

Rob looked puzzled for a minute; he had forgotten something else in his interest in his sled.

"But you're certainly going to shave them down and plane them square! To say nothing about the looks, the sled would run that much smoother for being planed."

"Oh-o!" said Uncle Marshall, "so the natural way is not always the best way? It makes a difference about the smoothness with which one gets through life, does it?"

Rob saw the point now, but chose not to notice it. "It reduces the friction against the snow, you know, and the sides of the runners sometimes run against the snow almost as much as the bottom."

"Yes, reduces friction, and that is one good thing in favor of making all sled-runners square, no matter in what shape they grow in the woods. Wonder if the rule applies to any thing else—if a uniform fashion in some things doesn't reduce the amount of friction with which a boy can get through life, eh?"

"Then there's another thing about it, uncle; as this is very fine wood, if you smooth it up, it gives a chance to finish it so as to bring out the grain."

"To bring out the grain?" repeated his uncle.

"You see I have a friend in a town who works in a furniture factory, and you do not know what a difference it makes in a 'piece of wood just to bring out the grain.'"

"But is it very hard work? I should think that if it had been intended to have the grain brought out, as you say, it would have been out in the first place. Don't you think that the bark is prettier than the grain?"

"No, and I don't think any one could say that. The bark might do for fence posts, but for tables and chairs and fine office desks they have to rub and rub, and oil and oil, and varnish and varnish, to make a fine, glossy surface, so hard that you can hardly scratch it at all."

"Then the wood in its natural state, with the bark and roots on, is only for fence posts and other rough uses? I suppose it must be the same with other things, too. There was a young fellow who went up to the city from here to get a position. He was bright at figures, and quick and ambitious, but he came back within a week, and I heard that he was so rough in his speech that he drove customers away from the store. I suppose he was only fit for a fence-post, and not for the finer uses. He hadn't had the grain brought out, had he, Rob?"

"I suppose he hadn't had any sort of bringing up," said Rob, a little uneasily, for he had been fighting shy of that subject.

"You mean the rubbing you spoke of? He had the chance to have the grain brought out, but I'm told he never would stand the rubbing. I suppose if the wood had feelings it would oppose being oiled and rubbed in the way you tell about it, wouldn't it? It would rather have the ragged-looking bark in which nature clothed it and be itself, wouldn't it?"

Rob winced a good deal, but he had drawn himself into the subject, and he did not see how to avoid it now. So he bravely said: "If I were a piece of oak, I guess I wouldn't mind about the rubbing, if it would make all the difference between a fence post and a fine office-desk; I'd tell 'em to rub away, and grin and bear it the best I could."

"Good for you, Rob!" said Uncle Marshall approvingly, patting the boy on the shoulder; "that means a bargain; this isn't to be a fence-post sled, but a mahogany polish. And you see that the material you have gets the same kind of a finish, and nothing more said about rubbing on either side. Is it a bargain?"

"It's a bargain," said Rob. And then, as he walked back to the house, he said to himself, "If I'd known there was so much in making a sled good, I'd—but then if that's the way to bring out the grain, why I don't want to be a fence post."—Our Morning Guide.

Her Lesson.

"Love, which is the bond of perfectness."

Barbara Campbell came in one day from her cousin's feeling somehow all out of sorts with herself and the world. Not that much of anything had happened—perhaps that was the trying part of it. To think that she should feel so upset when there was really so little to tell of!

And yet she felt humiliated and restless, and found herself blaming others, and justifying herself.

What was it all about? Only that somebody had criticised her conduct and spoken as though she was not doing quite her full duty in the care of some little girls at sewing school. And then in return she had been aggrieved and her pride resented the charge, which she felt was an unjust one.

Yet now, in thinking it over calmly at home, she said to herself that perhaps the offending remark had been half in fun, and she would better, at any rate, have taken no notice of it.

"Oh! why is it so hard to keep one's temper, and be calm in spirit?" she thought. Just then her eyes lighted upon the wall-roll of Scripture that hung near the window, and she read over the hymn for the day. As she did this, two lines of it seemed quite to answer her question:

The perfect way is hard to flesh,
It is not hard to love.

"Why, yes," mused she, "that is it! The flesh is quick to take offense, quick to give retort, and I must have been yielding to the old nature that should be crucified with my Savior. All it needs is to be under the rule of love, not of the flesh. Christ's love in my heart, his meek spirit controlling my speech—then nothing will be hard to me! Christ's loving love, that 'vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not his own, is not provoked; taketh not account of evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'"

For several days after this, Barbara found constant help and comfort in these two lines of Faber's—repeating them to herself when alone and when about to go forth to companionship with others:

The perfect way is hard to flesh,
It is not hard to love.

And then she read again the little book that not long before had come close to her need, Drummond's "Pax Vobiscum," dwelling especially upon certain passages that fitted her case exactly. Here is one:

"The ceaseless chagrin of a self-centered life can be removed at once by learning meekness and lowliness of heart. He who learns them is forever proof against it. Men sigh for the wings of a dove that they may fly away and be at rest. But flying away will not help us. The kingdom of God is within you. We aspire to the top to look for rest; it lies at the bottom. Water rests only when it gets to the lowest place. So do men. Hence be lowly."

Again she read:
"Touchiness, when it becomes chronic, is a morbid condition of the inward disposition. It is self-love in-flamed to the accurate point; conceit, with a hair trigger. . . . It is the beautiful work of Christianity everywhere to adjust the burden of life to those who bear it—and then to it. It has a perfectly miraculous gift of healing."

God help all who, like my Barbara, are wearing "a rough, ill-fitted collar at the best," instead of the perfect and easy "yoke" of the blessed Master.—The Advance.

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