

Family Circle.

"Lost for Want of a Word."

"Lost for want of a word!"
 Fallen among thieves and dying,
 Priests and Levites passing
 The place where he is lying;
 He is to faint to call,
 Too far off to be heard—
 There are those beside life's highway
 Lost for want of a word!
 Lost for want of a word!
 All in the dark night straying
 Among the mazes of thought,
 False light ever betraying,
 O! that a human voice
 The murky darkness had stirred!
 Lost and benighted forever!
 Lost for want of a word!
 Lost for want of a word!
 Too high, it may be, and noble
 To be ever checked in his sin,
 Or led to Christ in his trouble;
 No one boldly and truly
 To show him where he had erred—
 Poor handful of dust and ashes!
 Lost for want of a word!
 Lost for want of a word!
 A word which you might have spoken:
 Who knows what eyes may be dim
 Or what hearts may be aching and broken?
 To scatter beside all waters,
 Nor sicken at hope deferred:
 Let never a soul by thy dumbness,
 Be lost for want of a word.

Jack's Lesson.

Here is a true story. Jack H. told it to me of his own boyhood.
 He was born and reared in the north of Ireland. The winters there are not usually very severe, but occasionally they have some very deep snows.

Father came through the shed where I was fixing straps, for my new snow-shoes one day, and said:

"Jack, do you get the sheep together before night in the lower fold. It looks as if this storm would last all night; and if it should it may be more easily done to-day than to-morrow."

I looked up through the open door at the snow, which was falling gently and steadily. It did not seem to me likely to be much of a storm. But I had been taught unquestioning obedience and replied:

"Yes sir, I will," and went on with my work.

Before it was finished Tom Higgins came up and had a new plan for making a rabbit trap, and we spent half the afternoon trying to carry it into execution, and the short winter day passed and the sheep were not folded.

In short, it quite slipped my memory, only to be recalled by my father's question as he drew the family Bible towards him for evening worship:

"Jack have you folded those sheep?"
 The blood leaped to my forehead and I was forced to reply:

"No sir, I got to playing with Tom Higgins."

My father's eyes were fixed on my reply with a dreadful gaze. He had upbraided me with violence, and I think I could have borne it better.

"I am very sorry, sir," I managed to stammer out at last.

"Did you have good reason to be so?" said my father, "and those sheep are lost to-night and you do not remember there will be no more play for you till they are found. People who will not take trouble will be overtaken by trouble."

The reading and the psalm and the prayer over I slipped quietly away to bed, taking a peep as I went, through the shed door, to see how the storm was progressing.

I saw it had increased and the wind was rising.

Nothing but power could keep me awake long, in those days, however, so I slept soundly.

In the morning I found that the storm was still raging. The snow lay deep on the ground, and the wind was driving it into the hollows and packing it away into solid masses.

Father came in from taking a survey of the weather, bringing a rod full fifteen feet long.

"The snow is deep," said he, "I am troubled about those sheep. They always seek shelter in the hollows and along the hedges, just where the drifts will be deepest. How I shall find them I do not know. I hope you are ready for a weeks hard work, my son!"

"Yes sir, I am very sorry, and will do my best," I replied.

Your best would have gone much further yesterday than it will to-day. But we won't spend our strength groaning

over a bad job. After breakfast we will go out and try what we can do."

"In this storm, father?" said my mother depreciatingly. "It is the worst storm of the year. The snow blows so you can scarce find your way."

"There are two hundred of those sheep," said my father, and I cannot afford to lose them.

Breakfast over we bound on our snow-shoes and with the long pole and a snow shovel went out to seek for the lost sheep.

It cleared a little before noon, though the wind still sent the snow whirling about our faces; so it was not easy or agreeable working.

Father found one here and another there and I was set to dig them out.

Fifteen were found and brought home that day as a result.

The next day the neighbors came and helped, for the weather had moderated, and there was always danger that a sudden thaw would follow such deep snows and the sheep be drowned before they could be rescued.

One by one, or in twos and threes, the poor creatures were found and taken from the snow.

At the end of a week of search and hard digging there were still seventy-five missing.

"How long will any live under the snow father?" I asked when, a second week of labor had only reduced the number of missing to forty.

"I have heard of their living three weeks," said my father. "We will keep on as long as we can find any alive."

The snow had settled into compact masses nearly thirty feet deep in some of the valleys, but we still found now and then a sheep by the hole which the warm breath of the creature made in the snow as it rose.

I searched diligently for these holes. Little I cared that I had not had a moment's play in all the days since the storm. I was most anxious that all the sheep should be found alive.

I think the first real prayer I ever offered was sent up then that the thaw might keep off till all the sheep were found.

It did keep away wonderfully.

At the end of three weeks all but twenty-four were rescued.

Still we searched, and now and then found a poor creature famished and emaciated but still alive, which was carried to the house and consigned to my mother and the girls, who chafed and tended it till it was won back to a degree of strength while we spared no time for the search.

"It's no use to hunt longer; the rest are all dead," said my father one night when we were coming home dispirited and weary having found five of the poor things laying together drowned in one of the hollows. "You look thin and pale Jack. You have worked well. I think I must release you now."

But I would not be released. The word had been, "No play till every sheep is found," and alive or dead they should be found.

I toiled along next day, and found three and one was alive.

The thaw carried away the snow so fast that I had less and less area to search over now.

But it was poor encouragement to work for all I found was dead.

A dozen times I was tempted to yield to my mother's persuasion and not throw away any more labor. But my father said not a word and I kept on.

"The sheep are all found now, father; I took off the pelt of the last of the dead to-day," I said one evening when he came in late from work.

"Well Jack, this lesson has cost me almost a score of sheep and both of us a good deal of hard work; but if it teaches you to be faithful to all your duties in the future I shall not be sorry."

"Thank you father," said I, and I vowed inwardly that it should and I believe that

Charlie's Lesson.

"What are you rattling off at such a rate, Charlie, boy?" asked little Charles Radcliffe Aunt Helena, as she came upon the piazza one Sunday morning before church time, and found her nephew perched upon the piazza-rail with an open book in his hand; the while his busy tongue as fast as it could move, chatting some sounds like these:

"Shant take thname
 Thiondthegod vain,
 Flordun oldm gifts,
 Flordunm vain."

Over and over Charlie turned, his strange sounding medley on his tongue, and Aunt

Helena looked at him in a puzzled way trying to make out the sense, if sense there might be in any of it. At last she asked,

"Where did you learn that gibberish, Charlie, and what do you mean by it pray?"

Charlie seemed surprised.
 "Why Auntie," he cried, "don't you know your commandments? That is a commandment. I learned it out of the Bible."

"Oh," said Auntie, "out of a Choctaw or Choctaw or Cherokee Bible, probably. I do not know the commandments in any such language as that."

"Why," laughed Charlie, "that isn't Choctaw or Cherokee. It's just—well I guess it's English—only it's the careless sort. Mamma didn't understand it any better than you did. She paused just now, and said it was naughty to jabber nonsense in such a fashion on Sunday."

"Won't you please translate your 'careless English' into good plain English for my benefit?" asked Aunt Helena, kindly.

"Oh, you know it," said Charlie, gayly. "It is the third commandment: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.'"

"Do you understand this commandment?" asked Auntie.

"Oh yes, indeed," said the little lad.

"It means you mustn't curse and swear—be profane you know."

"What is it to be profane?" asked Aunt Helena.

"I know," said Charlie, smiling, "but I can't exactly tell. Wait a moment, and I'll find out."

Then he ran to the dictionary, and looked up the word. His mother had taught him to do this whenever he came to a word the meaning of which he thought he understood, but which he could not define.

"To be profane means to treat any sacred subject with irreverence or neglect. To profane the name of God is to speak or use it lightly, irreverently or wickedly, and not with that respect and reverence that belongs to holy things," said Charlie.

"Yes," answered Auntie. "And according to this, it is a sin against God to use his holy name in any but a reverent manner."

"Yes," said Charlie promptly.

"Then was my Charlie in his careless sort of 'English' just now, using the name of God in a sacred or reverent manner?"

Charlie blushed, but made no answer.
 "I hope my little boy has now learned the third commandment," said Auntie. "It is a lesson that none of us can learn too early or too thoroughly."

"The name of God is the holiest of all sacred names. We should never let it lightly pass our lips, or use it except with utmost reverence. To use God's name in wicked cursing and swearing is a fearful wrong. To speak it lightly or unthinkingly is also wrong. And God has said that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Charlie is a man now, but he has never forgotten the lesson of his "careless English," and always remembers the true meaning of the third commandment.

Two Poisons.

"Father," said Albert Leigh, one evening, "will you give me the key to the book case in your study?"

"Why, my son?"

"I want to get a paper."

"What paper?"

"A paper that is on the lower shelf."

"That is not an answer to my question."

"A weekly paper, father; I am not sure of the name. I want to read it this evening."

"Who gave you that paper, Albert?"

"One of the boys at school. A great many of the boys buy them. He said there was nice stories in them. Did you look it up father?"

"Yes."

"Why can I not read it?"

"I put it away because I did not wish you to read it. I have not read it myself, but I know its character and the character of the men who publish it. They are bad men who fill their papers with things that it would be wrong for me to allow you to read."

Albert looked very much disappointed.

"I am sure father that was a very interesting story I began last night, and I want very much to finish it. I will pass over all that is wrong."

Mr. Leigh smiled.

"And how will you know what to pass over till you have read it?"

"Well, father, I am sure just reading it once very quickly would do me no harm."

"Albert, why is your mother always very careful to keep the laudanum locked up?"

"Because it is poison and she is afraid the children might get it."

"But is that the only poison?"

"No, there are a good many others."

"Yes, and of many kinds, which may hurt a man in various ways. Some will put you into a deadly sleep; others bring violent pain and convulsions. You may die from swallowing one kind or breathing another kind into your lungs, or by allowing another to touch a scratch and so get into your blood. A sensible man will handle all most carefully; a sensible child will not touch them at all. But there are worse and more deadly poisons than any sold at the druggists. Which is of most importance, Albert, to you and to me, the soul or the body?"

"The soul of course."

"Why?"

"Because it must live forever in heaven or hell."

Then is not the poison which would destroy the soul to be dreaded and avoided more than what would injure our poor mortal bodies?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, I believe that fatal poison is contained in many weekly papers which are published and made attractive for boys and girls. So I looked this up just as your mother locks up the laudanum. The writers of these stories are wretched men and women, who are poisoning the souls of their fellow creatures. They are doing this in a dangerous way—by interesting and exciting stories. Almost daily we hear of men committing crime, and even boys, who say that they were first led astray by just such papers and books."

When you are older, and your character is formed and your principles established, if you ever see such papers you will notice their errors and despise them. But now, my dear boy, be as much afraid of reading poison as of swallowing it. Never begin a book or paper until you have asked me or some friend you can trust, whether it is safe and proper for you. There are far too many good papers and books, interesting and instructive, that you need waste your time and ruin your soul by reading such papers as you desire."

And now my son, I want you to read this statement in to-day's paper, and said to have been made by Mr. Campbell, Superintendent of the House of Correction of the New York Asylum:

"I wish to enter the strongest protest against the evil that sends seven-eighths of these boys here. Almost the first question I put to these unfortunate lads is, 'What have you been reading?' and the answer invariably shows that my surmise was right. The horrible trashy literature that these boys feed on is what corrupts their minds. The other day a boy was brought here in whose pockets were found a toy pistol, three revolvers, three boxes of cartridges, a gold watch, three large new jack-knives. With this display before me I asked the usual question, and the answer came promptly, 'I read *The Boys of New York*.' The boy had an uncle in Connecticut from whom he had run away after stealing his money and watch."

Smiles.

Men are frequently like tea—the real strength and goodness are not properly drawn out until they have been in hot water.

Mrs. Farrington has been reading the health officer's weekly report, and thinks total must be an awful malignant disease since as many die of it as of all the rest put together.

"Mr. President," said a delegate in a recent convention, "I think we should adjourn till to-morrow as I notice that there are fifteen delegates in this convention here who are absent."

A well-known Boston banker, who always prided himself upon being a self-made man, during a recent talk with a friend had occasion to remark that he was the architect of his own destiny—that he was a self-made man. "W-h-a-t do you say?" asked the friend, who stutters. "I say with pride that I am a self-made man—that I made myself," replied the banker.

"Then while you were making yourself," stammered his friend, "why the dickens didn't you put some more hair on the t-top of your head?"

"How long will it be before you get this work done?" said a lady to an apprentice who was painting her house.

"Well, I don't know, ma'am," said he, "the boss has gone to look for another

job. If he gets it, it will be done to-morrow, but if he don't I'm afraid it'll be all next week."

Many a congregation makes it a point to witness the entrance of every son who passes up the aisle of the church.

Being worried one afternoon by turning practice in his congregation Dean stopped in his sermon and said:

"Now listen to me and I will tell you who the people are as each one of comes in."

He went on with his discourse until a gentleman entered, when he bawled like an usher:

"Deacon A., who keeps a shop over way."

He again went on with his sermon presently another man passed into aisle and he gave his name, residence and occupation.

At length some one opened the door was unknown to Mr. Dean when he said: "A little old man with a drab coat and an old hat. Don't know him. Look yourself."

The congregation was cured.

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