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H. P. MOORE, Editor and Proprietor.

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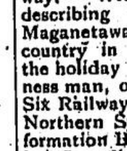

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Poetry.

AN OVERWORKED ELOCUTIONIST

Once there was a little boy, whose name was Robert Reece;
And every Friday afternoon he had to speak a piece.
So many poems thus he learned that soon he had a store
Of recitations in his head, and still kept learning more.

And now this is what happened: He was called upon one week,
And totally forgot the piece he was about to speak!
His brain he cudgeled. Not a word remained within his head!
And so he spoke at random, and this is what he said:

"My Beautiful, my Beautiful, who standest proudly by,
It was the schooner Hesperus—the breaking waves dashed high!
Why is the Forum crowded? What means this stir in Rome?
Under the spreading chestnut tree there is no place like home!

When Freedom from her mountain height cried, 'Twinkle, little star,'
Shoot if you must this gray bid head,
King Henry of Navarre!
Roll on, thou deep and dark blue castled crag of Drachenfels!
My name is Norval, on the Grampian Hills, ring out, wild bells!

If you're waking, call me early, to be or not to be.
The curfew must not ring to-night!
O woodman, spare that tree!
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on! And let who will be clever!
The boy stood on the burning deck, but I go on forever!"

His elocution was superb, his voice and gestures fine;
His schoolmates all applauded as he finished the last line.
"I see it doesn't matter," Robert thought, "what words I say,
So long as I declaim with oratorical display!"

—Carolyn Wells, in St. Nicholas.

Select Family Reading

The Boy and the Dream

THE boy's father died when he was ten years old. His mother had no one then but him. She read and studied and played games with him. They walked up and down the hills together and picked flowers and mosses. Often they had long talks.

Little by little a terrible truth dawned upon the mother. She had never been strong, and since her husband's death she had grown weaker. She might die before the boy should grow up. Then he would come under evil influences. He might forget her teachings. He might become a very different man from what she wished him to be.

"Oh," she thought often, "if I could only speak some strong words which might sink so deep into his heart that he would never forget them!" She prayed much that those right words, at just the right time, might come to her, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

One day they had been off on a delightful excursion and had come home in the early evening very tired. It was while they were resting in the little parlor, the mother in a great easy chair, and the boy on a hassock at her feet, with his head in her lap, that the words came to her for which she had been hoping; and it was as she had wished—the boy never forgot them.

There had been a pause. Then the boy began: "Harold says he don't like it in the city. He says when it comes night his aunt won't let him go anywhere—and she won't play parched or anything with him, and there isn't anything for him to do."

"That is rather hard," smiled his mother, "but there is always the dream."

"The dream?" repeated the boy, mystified.

"Yes. Haven't you a dream?"

"Why, yes," he answered hesitatingly. "I dream a good many nights. Don't you know I told you yesterday about a dream I had about riding with my father?"

"Yes, that was a night dream. Night dreams are often beautiful, but they are generally rather wild and disjointed. I like day dreams better."

"Day dreams?"

"Yes. When I was a little girl I used to have beautiful day dreams—especially when there was nothing else to do and time hung heavily. Sometimes I dreamed that I stood at the head of my class. Sometimes that I became a great nurse and comforted many sick people. And always, that I had a home of my own, which I would arrange sometimes in one way and sometimes in another; and a husband who would love me as my father loved my mother—and always a dear little boy of my own. You see, some of my dream came true."

The boy laughed.

"Yes, and I dreamed that I should travel through strange countries. That came true, too. But I often dreamed afterward that I should go again and take my little boy with me. In the dream it was very nice to see how pleasant he was with the funny birds and animals and the queerly-dressed children over there."

The boy laughed again, this time half sadly. "But that part never came true," he said.

"No," she rejoined with a sigh, "and it probably never will come true now, for since your dear father died we have been too poor."

"But I can have that for part of my dream," he said eagerly.

"Yes, and if you have a dream like that to turn into a reality, you will work all the harder and better. Let us imagine a beautiful dream for you."

There was silence. The boy seemed intensely interested.

"I will dream that I shall be a great engineer—like Harold's father," he broke out at last. "I will lay out great railroads, and survey for cities and reservoirs—and be the best in the town—maybe in the state, maybe anywhere."

"You might as well try," laughed his mother. "But don't be discouraged if you have to work hard and if in the end are not as successful as you meant to be. Just do the best you can."

"Oh, of course," he said comfortably. "And soon I shall have some money laid up; then I must have a home of my own."

"I am so glad you thought of that!" cried his mother. "That is really the best of all—but I did not think you would realize it. A home of your own, with a sweet wife and loving children—surely a dear little boy like mine," kissing his forehead lovingly, "and people liking you and respecting you and coming to ask your advice, just as they used to ask your father's."

He laughed a little scornfully. That did not appeal to him.

"And you a very strong man," she added, "very well—never sick—never doing anything to hurt your health."

"Yes—very strong," he echoed. "I can jump further now and throw the hammer further than Harold or Frank."

"That is all very well, but," she reminded him, "you remember that I read you how too much of what they call 'athletics' often unfits a man for practical life. Don't go into it too hard."

"Oh, no, I won't," he answered, with the impatient confidence of the young and ignorant.

"And what kind of a home shall we dream for you?" she asked thoughtfully. "Shall it be a large mansion, with turrets on it, and with grand terraces in front? Or shall it be a plain house, with just a bay window like ours? And, of course, a large yard?"

"Yes, a very large yard, with fine trees and flowers. I am not sure about the house, but there must be lots of yard—enough for a tennis court and one field on purpose for baseball, and I rather think, for golf."

"Perhaps one yard might be very trim and smooth, and another rough and wild, like ours," she suggested.

"I think all rough and wild," he corrected.

"Oh, well, you can dream it any way you like—and over so many different ways. That is the pleasure of a dream. And no matter how hard you work—and of course you must expect to work hard to get the money to pay for all these things—then in the evening you can always dream your dream, and pray God to help you make it true—if it is a right dream," she added, with a sudden fear that with the years new and lower ideals might come to him.

"Of course," he laughed easily and sleepily, "it will always be right and pretty. I like it."

A few weeks later the mother did indeed die. The father had trusted people who had deceived him and had cheated him out of his property. The pleasant home was sold. There was just enough money to pay the debts.

The boy went to live with his father's sister, Aunt Ellen, and her husband, Uncle Silas. They were plain, godly people, who tried to take good care of the little orphan, but they did not understand him very well.

One day when he was tired with "raking after" the men who were getting in the hay, he threw himself down to rest under a big maple tree.

"Want a paper to read?" said Uncle Silas, kindly.

He tossed the county paper toward the boy, who caught it and said "Thank you," and laid it aside.

"I'd rather think about my dream," he said.

"Your dream," repeated Uncle Silas, staring at him with some contempt. "Dreaming's mighty poor business. A boy like you, with nothing but his head and two hands to depend upon, better not do much dreaming."

The boy turned red but he said nothing. He saw that Uncle Silas did not understand—and how could he explain?

Years afterward, Uncle Silas and Aunt Ellen, grown old and gray, visited the boy, now a boy no longer, in his own beautiful home. His charming wife and children entertained them with affectionate hospitality. He took them to drive in his own carriage, and they noticed with pride that his neighbors treated him with respect.

When the good old people were ready to leave, Uncle Silas shook the boy's hand warmly.

"I'm proud of you," he said with feeling. "You seem to be doing your part in the church and in the town. You work pretty hard, but you've got something worth working for."

"Yes," said the young man, smiling. "I do work pretty hard, as most people have to these days if they accomplish anything—but I always have my dream."

"Your dream?" asked the old gentleman, in a puzzled way.

"Yes—just the same dream I used to be dreaming under the maple tree. Part of it has come true, but there is a good deal more to bring to pass yet."

"I—I never had such an opinion of dreams," stammered the old man, "but—"

"You see," said the boy, with a grave smile, "one has to know how to dream—and I had a good mother who taught me how. I was a very little boy—but I never forgot it, and it is my dream which has shaped my life."

—The Interior.

The Indiana man who led a double life on a salary of $16 a week must seem like a wizard to the man who finds it hard to live a single life on double that.

THE INVISIBLE STRING.

Paderewski is a master of the ivory keys, but few know about the invisible string of his music. That he should have some "secret" will be credible to every one who knows human nature. For it is a familiar fact to those who know the inside of human life, that most men of influence have something intensely personal as the secret key of their work or character.

I observed a number of years ago that the great pianist had lost his only son. Few of those who read the bald mention of the fact in the papers knew how it stood related to his career.

"You are not aware," he once said to an acquaintance, before his re-marriage, "that my wife died some years ago, and that my only child is an incurable cripple. He is all in the world that I have. My only motive in studying for the career of a public artist was that I should be able to obtain the best medical advice for my poor boy. When the public applauds me, I think of the little fellow lying on his couch in the house by the sea which I have taken for him."

The public naturally assumed that he lived only for his art, for mastery over his instrument and over human emotions, or for the fame and its golden harvest. Doubtless these incentives animated him in his profession. But a finer inspiration lay behind—the vision of his suffering boy, who might yet be cured.

In our Christian service have we some such deep and sacred inspiration to give vital power to our work? Without it we cannot reach and strike the heart strings of those for whose benefit we are working. To penetrate and quicken others' souls, our words must vibrate in answer to some hidden chord, some fine and ardent motive. If Christ has become the centre and ruling force in our lives, "for My sake" will animate and energize us, and will draw around it other high inspirations. And these will become the secrets of our power with God and men.

There are practical human reasons, standing in the front of our minds, for carrying on our work—perhaps the argument of our imperative wants, or the pleasure of being associated with friends in a good cause, or the natural wish to be useful. Men and affairs crowd and press on us; the business of our post calls forth the ordinary prosaic incentives: and we cannot always be keeping up a conscious whispering communion with the Holy One. Yet all the time the deep undertone of our life may be, must be, a holy devotion "for the sake of Somebody," an urgent love, or the high calling to win the Christian character and make our lives fruitful of good in the lives of others.—Presbyterian College, Montreal.

A DOMESTIC SCIENCE EXAM.

Heinrich Conreid, the retiring manager of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, tells of a queer mistake recently made by a friend of his, a clergyman.

"The clergyman had advertised for a butler, and the next morning after breakfast a well dressed, clean shaven young man in black was ushered into his study. 'Name, please?' asked the clergyman. 'Hilliary Arbuthnot, sir.' 'Age?' 'Twenty-eight.' 'What work have you been accustomed to?' 'I am a lawyer, sir.' The clergyman started. This was odd. However, as he knew, many were called in the law, few chosen. 'But,' he said, 'do you understand the conduct of a household?' 'In a general way, yes,' murmured the applicant. 'Can you carve?' 'Yes.' 'Wash glass and silver?' 'I—er—think so.' The young man seemed embarrassed. He frowned and blushed. Just then the clergyman's wife entered. 'Are you married?' was her first question. 'That,' said the young man, 'was what I called to see your husband about, madam. I desire to know if he can make it convenient to officiate at my wedding at next Thursday week.'"

FAITH IN ORATORY.

"I suppose, Uncle Jim, you remember a good deal about the politics of the early days?"

"Well, I never tuk much int'rest in politics, but I kin recollect when John C. Fremont was 'lected President."

"Fremont! Why, Fremont was never elected."

"He wun't? Well, now, that gits me. I heerd a leadin' speaker talk the night 'fore 'lection, an' he said if John C. Fremont wun't 'lected the country would fall to ruin an' everybody would have to shut up shop. Course, I didn't take the papers; but, nothin' thet things went on 'bout same as before, I calculated John won. So he wun't 'lected? Well, b'jinks! thet gits me!"

SHE WAS LONELY.

Mary Helen, four years old, is very brave, and is usually perfectly willing for her mother to leave her after she has put her to bed and has given her her favorite doll. But one night after she had been left a short while she called loudly for her mother.

"Why, Mary Helen!" her mother asked, "what is the matter with you?"

"I'm tired of staying up here with nobody but God and my dolly. I want somebody with skin on," she sobbed.—Delineator.

DOCTORS' BILLS.

Who, having obtained an honest bill for the medicine, will wish to have particulars of the doctor's "professional services?" Imagine a bill made up with such nicety as this:

"To counting pulse, sixpence; to viewing tongue, threepence; to asking four questions (three irrelevant), fourpence; to telling patients to say 'ninety-nine,' eight-pence; to medicine, 1s. 6d.; to bottle, two-pence; to label, 1 penny; total 3s. 6d."—Yorkshire Observer.

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

Gleanings and Sittings from Our Issue of August 2, 1888.

DIED.—At Speyside, on the 30th of July, Alex. McDonald, late captain of the Salvation Army, aged 23 years, 5 months and 28 days.

Rev. Byron Laing preached an excellent sermon in the Methodist Church, on Sunday morning. It was plain, practical gospel teaching.

Mr. Geo. H. Kennedy was elected Councillor in Georgetown last week by a majority of 13. It was a prohibition contest, and whiskey lost.

The Village of Parry Sound never had a license to sell whiskey. Now having become a town, it still pursues the same policy.

The ACTON FREE PRESS has entered its 11th year, and is receiving congratulations from many newspapers. We recognize the FREE PRESS as a most excellent journal, and wish it increased prosperity.—Oakville Star.

It is expected that the Guelph Junction Railway will be completed as far as the Eramosa bridge this week.

Mr. Thos. Ebbage has replaced his ten-horse power boiler with an eighteen-horse power one. This will equalize his power so that in future it will not be necessary to run down his water power so low as has been frequently done.

The ACTON FREE PRESS has just passed its 13th mile post. It has gained in strength and appearance at every stage, and to-day its publisher may pride himself on the fact that he holds the helm of the model craft among Canadian country newspapers. May its shadow never grow less.—St. Mary's Argus.

Cretonne of the cheap sort used for decorating rooms, turns out to be as arsenically poisonous as green wall paper.

A stalk of Lincolnshire Poland white oats brought us by Mr. Robt. Kannawin, measures from tip to root 55½ inches. This is his first year with this variety, and it promises to be very prolific. This stalk bears 200 grains, the product of a single seed.

At an enthusiastic convention of the Conservative party held in Milton on Saturday, Mr. David Henderson was again chosen candidate for the coming bye-election. Acton delegates reported as being present: County Warden, W. H. Storey, Dr. McGarvin, Adam Cook, Thomas Perryman. Mr. Henderson accepted the candidature.

Mr. John Waldie was waited upon in Toronto on Saturday, by Messrs. Mayor Robertson, of Milton, David Wheelehan, Nassagaweya, and Henry Robinson, Trafalgar, the deputation appointed to convey his selection as Liberal candidate for the bye-election. Mr. Waldie accepted the nomination.

Mr. Harvey Stafford, who went to Fort Scott, Kansas, recently, in search of better health, has returned home. He, however, is not nearly so well as when he left.

Constable Ephraim Chapman, of Campbellville, arrested a man who tried to sell him a horse and rig, but who could give no satisfactory account as to how he came by them. He refused to tell his name or where he came from. Sherriff McKim, of Wellington Co., and a son, came next day and claimed the horse, stating that the son had been at a barn raising, leaving the horse in the stable. The prisoner was seen at the raising, and had taken the horse and a neighbor's rig. The man had with him three watches and $200 confederate money.

The keeper of the C. P. R. hotel, Milton, in default of payment of a $50 fine for selling liquor without license, was sent to goal for 30 days. This is first case under the Crooks Act, since the Scott Act repeal.

[ED. NOTE.—During the twelve months closing with the present number of the FREE PRESS, we have regularly conducted the department, under the heading, "Twenty Years Ago," and have received many intimations, verbally and by letter, which lead us to believe the innovation has been appreciated. There have been many surprises expressed as showing the rapid flight of time, and wonderful changes occurring almost without serious notice during a period of this length. We propose to continue these condensed notes, and may say that we shall endeavor to sift out matters which, while all may not be of interest to everyone, will be of interest to some.]

NOT EASILY CAUGHT.

The young clubman had been introduced to a beautiful Russian actress. He was charmed, entranced, and he finally led her to the conservatory, where they might have a quiet minute to themselves.

"Pardon me," he said. I did not quite catch your name."

"What is it you did not do?"

"Catch your name."

"Oh, your language is so strange. Do you want to know my name?"

"Yes; your own full name."

"Will you catch it this time?"

"I'll do my best."

"Well, it's Vera Federovina Kommisarjewskaya."

AN EYE ON THE FUTURE.

Tommy's maiden aunt had called attention to some of that young man's misdemeanors, thereby causing him to be punished. Tommy pondered a while, then asked, "Papa, will little sister Gladys be an aunt to my children when I am a man?"

"Yes, Tommy," answered his father, much interested. "Why do you ask?"

"'Cause she might as well get married and have a home of her own, for I don't intend to 'low any aunts to stay around my house, making trouble for my children."—Woman's Home Companion for August.

Marriage is a failure only when one or both parties to it are failures.

LOVING KINDNESS.

Let us not ask to do great deeds or for the world's applause,
But only just to live each day for some true, noble cause;
It may be some obscure place will claim us for its own,
The world pass by with scornful smile and leave us there alone.

It may not be on glowing heights that we are called to live,
But on the lonely mountain-side, with but ourselves to give;
In times of need and sore distress another's wound to bind
Will bring to us life's deeper joy—the art of being kind.

We may not be upon the roll of the world's greatest men,
But we at least can do our best; and, failing, try again;
No matter where our lot is cast, in lowly place or high,
Just do a deed of kindness there, let not the chance pass by.

The good of simply being kind helps ease mankind's great pain,
Each human soul our love has touched grows strong to bear again,
And thus by helping those in need, we help ourselves the most,
And at the journey's end we'll find that kindness was not lost.

—New York Observer.

ABRAM'S STEERS.

They were all gathered about the stove in the deacon's store when Abram Howland entered, and was greeted with inquisitive nods and glances. Abram was a man of affairs, and in his cattle-buying expeditions sometimes travelled far. This brushing up against the world, says a writer in the Boston Herald, gave him an air of shrewd ability, and his neighbors were evidently anxious to hear of his latest purchase.

"That was a fine pair of steers I saw yo toting up the road t'-day, Ab'am," suggested the deacon.

"Fine a pair as I ever picked up," Abram Howland replied, easily. "Well matched, I s'pose yo noticed?" he continued.

"Should say's much," replied the deacon, admiringly. "How much did they set yo back, I wonder?"

This was what everybody wanted to know, and the audience turned interestedly for Abram's reply.

"Oh, I got 'em back here quite a piece. That nigh one, he come off old man Tolles's place, up Goshen way. He's a pretty good match, but not quite so good's tother one. He come from—"

"What'd yo pay fur 'em?" repeated the deacon, raising his voice slightly. Abram kept on in his established monotone. Apparently he had not heard the deacon's question.

"You know that Swede, the one that took up the old Haskins farm, all run down to wreck and up to brush? Well, he had tother one. I see by my eye there wa'n't an ounce difference in their hoofs, so I made a dicker t' get 'em both. Glad yo all like 'em."

"Yes, but how much did they tax yo fur 'em?" shouted the deacon. And 'Bijo Stiles added; "Bet yo, now, the Swede taxed yo more'n Tolles did, if truth was known."

"I didn't consider that any defect," replied Abram, gaily. "A star more or less don't make any difference, and that's as nigh alike as yo can expect t' pick 'em up, fur apart's them was."

The deacon got down to Abram's ear and shouted, "Abram, what—did—ye—pay—for—the steers?"

"Oh, they are yearlings all right. I got their pedigree down fine. And I cal'late that if I don't dispose of 'em for driving, I can fat 'em up good for market. Now Western beef's getting so high, we Eastern fellers can work in a fat critter once in a while without losing anything."

By a simultaneous movement forced Abram's attention from the high joint of stovepipe where his eye had been fixed, and shouted at him in desperate unison:

"What did them steers cost ye?"

"Did I hear yo ask what they cost?" queried Abram, with a twinkle in his eye. "Now I can't recollect just this minute whether I told anybody yet what they cost. No, I don't think I have. But I'll think it over, and if I remember telling anybody I'll come back an' let yo know who it was." And so saying, Abram struggled to his feet and stalked out.

ALMOST SLIPPED HIS MIND.

"Mammy says yo' t' cum quick's yo' kin."

"Wot she wan' me fo'?"

"An dun fo'got."

"Well, yo' bettah 'membah, chile. She wan' watah?"

"Nope."

"Wood?"

"Nope."

"Am mah dinnah burnin'?"

"Oh, golly! Now Ah 'membah. It sho'ly am, an' so's de house!"

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