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The Acton Free Press

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IN TUNE

As I passed along the roadway
On a sunny, bright May morn,
I met my next-door neighbor,
Looking grievous and forlorn.

"A lovely day is this," I said,
"The skies are blue and clear,
"The carols of the birds ring out
"To say that spring is here."

My neighbor passed then on his way,
His brow still dark with care,
For him the springtime never came,
His skies were never fair.

I know he's had his share of gloom,
As all of us must have,
But if we would be happy here,
We must be strong and brave.

Cheer up! Cheer up! O, neighbor mine,
And let not them be sad,
When springtime comes upon the earth
We ought to all be glad.

The purple violet dots the sod,
The orchard's sweet with blooms
The wild rose furls its petals pink,
The lilacs toss their plumes.

The soft wind softly sighs among
The leafy maple trees,
And from the clover in the field,
There comes the hum of bees.

All nature is in tune with God,
In mystic, rythmic tune,
Come friend of mine, and with me learn,
The harmony sublime.

Let nature be your teacher, friend,
She'll teach you very soon,
"The secret of a joyous life
"Is just to be in tune."

—A. M. H.

HOW JONESVILLE GOT ITS NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Leslie W. Quirk

WHEN the Great Man rose to make the formal presentation of the new library to the town, the Littlest Boy Scout squirmed in his seat.

"It must be very wonderful," he told the scout master, who sat next to him, "to do a good turn like giving a library to the people; something that you know is going to please everyone, and to be a benefit to the whole town forever and ever. It"—he paused to shake his head wistfully—"It makes the good turns we boy scouts are able to do look rather small, doesn't it sir?"

The scout master did not answer in words. Instead he smiled and lifted his hand till it rested on the boy's shoulder.

"I know," the Littlest Boy Scout went on, "that our good turns aren't done for rewards; they wouldn't be good turns, of course, if we did them in hope of getting something back. Only—only sometimes it seems as if anything we followed can do, isn't exactly worth while. If we could just do something really big, now and then; if we could just build a library—"

The scout master's hand squeezed the scout's shoulder. The Great Man was beginning his speech.

"I want to tell you," the Great Man said, "how this library came to be. It grew from a very tiny acorn, planted nearly a year ago, and I've gone to considerable pains to trace its growth. In telling you the story, I think it is best to omit names, though I can vouch for the accuracy of every statement I make. Let me start in the good old-fashioned way.

"Once upon a time there lived in this town a lady who owned a well-stocked private library. It was the right sort of library, too, not bound in a darkened room, hidden away from those who were hungry for it, but arranged in cases that never had known keys. The library was as free and welcome to those who wanted to use it, as is the very sunshine itself.

"The lady was particularly anxious that the boys of the town should read her books. And they did. I presume they trampled upon her rights at times and even proved themselves nuisances at times, for boys will unwittingly do all these things. But she never minded. She smiled and lent her books, and gave advice and did everything in her power to help the boys.

"Well, they appreciated it. When the boy scout movement came to this town, they began to see that she was doing them a good turn by allowing them to read her books. One afternoon, following the return of some borrowed volumes, two of the boys who had just joined the scouts were talking about this very thing. The conversation ran something like this:

"'I wish,' said one of them, 'that this town had a regular public library, don't you?'

"'Don't I, though!' agreed the other. 'I'd like to do a good turn by building one, if only I could.'

"'That would be a good turn worth while. Everyone would thank you for it. People would look up to you. They'd like you, and they'd go out of their way to do nice things for you. You'd surely be repaid for a good turn like that.'

"'I didn't mean it that way; you don't do good turns for 'towards,' the first boy objected. 'And I can't build a library, of course; no boy can. I guess you and I and the other fellows ought to be mighty thankful that Mrs. Blank is willing to lend us books, and to do good turns for us.'

"'I think,' said the second boy dispassionately, 'she's a little foolish to do it. We can't ever do her a good turn in payment. And I say that the only good turn to do is the one that gets you something.'

"'Every good turn gets you something sooner or later,' his companion argued. 'Maybe not right away, and not directly, but—'

"'Prove it!' snapped the other; 'I don't believe it.'

"Then they both probably forgot all about the discussion, because they saw a man driving past. He was a man who didn't like boys; he didn't know them well enough, perhaps. At any rate, he was about the last person in the world whom either of the scouts wanted to help.

"And it happened just then that he needed help, too. A bolt had dropped from the shafts of his carriage, and unless this was called to his attention, an accident would surely result. The boy who wanted to do something definite for each good turn, stood stock still. The other ran after the man, and called his attention to the lost bolt.

"The man merely grunted, without even saying, 'Thank you.' He didn't offer any reward for the good deed; the boy had known he would not. Nevertheless the man repaired the damage and drove on.

"Just the same, the kindness began to warm the cockles of his hard, old heart. The sun seemed a little brighter, and the world dimmer and better. He felt different, somehow. And a little later, when he met a doctor with whom he had had an argument earlier in the day, he pulled up and told him that he had decided not to close the short-but road across his farm, after all, as he had threatened to do, but that he would leave it open for the doctor to drive over as often as he pleased.

The doctor needed just that little encouragement. Things hadn't been just going right with him that day, and he had begun to despair of human nature. But now he said: 'Why, down at the heart, people are good, of course. What have I been thinking of?' And he touched up his horse and whistled all the way home.

"As he was unhitching, a young fellow of about twenty went tramping dejectedly past his house, casting furtive glances fiero and there. The doctor felt so elated over his discovery that the world was still good that he wanted to do something for some one, and he wanted to do it right away. So he called the lad into his yard and offered him a bench to rest on, and gave him some apples to eat.

"It wasn't much, of course, but it seemed a lot to the young fellow who was out of work, and who was facing his first real crisis in life. That doctor's little kindness worked a miracle in the boy. Never mind what was in the boy's heart to do; he didn't do it. When he had finished eating, he had a long talk with the doctor, instead, and borrowed enough money to take him to the city, away from the temptation which had been gnawing at his heart.

"Better yet, the young fellow's whole nature seemed changed. He was glad he was alive, and he knew he could make good where he was going. He hummed a little tune as he walked to the station with head up and chest out.

"On the train he found a seat next to a prosperous business man who had been brought up in that section of the country. But this man's memories of the people there were unpleasant and he told the young fellow that he could not remember a single thing good about the place.

"'How about the apples?' grinned the boy, and gave him one of the doctor's to eat.

"The man said nothing, but he just munched the apple slowly. It was a good apple, sure enough, and it then brought back recollections of other good apples he had eaten there years before. Then he got to thinking about the people who had given them to him. As he ate slowly and silently, his heart mellowed, till in the end he had changed all his views of his old home town. And this change was all brought about just by thinking of the good people and the good deeds, and forgetting all about the other kind.

"He felt so pleased, so in tune with the world, that when he reached the next station he got out and telegraphed his agent to extend a certain mortgage he had left instructions to foreclose. Where that good turn eventually ended would make another story.

"As he was walking back to his coach from the telegraph station, he heard a dog whining and howling mournfully in the baggage car. He knew animals, and he loved them. Because he couldn't bear to think of one suffering, he asked to be allowed to see it.

"It seemed that the dog wouldn't drink or eat food. The baggagemen didn't know what to do for their charge, and were glad enough to have the man's help.

"Well, it turned out that the animal had a bit of sharp wire stuck in its mouth. The man worked with it till the train reached the next station, and by that time, he had extracted the ugly prong from the dog's jaw. The dog wagged its tail by way of dumb appreciation, and the man patted its head and smiled, quite as if some one had done something for him.

"Back in the train he found its owner, who naturally was very grateful. The dog's master even would have offered a reward, if the man had not explained. 'You see,' he said, 'it was just kindness I was passing along. Some one did something for me, and I wanted to do something for some one else.'

"This made the owner of the dog feel good too. The men began to talk, and the one who had passed along the kindness, told the other about this section of the country, and particularly about his home town. Since he had boarded the train, you see, he suddenly had become proud of his old home place; it seemed to him now that everything there was better than it was anywhere else—the people, the land, the spirit, and maybe the apples he had almost forgotten until to-day.

"He recalled his agent's having mentioned the agitation for a library, and the reluctant decision of the town council that it was impossible to build one, perhaps for years to come. If he could only afford it, the man said, he'd build one himself. He'd like to do the place that sort of good turn.

"Now, the owner of the dog wasn't Andrew Carnegie, but he was interested in books and in libraries. He now thought of a good turn he'd like to do himself; thought of it, you see, became of the warm pulse of good cheer that was flowing through his veins. He took out a pencil and a pad, and looked inquiringly at the business man.

"Suppose," he suggested, "suppose I guaranteed half the cost of a library,—

"Well, that was the beginning.' I—yes, I may as well admit that I was the owner of the dog—I, with the help of the man who had been raised here, rent a representative to this town. He talked to your business men about it. All of them seemed to have good turns to pass along. The farmer who had lost a bolt was not the least of these. The doctor helped. In fact, everyone appealed to give of his time and of his money to further the project; and everyone said he was doing it without wanting any such reward as the mention of his name in connection with it. That's way I am omitting names in my story.

"A month or two later, the building began to go up, on the assurance of your people that the library would be stocked and supported in the proper manner. To-night I have been asked to make the formal presentation to the town. But after all, it isn't my library I didn't build it.

"And now I am going to make an exception to my decision not to mention any names. I'm going to say that the one who really built this library is the boy who wanted to prove, and has proved, that good turns, like chickens, come home to roost. The one who built this library is—." And he said the name of the Littlest Boy Scout.

The Littlest Boy Scout squirmed in his seat. His cheeks got very red. He remembered his complaint that good turns were so small that they didn't seem worth while. He looked with blurring eyes at the Great Man, at the rows of new books, at the magnificent room which housed them. Then his heart began to churn so madly with pure happiness that he couldn't have said a single word if you had offered him a hundred dollars.

PAYING IN ADVANCE

For many of the blessings of life we must pay in advance. The successful man, as a rule, is only taking possession of the good things he paid for in his youth. The habits of application and industry which count so much in life's success, are formed early, invariably. Education is won in youth, almost always. The young people who are learning self-control and are practicing self-denial, who look beyond the present pleasure to future usefulness, are paying in advance for that which they most desire.

THE DESPISED BEED ONIONS

"I've done setting out all the large ones, father," said Harry. "I'm going to throw all those little old things away; I've got the bed full."

The little old things Harry was speaking about were small onion sets. Harry lived in the country and had been helping his father in the garden by putting out the onion bed.

Mr. Hyrd stood looking down at the small sets for a moment before replying. "Looks like it's a shame to throw all these away just because they are little," he said at last. "If they are put out carefully and tended like the larger ones, they would make big, fine onions. Of course they're troublesome to put out, but it seems to me that they ought to have a chance to show what they could do in the way of growing. It just doesn't look right to throw them away because they are little."

Harry looked at his father, then he looked down at the tiny onion sets. "I guess I could rake up another bed for those, father," he said slowly. "I didn't think about them wanting a chance to grow or anything like that."

"Suppose you do that," returned Mr. Hyrd; "and whatever you raise you may have for your own, to sell or do what you please with."

Harry, looking at the slender little sets, had grave doubts about their growing into anything big enough to sell, but he made up his mind to give them a chance; so he set about to make the best bed for them that could be made by a small boy; and when it was finished he carefully put out the little onion sets. Not one was thrown away. He was a very tired little boy when the last one had been planted, but his father came by and said it was a very fine-looking bed indeed; and so Harry almost forgot how his knees and back hurt. He felt proud of the work he had done, even if the little sets refused to come up and grow for him.

Six days later Harry went down to the garden one morning to see if there was any sign of growing things in his onion bed. There had been a warm, gentle spring rain during the night, and Harry gave a little cry as he looked. His union bed was covered with tiny green shoots; not one little set had failed to come up. He ran back to tell his father the wonderful news. "And will they keep growing, father?" he asked.

"If they are worked, they will," said Mr. Hyrd heartily.

"Then you may be sure they'll grow," answered Harry.

And they did grow, for never was an onion bed better tended.

There came a day when they were ready to be taken up. And when they were all up and measured, there were five bushels. Harry's face fairly beamed with pride. "Just think, father," he said, "I was going to throw them away 'cause they were so little."

"Little opportunities, like little onions, often grow into big ones," returned Harry's father. "Always remember the lesson of the little onions, my son; and do not forget, among other things, that kind acts, however small they seem, may be seeds that will grow into something big and fine. So plant as many little seeds of kindness as you can."—Exchange.

THE STRAIGHT AND THE CROOKED

I visited a factory one day where pins are made. A long brass wire is drawn in at one end of a machine, and at the other end out come the pins, more of them than you could count. Most of them are fine and straight, but a few come out crooked. The machine drops them all into a great heap, the crooked and straight together. But it would never do to send them all to market, for nobody wants bent pins. So the crooked ones must be picked out from the others and set aside, while the straight ones are placed in shining rows in paper rolls.

It would seem an endless task to find them. You would never guess how it is done! Nobody's eyes look for them; nobody's fingers pick them out. Each pin is made to confess for itself and to go to its own place. They are all dropped upon a ribbon which has two motions—one straight forward, horizontally, the other from side to side, like a slave. The straight ones roll off easily, but the crooked pin can't roll. So the bent ones stay on the ribbon and when they come to the end of it they drop off in a box of waste.

It made me think of boys and girls. Most of them, I think, are "straight," but not all. Some have a crook in them. These often pass the school tests and graduate with the rest, just as the crooked pins run through the machine without getting found out. But, like the pins, every one will come to a test which will show just what he is. Some day the crooked will be separated from the straight and each will find his own place.—Frank T. Bayley.

BE PREPARED

The motto of the Boy Scouts is "a good one for all of us "Be Prepared." The Scout Manual says: "Be prepared in mind, by having disciplined yourself to be obedient to every order, and also by having thought out beforehand any accident or situation that might occur, so that you know the right thing to do at the right moment, and are willing to do it. Be prepared in body, by making yourself strong and active and able to do the right thing at the right moment and do it."

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 5, 1898

The fruit trees are blossoming.

Brown's sawmill will commence the season's cutting next week.

Arbor Day to-morrow. Let it be more than in name. Plant trees.

Owing to the war in Cuba pineapples will be scarce this season.

Dr. F. S. Mercer, dentist, formerly of Acton, has commenced practicing at Prince Albert, N. W. T.

The annual Dublin Picnic will be held in McDougall's Grove on the afternoon of the Queen's birthday.

It looks as though Councillor Murray's Sunday bell-ringing scheme was knocked out at last meeting of the Council.

A practical electrical engineer will meet the Council this evening to supply expert information on the subject of installing an electric light system in Acton.

Isn't it about time the Park Committee was at work planting maples and other shade trees in the park.

A girl in a neighboring town recently sent twenty-five cents to a New York advertiser to find out how to whiten her hands. She got the answer in a few days, "Soak them in dishwater." It tickled her tired mother nearly to death.

The close season for trout ended on Monday and before sunrise that morning there was a fair quota of enthusiastic fishermen on the move to the "Ole Fishin' Hole."

In response to numerous complaints on the part of farmers and others whose properties the stream passing the tanneries runs through, the members of the Township Board of Health made a tour of inspection on Saturday. Messrs. Beardmore & Co. hope by the improvement in course of construction to remedy the defects complained of.

DIED

HEROD—In Guelph, on Tuesday, May 3, Margaret Sandilands, beloved wife of Dr. George S. Herod.

SHE COULD NOT DISAPPOINT HIM

Everybody knows the girl who puts a sort of blight upon the efforts of other people because she never expects them to do anything worth while or to win the victory in any struggle which they may be making.

"It's only what I expected," she says with a disagreeable laugh when her brother, who is making a real fight to control his hot temper, forgets for a moment, and gives way to sudden anger. And when Tom flings himself out of the room with a muttered, "Oh, what's the use!" he has lost, for the time at least, something he needs in the fight for self-control. That is the feeling that others believe in him and in his ability to conquer in the end.

Many years ago a man who is still known throughout the country as one of the most brilliant and influential preachers of his day found time to accompany a young niece from her home in Boston to a town in Pennsylvania where she was to teach. When he left her there, far from home and friends, he took both her hands in his hand and looked earnestly into her upturned face.

"Good-by, Martha," he said, "remember, I'm expecting great things of you."

The brilliant preacher died years ago, and Martha is now white-haired and feeble. But she has not forgotten what a help and inspiration those few words proved. Not long ago I was one of an audience to which she told the story.

"I don't suppose there was ever a more homesick girl than I was after Uncle Theodore left me," she said. "It was the first time I had ever taught, the first time I had ever been away from home, and for weeks it seemed to me as though I should die if I couldn't go back to Boston. But every time that I decided to give up my school and go back, I thought of Uncle Theodore. 'Uncle Theodore will be disappointed if you show the white feather,' I said to myself. 'He's expecting great things of you, Martha.' And so I would decide to fight it out for another week. I conquered in the end, simply because I could not bear to disappoint Uncle Theodore.

"It has been the same all my life. Whenever anything unusually hard has confronted me, whenever it has seemed as though I could not possibly accomplish what lay before me, I have braced myself to my task with the thought, 'Uncle Theodore is expecting great things of you.' The fact that Uncle Theodore died years ago has made no difference; the words have always helped me."—By Alice Griggs Goode.

A WORD FOR CARELESS LADDER CLIMBERS

We all know the sadness of accidents caused simply by placing a ladder in a tilting position. Hardly a week passes that some accident in home life is not reported, due to carelessness of this kind. Some of the accidents are caused by unsafe equipment, but many of them are caused by unsafe placing of the ladder.

There are means by which one can safeguard the base of a portable ladder. Pivoted lead shoes are recommended for concrete floors, and rubber bases for wet floors. Metal points, lead-coated plates and carborundum have been found to serve very well. The State of Pennsylvania goes so far as to make it a legal obligation to have a man at the foot of each ladder when the floor is of iron.

WE SHOULDN'T WORRY

O heart of mine, we shouldn't
Worry so!
What we've missed of calm we couldn't
Have, you know!
What we've met of stormy pain
And sorrow's driving rain,
We can better meet again
If it blow.

We have stood in that dark hour
We have known,
When the tears fell with the shower
All alone
As the gracious Master meant?
Were not skies and shower blent
Let us temper our content
With His own.

For we know not every morrow
Can be said,
To forgetting all the sorrow
We have had,
Let us fold away our fears,
And put by our foolish tears,
And through all the coming years
Just be glad.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

"YOU WILL WIN"

"You will win! How do I know it? Because you hold your head straight up when you walk!"

They had met on the street, a young man and his teacher, a kindly gentleman. The young man had just engaged to teach his first term of school. It was quite a great event for him. And yet, as was quite natural, he looked forward to the "first day" with something of anxiety. Even while he was thinking it over, the teacher came face to face with him, and, pulling the youth's head up close to him, he had whispered those words in his ear.

And they helped the young teacher all through the years which came afterward. It did him good to know that the man who had followed his work in school had confidence in his ability to win in the battle of life.

What does it show, when a man holds his head up, looking the world squarely in the face? One thing this proves, and that is, that he has nothing to be ashamed of. His life is clean. It is the downward look which speaks of wrong in the life. Did you ever look at a dog that has been caught in some act of thievery? Speak to him, and his head will drop. The cheery wag disappears from his tail. He tries to slip away from you. The same thing which leads the dog to show these signs of guilt, impels men to keep their faces turned downward when they have done something of which they are ashamed.

There is a world of meaning in the old Greek word which calls man "the one with the upturned face." Only the true man has the upturned face.

And when we hold our heads up bravely because we feel that we have it in us to meet the world and win its approval. Consciousness of strength helps us to keep our faces firmly set against everything which may stand between us and success. The weak man always shows his weakness in his face. When he looks at you, you feel a sense of discomfort. You cannot get him to look you fairly in the face. He shifts his gaze. He apologizes for his failure to bring the world to his feet. You go away with the consciousness that, somehow, you have been in the presence of a man who never can win unless he receives power from some source outside of himself. Power keeps the face turned toward the obstacle which is to be met.

The upturned face is the sign of bravery. The men who win battles are the men whose faces are bent upward.

FRIEND, INDEED!

Into one of the ruined villages of France, razed and desolated by the Germans in their retreat, says the World Outlook, came one day a party of the "Men in Gray," the Friends, or Quakers, of England, who, although their religion will not permit them to fight, are spending their strength to restore the ravages of fighting.

In that village lived Marie, who in the pleasant days before the war had dwelt happily with her father and mother, her old grandmother and baby brother in a comfortable red-roofed cottage. Now the father was at the front, the cottage was burned, and the lonely, frightened, half-starved family of four had taken refuge in the corner of a cellar.

When Marie saw the "Men in Gray" she took courage. She had heard of the wonderful things done by those quiet Englishmen, with the red star and the black star on their sleeves. Moreover, she was rich. She had six sous, and therefore was in a position to undertake a real-estate negotiation.

"Maman," she said to her mother, "would not the 'Men in Gray' build us a cottage for my six sous?"

"Non, non!" said the mother.

But Marie persisted. "I will ask them," she announced.

"You must not trouble them. They would laugh at you," the weary, and mother told the little girl; but Marie had the dauntless spirit of the women of France, and she was tired of the dark, damp cellar, where grandmere coughed all night, and where there was no furniture, only rags to lie on. So with her six sous tight in her hand she stole forth and sought the "Men in Gray."

"Sir," she said to the one who met her, "could you build a cottage with a living room, kitchen and bedroom for grandmere, maman, my brother and me? Could you do it for six sous? Too, I have the money." She opened her hand and showed the coins. "Is it enough?"

The tall Friend never smiled. "Quite enough," he said. "In fact, I think it can be done with four sous. We will build it at once."

Marie got her cottage, a comfortable shelter with beds and all necessaries in it, and when everything was complete the "Man in Gray" collected the four sous with all the formality of completing a large building transaction.

In a world where so many humans seemed to have turned into devils, doing things we supposed human beings had climbed far above, incidents like these are very cheering. They are an earnest that when peace has returned not only will the desolated regions be restored as well as modern skill and labor can restore them, but the work will be done with gentleness and with tact.

MAY STOP DUELLING

Prohibition of duelling in the German army and navy is urged by the newspaper Germania in commenting upon the order issued by Emperor Charles of Austria, forbidding the practice in the Austria-Hungarian army and navy.

"This inhibition," says Germania, will awaken an echo of dissatisfaction in the widest circle in Germany and will give renewed expression to the repeated command that competent officials put an end to this duelling nonsense in Germany. Nothing can be achieved with half measures and nothing short of an order prohibiting duelling without restrictions or reservations will prevent further sacrifices through this antiquated method of restituting honor."