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Advanced Studies.

Man's books are but man's alphabet—
Beyond and on this lesson lie—
The lessons of the violet,
The large gold letters of the sky;
The love of beauty, blossomed soul,
The large content, the tranquil toil.
[Joaquin Miller.

Blossoms Changed His Life.

"Oh, Frank, how lovely this air is! How I pity the people in the city! To think anyone should live in a city from choice!"

"I won't let damp your enthusiasm, Kate, but, at all, a man does not see much of the country; he is only like a chicken which comes home to roost, and everyone does not delight in catching the train twice each day. I can't say I am quite reconciled to it myself. But I must be off. Good-bye, both of you," and giving his young wife and little daughter a parting kiss, Mr. Travis ran for the train, whose warning shriek could be heard in the distance.

Kate Travis lingered on the porch. It was her first experience of a whole year in the country, and every day brought new delights. She had discovered "pussy-willows" down by the brook, and had learned how warmly Dame Nature blankets the tender grape-vine leaves. She had found the shy violets' and anemones' favorite hiding-places, and decked her little home with laurel, and revelled in the delights of lettuce and radishes of her "own raising." This particular May morning was a day in which the mere fact that one was alive was a joy, and as the young wife looked at the fleecy cloud, the hillsides bright with rye, and the orchard one mass of lovely blossoms, she sighed for very excess of happiness.

"I wish I had given Frank a branch of apple-blossoms they would have brightened up that dreary office," thought Mrs. Travis. She, like the rest of us, often had these after-impulses, but somehow this one would not be shaken off. Kate Travis was not a superstitious woman, yet such a furious desire to send her husband some of the bright, delicate blossoms grew upon her that she feared to resist it. Just before the starting of the next train, a happy thought struck her, and, donning her garden hat, having hastily gathered three or four beautiful sprays of the blossoms, she hurried to the train. Yes, Jack Dorset was there—he took the later train quite often, Kate thought, reprehensibly, for she knew by many little signs that Jack was not quite so attentive to business, and quite so true and manly as he had been.

Jack, on his side, watched the bright, eager face as it came near. "That Travis is a lucky fellow," he thought. "After all, what a fool a fellow is to waste time or money on cards and theatres!"

"Oh, Jack!" exclaimed Kate, breathlessly. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Dorset! Could you drop into my husband's office and give him these blossoms? This branch is for you."

Jack had only time to seize the flowers and call out his thanks for his share before he was whirled away in that remorseless fate—the train.

There were two reasons why Jack Dorset had taken this later train, though even to himself he acknowledged but one that, as business was slack, it was just as well to sleep a little later this spring weather. But hidden far out of sight was another reason and Jack had not been well-coaxed when that reason became apparent.

"Hello! Thought you'd be on this train. Come along in the smoker; we're just making up a hand."

"No, thank you," said Jack, with a decision that surprised himself quite as much as his comrade.

"Why, what's up? Turned rusty? Come, you'll have your revenge on me today. I shouldn't wonder if you won enough to have a lark to-night."

The perfume from the apple-blossoms had given Jack a wonderful pleasure, not unmixed with bitterness, and when his comrade leaned over to whisper the last sentence confidentially, the odor of stale tobacco and liquor seemed unbearable. Jack fairly blushed with manly shame.

"No, no!" he said; "I'll have none of that sort of thing this morning," and with a sudden realization of his own happiness and this bad fellow's power over him, Jack deliberately walked over to old Deacon Taft and seated himself by him.

The deacon was surprised. Young men did not take much to him. Perhaps he knew he was, at times, the mark for their jokes. But the flowers helped matters.

"Them's beauties, I do declare," said the deacon, "and I'm glad to see a young fellow like you think enough of 'em to carry 'em to town. Why, I remember when a flower just changed my half future."

"Tell me about it, Mr. Taft," said Jack with a sense of having escaped from imminent peril.

"Wa'a', I don't know as I've told a person about Mary's rose in years, and of any body had told me five minutes ago that I'd be here telling it to you, I'd have jest laughed at 'em. It won't a-most cut its fleetness. But seein' them apple-blossoms has brought it all back mighty strong, and I feel sorter drawn to you, Jack Dorset, seein' you with 'em."

Jack felt almost as if he ought to make some disclaimer; yet surely he deserved some credit for turning from temptation. After a few moments the Deacon began:

"I was a boy about fourteen—I s'pose you think old Deacon Taft has been country born and raised; but at that time I'd never seen the country; never seen grass I could tramp on; never seen birds kept in cages; never seen anything—I was goin' to say—but misery, dirt and poverty. But then, that wouldn't be true, for there was one lovely thing before my eyes, night and morning, and that was my sister Mary. She was a beautiful girl, but she'd been sick for a long time, and so, though she did all she could, she couldn't do much more than keep herself sweet and clean. Mother had died when I was a baby, and I suppose it was the hard work and father's drinking that had sickened the poor girl. But I was to tell you about that day. It was a hot June day. Father had been special hard on me, and the last thing he'd done was to get me a place in a drinking-saloon, where there was a lot of gamblin' goin' on, too. My boy, you're an innocent, well-brought-up young fellow" (Jack lifted the mass of blossoms to his face, and their delicate pink seemed reflected in his cheeks), "but if you ever know what I know of the wickedness that cards and liquor may lead to, you'd not wonder at the old deacon's 'narrowness.' Well, as I was sayin', my father 'd found me the place, and I'd been at it for just a week. That Friday evenin' I was to be paid, and I had a great plan in my head. Mary was just crazy over flowers. A missionary lady had brought her a bouquet once and again, and the way she doted on 'em was just surprisin'. Dear, dear, how often I've thought of Mary when I see the youngsters pullin' flowers and throwin' 'em away!"

The deacon paused a moment. Jack broke off a bit of the blossoms, and, with the gentleness of a woman, fastened it in the old farmer's coat.

"Thanks! thanks! I wouldn't pick fruit-blossoms my-sell, but I don't know but they're just as much needed as fruit. Well, as I was sayin', I had a place. I had seen a lovely rose-bush in a pot at the corner grocery, and meant to buy that for Mary. I pinched; twas pay twenty-five cents; and I'd watched every day and saved half my lunch. Now, this morning I meant to pay it and keep it in the saloon till I'd get off, late at night. But when I got to the grocery the rose-bush wasn't there!

"I've had a good many disappointments one way and another, but I don't know as ever I felt one worse. The grocery-man was talkin' to a big rough-lookin' fellow, and I was that vexed I couldn't wait, and I just rushed up and said: 'You didn't sell that rose, didn't?'

"I guess I looked mighty earnest, for they both looked at me, and then the man said: 'Yes, bubby, I sold it yesterday afternoon. But there's other flowers—this man's just buy-ing for me to buy some of 'em.'

"'Are you so fond of flowers, sonny?' said the strange man.

"I told him I wanted the rose for my sister, who was sick, and then I said I had told Mary how pretty the rose was, and, though she didn't know I was to get it, I'd meant to take it—I'd borrowed the money from Tom 'cause I wouldn't be paid off till midnight.

"'Midnight! A little fellow like you!' exclaimed the big man. 'And where do you work till midnight?'

"'At the big saloon around the corner,' I said. 'I ain't so young—I'm fourteen!'

"'And working in a saloon! What does that sister o' your's say to that?' said the big man.

"'She feels mighty bad about it. She cries and cries. But I tell her I won't drink, not if they killed me, nor I won't play cards; and to-night I'll have three dollars for Mary.'

"The groceryman had gone to another customer. The big stranger stood lookin' me over for a minute or so, and then he laid his hand on my shoulder and said: 'How'd Mary like you to live on a farm, sonny?'

"I told him that that was just what made Mary feel so bad. A lady had told her to pray about everything, and Mary had prayed and prayed that I might go to work on a farm—as if there were farms in New York City!

"'Now, see here, sonny,' said the man, 'you just look in that covered wagon and pick out the flowers you'd like for Mary, and then tell me where she lives, an' I'll go and see her.'

"You'll believe I stepped up to that wagon pretty lively. It was just full of roses—little pots and big ones. But I hadn't a minute to spare, and I pulled out a beautiful pink rose that made me think of Mary's cheeks at night, and told him where we lived; and then I put flew around the corner. I was late, and the man was mighty cross. The police had been in the night before, and I got hard words and some blows, but I didn't care—Mary would love that rose! I haven't time to tell you how the man took a fancy to make me drink that evening, and how my own father, half tipsy as he was, helped 'em on; but at last it was time for me to leave, and I asked for my pay. Jack, just think how I felt when that saloon-keeper told me my father had taken my pay in liquor! I was stiff and sore—I had been up late for seven nights; and now I hadn't a cent for Mary!

"Dear, dear! How it all comes back to me! Well, I got home somehow, and crept up softly, hoping she was asleep but she was sitting up in bed, her cheeks like the rose by her side and her eyes shining. I just threw myself on her bed and cried—though I was a boy—and she had sense enough to let me. But pretty soon I began to listen to what she was saying and she certainly had news. The big man was coming for me the next day and I was to go out his house. He hasn't chick nor child and his wife would be glad to have a boy around, besides his needing help.

"Well, the long and the short of it was, I went and I stayed; and when the dear old man and his wife died, they treated me like an own child and left me all."

"And Mary?"

The Deacon wiped his face as if it were a June day instead of a May day.

"Mary? Mary was like these here blossoms—too tender and delicate to last long. Yet perhaps the fruit has come in place of the blossoms—I wouldn't be' been much use in this world if it wasn't for Mary."

Jack sat silent looking at the blossoms. Was not fruit always from that far-off life even now? Another life was changed that day by means of a flower—only a blossom picked before it could fructify, but shall we say "What a pity?"

From that day Jack Dorset dated two friendships. Before long Deacon Taft knew the story of another flower, for Jack confessed to the old farmer his progress on the downward road and how a branch of apple-blossoms had stopped him, while Kate Travis and her husband learned to look for Jack's coming as one of the simple pleasures of their quiet home, little dreaming how God-given was the impulse to send the apple-blossoms to town. (Christian Union.

The Patient South American Burro.

The burro is a very patient animal, with his serious face, his contentment under a hard lot, his patience and his long and heavy burdens, writes a South American correspondent of the Cincinnati Gazette. He drinks nothing. Turned out to graze on the "campo," he finds in among the grass and other weeds. He can go long without water. The tradition is that he can live on nothing, and there is considerable practical faith in it. In the street, in front of the suppy shops, a score of them may be seen of a morning, no shade, feeding as a. Their burdens have transportation comes. A cask stove is placed on the other side of the burro, and one will further on. Perhaps a hundred pounds of tinware, basket of bread, a dozen or more of tinware, one on each side, so many forward of him and trailing behind on the ground, all the miscellaneous material of many working and of the living supplies found on his back in queer shapes whose bulk is his load, look ridiculous. The adjusting and balancing of these loads is an art. The burros are also said to have an art of grunting heavily while the load is being put on, to cut it short. Loaded up, off they go in a bunch, urged by a man on horseback, until they reach the mountain trail, when they fall into single file, an experienced one in the lead.

Letters of Ancient Times.

A remarkable discovery has been made in Egypt of tablets, or letters, which compose a literary correspondence of 3000 to 1000 years ago, carried on between Egyptians and Asiatics. The tablets now in Vienna represent letters and dispatches sent to Egypt by the governors and kings of Palestine, Syria, Babylonia, and other countries of west to Asia. The find is remarkable every way, and opens the people of that age to us with fire-hness and familiarity. It is clear that the literary spirit is very ancient, and Prof. Sayce surmises we shall yet find libraries of clay books. One town in Judah was called "Book Town," or "Library Town." The momentum of this discovery will be marked. Rich men should hesitate no longer to unearth the vast treasures of the orient.—[Philadelphia Ledger.

Quicksand.

Quicksand is composed chiefly of small particles of mica mixed largely with water. The mica is so smooth that the fragments slip upon each other with the greatest facility, so that any heavy body which displaces them will sink and continue to sink until a solid bottom is reached. When particles of sand are jagged and angular, any weight pressing on them will crowd them together until they are compacted into a solid mass. A sand composed of mica or soapstone, when sufficiently mixed with water, seems incapable of such consolidation.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Hear Your Little Troubles

Hear your little troubles,
Ye little children, dear,
Ye know not what's before you,
So be ready and be true.

Hear your little troubles
With a sweet heart,
For the worst of troubles
Must very soon depart.

Hear your little troubles,
Yes, hear them every one
Like a little friend,
Till your work is done.

[Independent.

Children in a Bog—Ma'ley.

It was early in May, some years ago, when one of the pioneer settlers of this lake county made up his mind to move his family from Massachusetts to that favorite region. He had seven little ones, and, tired by several days' journey and the perils of the road, How do you think he took care of them? The father obtained from a neighbor a great basket, twelve feet by six and four feet high. It was filled with straw and was made for the purpose of transporting grass seed. The seven little ones were packed in straw in this basket like so many kittens or pigs, and made the journey safe and warm. The basket is yet preserved by the pioneer's descendants.—[Western Journal.

A Pet Seal.

A seal about two months old was seen recently by a Portland Oregon Press reporter, on the deck of the steamer Arizona, which was moored at the Commercial wharf. It is the skipper's pet and a great favorite with the crew. The Captain said: "I have had the little fellow about six weeks, having caught him at Sitka Island. He was asleep when I came upon him and before he knew it I had him in my arms. In three days from that time he was as tame as a dog, and will now follow me all over the vessel. In the morning at about three o'clock the seal takes his position over the hatch, and there he will cry until some one of the crew comes on deck and feeds him. When we are outside I throw him overboard and let him swim until he is tired and then he is very too glad to be taken on board again." The little fellow seemed to enjoy himself on the vessel's deck, and was very fond of the caresses of the crew. When he saw one of the men approaching him he would lie down and roll over on his back in a manner full of fun and frolic. The seal is a male, and weighs 8 pounds.

The Lame Deer.

At one picturesque old thatched house in the forest, writes a correspondent from Japan, where a narrow side path angles in at least enough point to give one a long approaching view of the moss and lichen-covered thatch, there is an old possessor in the way of a lame deer with a broken limb. His infirmity warms an overseer's feelings, and the old soldier put two times his share of feeding, and crowds away all the little fellows. It is impossible to escape him, and after a long great struggle with the dissatisfied ocean hopping after me, I had to rest on the little girl at the establishment to hold him back while the younger deer got a chance. She brought out a small bamboo twig, and with it we not had enough to serve a hot scuffle, made sport of restraining the old scamp. It was so many a sight as one sees to watch the little girl and the deer wrestle gaily and playfully across the grass, that one pay no more attention to her or the whole than to the grasshopper's leaps in the grass.

The Weaver Birds.

The true weaver birds are not found in of Africa, and, as their name indicates, they make a nest by weaving. Away from civilization, they use tough grass for this purpose, but gladly work in cotton or other twines, when given a large ball of cotton twine they will not cease until the last inch is woven into the nest. The only specimen of this family inhabiting North America is the Baltimore oriole, sometimes called the hanging birds, golden robin, etc. The bird usually attaches its nest to the extreme ends of the branches of some tree, the nest being six or eight inches deep and shaped like a pocket or bag, and is built as firm as if made of hanging. This member of the weaver bird family has also adopted itself to the ways of civilization, making its nest almost entirely of hemp, cotton twine, and other materials pulled from old sent fabrics, occasionally using some horsehair. There is no lining for the nest except what is constantly woven into the fabric. This nest will often sway backward and forward several feet in a stiff breeze while the old bird is sitting on the eggs. Birds are seldom frightened by noise or motion created by nature or animals, except the two-legged biped, which seems to be an enemy to everything beautiful in nature, destroying birds and plants out of pure wantonness. Children should be taught not to destroy birds' nests; then when they grow up they will know better than to shoot birds just for fun.—[Prairie.

THE SIMOON.

A Whirlwind that Sweeps Over the African Desert.

Its Generation and Incidents in Its Terrible Career.

The most remarkable of the hot winds is the simoon (samiel, samiel, sam-yel, etc.), the worst whirlwind, with or without sand, which visits the deserts of Africa and southwestern Asia. The great heat of the air passing into the atmosphere causes an appreciable expansion and it blows in the latter, or rarefied in the formation of small cyclonic disturbances. The surrounding atmosphere, in the endeavor to restore equilibrium, rushes to fill the space vacated by the expanded air, and in its turn undergoes the same process, until at last there is a powerful current drawn into the vortex, frequently bringing with it quantities of loose sand, and the cyclone then becomes visible. Huge columns of sand whirling round and moving forward at the same time. The air, already very dry before the simoon originated, now becomes still more so from the presence of the loose sand of dust. Away goes the storm across the desert; at first it comes as a low haze on the horizon, temporarily spreading the dust advances, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, the tall pillars being visible a long way off darkening the atmosphere, and bringing with them great destruction. In the wake the wind blows with the force of a hurricane, hills of sand are taken up and are either scattered or are again gathered into new hills wherever the storm chooses to deposit them, so that the desert is dotted with frequently shifting sand ranges. After these are laid waste whole caravans of traders, travelers and even armies. The simoon is supposed to have annihilated the armies of Sennacherib and of Cambyses.

Suddenly dry in the air in these storms that it is fatal to vegetation, when the density of the dust cloud makes it almost impossible for human beings to live. This gives rise to the idea that the wind contained a deadly poison, hence its Arabic name, signifying a poisonous wind, but it is more probable that any other wind, its fatal qualities being simply the excessive dryness and the quantity of fine sand with which it is loaded. The temperature of the air has been known to rise to 130 degrees, and the density of the air is such as to disturb the lungs and nostrils, to skin excessive thirst, painful and difficult breathing and inability to sleep. The inmates would in passing a given point experience a few minutes and twenty or twenty-four hours, the blast leaving behind it numerous evidences of its path in the form of dead. The bodies, pending upon the strength of the meeting