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HEAP ON THE COALS, WIFE.

'Why, lass, what's the matter now?'

So said John Megson, when, arriving at his cottage home, after his day's work was over, he found his wife with indications of previous tears upon her usually bright and cheerful countenance.

'Mary Lastings has been calling me everything, and you too.' 'What has she to call us about?'

'I hardly know,' returned his wife, 'she takes such queer fits, sometimes, but I never heard a woman get on so in my life; she said we were everything that's bad, and our children, too, and all because our Tom wouldn't give their youngster a piece of cake when he wanted it. The woman made him quite nervous: I've had a dreadful headache ever since.'

John Megson listened to his wife's doleful account with a changed countenance, and no wonder, for he had been used on return from his work, to be greeted with her smiling looks and pleasant words.

'However I mean to have my revenge,' went on Mrs. Megson half angrily: 'she's not going to scold me, for nothing.'

'How will you revenge yourself, Jane,' asked her husband, looking her earnestly in the face.

'Oh, there's plenty of ways,' she replied; 'but John, why do you bear it so calmly; she called you too.'

'What did she say about me, Jane?' inquired her husband.

'Why,' replied his wife, 'she said many things about you: you were selfish, thought yourself above the rest of the villagers, because you wouldn't go near the public house, like the rest of them, and a lot more stuff, which made my heart as well as my head ache to hear.'

'God forbid that I should ever go near such a den of iniquity,' replied her husband, 'when I've such a happy home to draw to. Why, Jane, we must have our revenge, it won't do to be prattled to, in that manner, by such a woman as she.'

'That we must,' replied Mrs. Megson, her eye flashing, and then she began telling her husband the way she intended doing it. When she had finished her husband replied:

'Why, Jane, I think I've found a better way of revenge than yours.'

'Just like you, John,' said Mrs. Megson, smiling, 'you always did find out better ways than mine. What is it?'

'Why, here it is, wife,' replied John; 'suppose we take our revenge by heaping coals of fire upon her head?'

'Heap coals of fire upon her head!' ejaculated Mrs. Megson, in a tone of surprise; 'why, John, that would be downright cruelty; surely you don't mean it.'

'But I do,' returned her husband, half smiling at the manner in which his wife had misunderstood him; 'though, of course,' he went on, 'it's not the coals you're thinking of I intend using, but Bible coals; which keep up the fire of kindness.'

'Why, John, I never heard you speak like that before,' exclaimed

his wife, 'nor did I know that the Bible said anything about the coals and fire you speak of.'

'Yes it does, wife,' replied her husband, reaching down the old family Bible, and beginning to turn over its leaves. 'Listen here, Jane,' he exclaimed, and he read: 'Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'

'There now, Jane,' he added, when he had finished, 'that's how the Bible tells us to overcome our enemies.'

'But, John,' said Mrs. Megson, 'she's not hungering and thirsting, that we need give her food and drink, so it's no use in us using the coals of fire it means.'

'Maybe, Jane,' returned her husband, 'she's thirsting for kindness; and I can't but see that we are able to supply her too. Look here, wife,' he exclaimed emphatically, 'give her that basketful of potatoes, which I brought home for you last night.'

'John, John, you are talking nonsense,' returned Mrs. Megson. 'Don't you know such women as she are not won over so easy as that? And it's my notion that she would be the more angry with me, if I'd become so soft-hearted as you want me. It would not do, John: such women as she will not give in for anything of that sort. Why, if I did such a thing as that, all the village would laugh at me and say I'd become soft, and—'

'Have you ever tried the power of kindness, Jane?' added her husband interrupting her.

'It's no use in our village, I'm sure,' replied Mrs. Megson, rather irritated at the manner in which her husband spoke.

'The power of kindness,' went on her husband, 'is a power, Jane, none can resist even in our village, and I want you to try it with Mrs. Lastings; don't you think, now, but that the Bible's ways of overcoming our enemies would be the best if they were tried?'

Mrs. Megson remained silent; she knew her husband was right, and she did not know how to get over his plain way of reasoning, but she saw that if she worked out her own way of revenge upon Mrs. Lastings, it would displease him which she did not want to do, namely, to return good for evil, prevailed, and she then replied,

'Why, John, I think your way or, at least, the Bible way, is the best; and when I see her again I'll just try it.'

The next day Mrs. Megson might be seen crossing over the street, to Mrs. Lastings' door, with a basket of potatoes slung upon her arm. It was a very timid knock that she gave, and she had half a mind to run away again before it was opened, which it was, by Mrs. Lastings' son, Tommy.

'Here's a basket of potatoes for your mother,' exclaimed Mrs. Megson: 'I thought she would like a few perhaps,' at the same time handing Tommy the basket, and which he, without a word, took into the house to his mother. Mrs. Megson was about to turn

away again, when she heard a voice behind her; it was Tommy's and he said,

'Mother says she don't want your potatoes nor you either,' and handing them back again, he slammed the door in her face.

'Just as I expected,' murmured Mrs. Megson, as with a heavy heart, she retraced her footsteps home again. 'What a fool I was to listen to John or the Bible's advice, too; it don't suit people in our village, as I told him. But men are uncommonly stupid about such matters now-a-days.'

That night, when John returned from his work, he saw by his wife's countenance that she had not succeeded, and listened to her account of what had transpired with a grave and serious look.

'And now, John,' she added, 'I told you how it would turn out; kindness won't do in our village.'

'Only heap on more coals, wife,' replied John, calmly, 'and you'll succeed yet; the fire of kindness can't be got up in a moment; try again, Jane.'

John's words inspired fresh confidence in his wife, and she thought within her self, 'Why, I might as well go on now, as I've made the start.'

A few days afterwards she saw Mrs. Lastings going to the well, a quarter of a mile off, with a can to fetch some water.

'Mrs. Lastings, you need not go so far for your water, when you're at liberty to come to our pump,' said Mrs. Megson. Mrs. Lastings paused, and looked at the speaker as if she could hardly believe her own eyes. Could this be the woman she had called so a few days previous? But so it was, and a look of shame suffused her face as she thought of what she had done then, and the kindness Mrs. Megson was showing her now. But her proud spirit could not bear to be conquered in such an easy manner, and she replied,

'Why, thank you the same, Mrs. Megson, but I'd rather fetch my water from the well,' and so sped on her way. It was with a more cheerful countenance that Mrs. Megson greeted her husband that evening on his return from his work, for though she had not been so successful in winning Mrs. Lastings as she had wished, still she was convinced by her manner that her kindness was taking effect.

'You'll win yet, Jane, only keep heaping on the coals,' said John with a smile, when his wife had narrated to him what had passed between her and Mrs. Lastings that day. And it was not long before Mrs. Megson was enabled to carry out her husband's advice to the fulness of her wishes, as will be seen in the following incident:

One day Mrs. Megson heard a confused noise outside, and on looking out, she beheld a horse tethered to a light cart, coming at a terrific speed down the street, with a number of people trying in vain to stop it.

Now it happened that Mary Lastings' youngest child was right in the middle of the street, and would in all probability have been run over, and, perhaps killed on the spot, had not Mrs.

Megson rushed forward and, regardless of all danger to herself, snatched it from the danger in which it had been placed. As it was she did not escape being hurt, for, before she had barely time to escape, the horse turned a little from its course, and the wheel of the cart, catching her, threw her down with such force as to render her unconscious for a time. When she recovered she found herself in her own house, surrounded by a number of people who had witnessed the accident, amongst whom was Mrs. Lastings, who exclaimed, with the tears running down her cheeks,

'Oh, Mrs. Megson! however shall I repay you for this: and how will you ever forgive me for what I did to you before?'

'Mrs. Lastings, you are forgiven, exclaimed Mrs. Megson, grasping her hand, 'and henceforth let us be friends.'

'There, Jane,' replied John Megson that evening, 'did not I say that heaping coals of fire on her head would win her at last?'

'Yes, John,' returned his wife, smiling; 'and I mean to stick to that way as long as I live.'

May all our readers who have enemies overcome them in the same way as Mrs. Megson did, namely, by heaping coals of fire upon their heads, as it is written, 'Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.'

The power of kindness does not cost much, and may be used by us all.—*British Workman.*

THE SEASON AND ZONE OF HOMES.

One stronger reason than all others for being glad that we live in the temperate zone, is that it is the zone of homes.

Greenlanders and Laplanders, it is said, each consider their own country the fairest the sun shines upon, and charming stories of domestic life have come to us from icy latitudes. But the Esquimaux and Kamtchatkans, and those inhabitants of extreme Arctic regions who must live in snow-huts or burrow underground for warmth, cannot know the rich and tender meanings the word 'home' has for us.

How much comfort there is in our cosy houses alone,—in the clean, warm room, perhaps with a glowing fireside; the white table spread with wholesome and delicate food; the cheerful circle around the lamp at evening; the books the sewing, the games; the sound sleep of the long, snowy night, the beds as white as the drifts outside; and the many other nameless blessings of a civilized home! These the children of the eternal snows must do without.

There is more poetry in a really beautiful homelife than in the finest natural scenery; but it lies too deep in the heart for words to express. It is poetry that is felt rather than spoken. A happy home is a poem which every one of the family is helping to write, each for the enjoyment of the rest, by little deeds of tenderness and self-sacrifice, which mean so much more than words. This

home-poem is all the more delightful because it does not ask or need admiration from anybody outside. The poetry that people live in, of which they are a part, and which is a part of them, is always the most satisfactory, because it is the most real.

Think, little folks, of all the poems and fragments of poems you know, that never could have been written except in a country where tempest and sleet and long hours of darkness drove men and women and children within-doors, and kept them there to find out how dear and sweet a thing it is for a family to live together in love.—*Lucy Larcom, St. Nicholas for December.*

THE DIPPER AND ITS MOTION.

In order to see the dipper in its different positions, and also in that portion of its course which in December it traverses during the daytime, it is not necessary to keep a long watch upon the group, or to study the heavens during those 'wee sma' hours ayont the twal' wherein the professional astronomer does the best part of his work. If you come out in the evening (say about eight) once or twice a week on clear nights, all through the winter half of the year, and a little later during the summer months, you will see the dipper and all the polar groups carried right round the pole. For though, speaking generally, it may be said that they complete a circuit once in every day, yet in reality they gain about four minutes' motion in the twenty-four hours, and thus get further on little by little night after night—gaining an hours motion in about a fortnight, two hours' motion in a month, twelve hours' motion (or half the complete circuit) in half a year, until finally, at the end of the year, they have gained a complete circuit.

It is because of this steady turning motion or rotation around the pole of the heavens, that the stars of the dipper (say, for instance, the pointers) form as it were a clock in the sky, by which the astronomers at any rate, though also any one who is willing to give a little attention to the matter, can tell the hour within a few minutes on any night in the year.

A few observations made in this way on a few nights during the course of a year, will give a clearer idea of the steady motion of the star-dome (resulting in reality from the earth's steady rotation on her axis) than any amount of description either in books or by word of mouth.—*Prof. R. A. Proctor, St. Nicholas for December.*

Considerate father—'You should eat Graham bread, my son; it makes bone.' Responsive youth: 'H'm, I'm 'bout all bones now.'

A lazy fellow once declared in a public company that he could not find bread for his family. 'Nor I,' replied an industrious man, 'I'm obliged to work for it.'

A Chinaman upon being applied to for the payment of a debt, replied: 'If no havee, how cannee?'