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LOVE'S EXCHANGES.

You praise my beauty, grace and art,
O Love; but you are much to blame;
In every line you leave a smart,
That makes me bow my head in shame.

Whate'er the world may choose to say,
I look not for such words from you;
I'd throw them from my heart away,
If you could even prove them true.

World's praise is but a passing mood,
That shifts about with the occasion;
It serves as oft for envy's food,
As that of honest admiration.

In your regard, I set no store
On what, by way of form or feature,
I hold in common, less or more,
With every other human creature.

If Love be blind, as it is said,
What can he know of outward graces?
I care not for the love that's led
A facile slave of pretty faces.

I would not have my love depend
On beauty, were I ten times fairer.
If beauty knew no change or end,
Life asks for something deeper, rarer—

Something that sets the world aside,
Beyond the touch of time or season.
If only love for love abide,
I do not want another reason.

—*Chambers' Journal.*

GREAT CROOKS.

Romantic Ideas Dispeled by an Old Criminal.

The Skill and Courage of Cracksmen Greatly Exaggerated--Crimes Not Profitable--Noted Forgers and Burglars.

Great criminals are few in number You read of great crimes sometimes, and hear of their perpetrators being tried, but the facts adduced in the trials and the punishments inflicted are ridiculously disproportionate to the offenses of which one hears so much. There is a certain literature—or is it literature?—which purports to tell about criminals. In reality it extols detectives, who exalt the qualities of the class whose deeds they profess to detect. I have been reading--and I suppose everybody has been reading, too—about great criminals in the newspapers. The boastfulness of the detective and the imagination of the reporter have combined to make some interesting reading, but if you recall what you have read you will find that very few great criminals have been told about, and apart from murders very few great crimes have been committed. One or two professional forgers, a half score of burglars, a cluster of twenty-five confidence men, and the whole list is exhausted. The fact is there is no such army of criminals fertile of expedient, ready of device, watchful of every chance to break in and steal, as the police would have you believe. A great many people are repeatedly dishonest, but the professional burglar who "burgles" only for a living, the forger who contemplates a second forgery before he expends the profits of his first, is a rare article, and nine crimes out of ten against property are incidents or eddies in the current of life created by purely adventitious circumstances, and not part of the regular flow of the stream, much as they interfere with and disturb it.

The detective will deny this, although he knows it is true, and in his denial point you to the careers of Sheridan, Porter, Brady, Brockaway, Elliot and half a dozen others who are distinguished in crime. Its funny that some of them are not paying penalty of their varied wickedness by long terms of imprisonment. The fact remains that they are not, and either the detective can't convict of what he charges, or the criminal does not commit so freely as he is charged withal. The latter is the case. Jimmy Hope, who aided in carrying out a fabulous number of millions from the Manhattan Bank, had to steal for a living within ten months or work. He couldn't have had much out of the great robbery. The Kensington Bank burglars, who also got millions, didn't profit much if their subsequent condition is faithfully reported, for one or two of them were soon in prison for very trifling offenses, and another died in great poverty in a charity asylum. The fact of it is there is no such thing as profitable roguery—or robbery—by any of the means used by the professional "crook." The reason is not found in the fact that he is improvident or extravagant, or that his legal expenses eat up his returns. He simply doesn't have any such returns as he is credited with, and which the police advertise for him and the losers too frequently and untruthfully clamor about.

I was looking over the criminal list the other day of the convicted professionals confined in New York State. They were numerous enough, but they were contemptibly small. To make your Vidocq you must have first your great criminal and his great crime. The American Vidocq makes himself, with these two essentials left out; and having opportunity to talk with one of the alleged great criminals he confirmed my belief in the visionary character of these shrewd and clever rascals with no greater effort than revealing his own stupidity. I hunted up another, a professional who has repeated his offenses sufficiently to entitle him to any other distinction than that of an honest man, I would mention that he wears stripes now, except that it might draw from the value of his statements in the minds of some who are too easily prejudiced. Anyway, he is better authority than the police, whose vanity in their own capacity may be a proper pride, but leads to some mighty tall lying.

"The fact is that professional thieves and rogues are not numerous in any locality, and if crime were the sole source of support for the few hundreds that are so classed, most of them would be hungry many times every year. Men who steal whenever they get a chance always have some other occupation, and it is a fact that the legitimate one is more profitable than the illegitimate one in nine cases out of ten." Thus began my informant, whose name you may look for a little further on.

"But in this city there is a vast army of professional criminals," I said, "men who are classified and whose industries have special forms, implying cunning and originality."

"My dear sir, you have been reading the newspapers or talking to detectives. There isn't a dozen. If really clever men—if men with a modicum of brains that belong to clever people—were to devote their talents to roguery society couldn't exist. The methods employed by thieves, for example, to attain their ends look very cunning and well planned to one to whom they are first revealed. But take any one of them and examine it, and you will see how flimsy it is. A sneak thief wants to get into the till of a corner grocery. His accomplice comes with a tape line and begins to measure the sidewalk in front of the door, or to measure the wall, or comes in a wagon and begins to throw out a lot of boxes. The grocer steps out to inquire; is held in conversation, asked to hold the end of the measure or pass back the boxes; the sneak is in and away, and the trick is off. A saloon-keeper is known to keep a pocket-book stuffed with money in the inner pocket of his vest. The pick-pocket knows it is a difficult place to touch. Two accomplices come in when he is alone, both of them laughing heartily—one with a tape measure. 'Well, that was a dead loss for me,' says one. 'Set 'em up.' They laugh, ask the saloon-keeper to drink, and explain that they were betting on the neighbor. The saloon-keeper becomes interested; the more so as rounds are being called, and then the loser wants to get even. A bottle of wine is staked and the victim asked to measure, the new bet being on his girth. Objection is taken to the vest; off it comes, and the sneak thief—a third party—soon has the leather."

"Now, that's artful, certainly," said I.

"No such a thing; it is most transparent and simple. It couldn't succeed were in not that the victim is a fool. But these are exceptional cases of such good planning as crooks can do. But, after all, suppose a man of brains—real brains, such as you know plenty of—were to devote himself to the planning of ways to get other people's money without an equivalent and went at it with the energy that men give to the practice of their profession or to the pursuits of commerce, where would such schemes as this be? Nowhere. You hear of a great burglary. The newspapers which report it dwell upon the fact that it has been carefully planned and that the house had been plotted, for a diagram which the rascals had left in their flight was found. What's to hinder any more from learning every room and every door in New York city? There's the builder's plans, the insurance companies' plots and the building department's open files. A little watching and a good deal of guessing makes up the rest of the burglar's knowledge. Of course, his 'tools are of the finest workmanship.' Rats! The chances are ten to one that they consist of a bar of iron, which, being carried by a burglar, is called a 'jimmy'; a dark lantern, a copper hammer, a chisel and a flask of powder and a handkerchief with holes in it for a mask."

"But there are cases where men have gone further than make a few hasty preparations; have hired adjoining stores and tunneled and burrowed into banks and vaults with infinite patience and labor."

"Bah! How many? You say ten and I say one. Whatever you say I will allow ten per cent. But can you recall any?"

"Well, the Covington (Ky.) bank."

"That's one. You can't go on. But there have been probably twenty robberies committed in that way in the last thirty years, and none of them amounted to very much in the way of returns outside of two or three. You make up your mind to the fact that the returns of robberies are vastly exaggerated. That's not accounted for by the fact that the thief has to dispose of his swag at a discount amounting to a sacrifice. It's because the man robbed tells lies. If you want to make a liar of a man rob and then pump him on values. I remember a man who yielded me $47. What do you think, he 'squealed' for $4,700, and I got the reputation of being a great 'crook' on the strength of that man's lies. One day I was taken in on suspicion in Buffalo. My record was known, and when the chief of police ladled out his mess of lies to the reporters my little trick of $47 became $47,000. Finally it got to $147,000, where it sticks, and when I was sentenced in Brooklyn the detective named my offense at that figure to show what a dangerous criminal I was. I didn't mind that so much. I didn't object to the detective believing it, and possibly he had told so often that he had arrested me for it that he thought it was true. The judge believed it though, and put seven and a half years of it on me. I could have escaped with not more than three, and possibly one, if it had not been for the lies—perhaps escaped altogether. What I want to say is that reporters and detectives delight to lie about thieves. They can't kick, you know."

"You say there are no good abilities in crooked work. How about forgers? The Fisher and 'Marsh Market Jake' gang, for example?"

"Now, there you strike upon the clever lot. At least they were, for they are nearly all in prison now. But let me tell you that professional forgers are very few—fewer than counterfeiters, in fact, who are practically exterminated, not because of the cleverness of the police, but because the mechanical work of making notes and bonds requires such an expensive plant, the founding of which attracts attention to itself. There are a few professional gangs of forgers, say half a dozen, in the history of the United States in a quarter of a century. The last one was the one you named. It was composed practically of three men. A 'scratcher,' one who does the writing, you know; an organizer, who plans and directs, and a third who covers up the tracks and helps the fellow who lays the 'paper down' to get away. The organizer in the gang I speak of was Fisher, a calm-faced, gentlemanly young fellow of good address and some superficial knowledge. Don't let anybody deceive you into thinking that any 'crook' is a polished gentlemen, learned in the philosophies, conversant with the arts and founded in literature. Why, there's Hungry Joe, the famous—well, notorious, then—bunko steerer. Why, he is an utter vulgarian; can't speak two sentences of grammatical English; nouns and verbs nearly always at war, and the objective pronoun in the nominative case invariably. He leads your cultured Oscar Wilde and your learned Charles Francis Adams up to the dealer like an unsuspecting lamb to a butcher's block. As soon as they acquire that sort of thing they know enough to be honest.—*Philadelphia Times.*

COURTESY AT HOME.

Some New Thoughts on a Subject That Can Not Be Discussed Too Often.

If there is any spot where the amenities of life should be freely exchanged, it is at home. Courtesy should be the rule, not the exception. It prevents jarring, it dissipates moodiness, it heals wounds, it ennobles human nature. It is wonderful in its subduing influences. It is contagious. It extends to the entire household. The boys, with inward pride over their father's courteous demeanor, will be chivalrous and helpful to their younger sisters. The girls will imitate their mother in gentleness and patience, even when big brothers are noisy and heedless. Even the domestics will show their appreciation.

It seems strange that a man will speak more rudely to his wife than to any other lady; or that a brother will be harsh to his sister, while to her lady friend he is every thing that is respectful—perfect gentlemen in society, but boors within their own homes. It is a sad commentory to say that some, nay many, mothers, wives and sisters are indebted for most of the politeness shown them to those who are not members of the household.

Family ties are designed to make us sociable. We are not gregarious. We were not made to live alone. We must have a heap of embers to have a glowing fire; if we scatter them, they will flicker and die. In the same way, if we want to live a healthy and vigorous life, we must have a group of lives, to afford comfort, encouragement and support. Courtesy is mighty in its influence to glorify the home and to benefit the world; yet fathers and mothers are careless and indifferent, and allow day after day of opportunities to go by. Let us remember that life is made up of moments, and that a succession of well-spent moments make up a well-spent life.—*Good Housekeeping.*

Eight Important Rules.

Pasted over the desk of the city editor of a Georgia paper are the following instructions:

"All brides are lovely, beautiful and accomplished, except they be old and tough widows, and then they are amiable and cultivated.

"All merchants who advertise are enterprising, wide-awake and a credit to our city. The names of those who do not advertise must not appear in our paper.

"All old lawyers are able and worthy of a place on the Supreme Bench. Young lawyers are promising and silvery-tongued.

"Conductors on passenger trains are gentlemanly and courteous.

"Doctors are eminent.

"Farmers are intelligent.

"Candidates who put their announcements in our paper are gaining ground every day. Those who do not announce are likely to be defeated.

"Under no circumstances must these rules be broken. F. Meddleton Pryor, editor and proprietor."—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Handles Real Estate.

Parent—Before I accept you, sir, as my daughter's suitor, I must know what your business is, what your means would be of supporting her.

Would-be Suitor—I handle real estate.

Parent (more suavely)—Ah, up town or down town? Up-town property is said to be raising.

Would-be Suitor—No, sir, suburban. I'm a grave-digger at Greenwood.—*N. Y. Sun.*

—It is said that "strawberry" is an old English "streow-berie," or strawberry, referring to the straying habits of the runners of the plant.

DROPPING TO PIECES.

A Man Who Pulls Off His Own Fingers, Toes and Ears.

An odd case of human wretchedness has been reported by Justice John Lavins and Constable Frank Little, who had just returned from a trip to Chickasaw bayou. On a plantation near the bayou they found a negro man who had been a farmer until incapacitated by disease from working. He first attracted their attention by hobbling about on the stumps of what should have been his feet, and exhibited hands which were without fingers or thumbs.

Too much accustomed to the sight of queer deformities in persons of the negro race they simply glanced at him and would have passed if the unfortunate African had not deliberately unwrapped a bandage about one of his hands and carelessly caught the remaining stump of a finger between his knee and the wrist of his other hand, and, with the utmost nonchalance, pulled the stump off. He threw it away and again put his disfigured arms in his bandages. He then scratched a considerable portion of his left foot off and settled himself comfortably at rest on the shady side of the fence.

The peace officers recovered their equanimity after a few seconds and held a consultation. They were not sure that if they disturbed the man that they would not unjoint himself entirely, and not wishing to be the cause of such a catastrophe they waited until he had time to grow quiet before they questioned him.

The curiosity started to lie at first, but Justice Lavins put him on his oath to tell the truth and stopped this. The story told was that about six months ago the victim noticed that his fingers and toes were becoming cramped and numb. He paid no attention until one day in using his index finger as a stopper for his pipe he broke it off in the bowl. He was alarmed and threw the pipe away, and as he did so parted with another finger. Panic-stricken, he fled to his home and had a voudoo doctor attend to him. The treatment he received did not benefit him, and he continued to lose his fingers and toes until he became hardened to it, and of late when he found one growing too dry he would pull it off. One of his feet was gone, and the toes of the other were missing. The last finger he possessed was the one his audience saw him remove, and he had stripped nearly all the calloused flesh from one shin. He further stated that he never felt pain.

After he finished the listeners were inclined to doubt, and on the promise of a two-bit piece the darky camly pulled off a portion of his left ear, which he said was dying very rapidly, and would fall away in a few days anyhow. He did not seem particularly frightened at his condition, as he thought he had enough legs and arms to last a year or two longer at the worst.

None of the man's friends were able to explain how he contracted his disease, and the man did not know himself. The gentlemen who were treated to the sight of his condition were also unable to tell what his trouble is, but are inclined to believe that it is something of the nature of leprosy or elephantiasis.—*Vicksburg Herald.*

CAVALRY HORSES.

Interesting Information Furnished by a United States Army Officer.

Most company officers try to get their men mounted on horses which are all of the same color, and in every regiment we have troops of black, gray, roan, bay and sorrel horses. Bay horses are the easiest procured, and consequently you will find several troops of this color in each regiment. Blacks and grays are not so easy to get, and it is almost impossible to get a roan troop. Captian Wood, of the Fourth Cavalry, has the finest troop in the service, the horses are all magnificent iron-grays, and it has taken him a long time to get them together. The regiment is proud of this troop, and the officers always give way to Captain Wood when a fine gray horse is purchased, so he can select it for his company. When a horse is first bought for the service he is designated by a number branded on his hoof, but as this soon wears off, he is allowed to be named by the soldier to whom he is assigned. Some troops have a uniform system of naming their horses; thus all of the horses belonging to B troop of the Fourth Cavalry have names commencing with the letter B. A great deal of attention is given to the cavalry horses; they are carefully groomed and regularly fed on the very best hay and grain which the Government can procure. The horses are retained in service just as long as they remain sound and in good condition. When they begin to fail in strength, become blind or get crippled, they are condemned by a board of army officers, and are sold at auction to the highest bidders. Some horses remain in the service for many years. I have known of a horse which was perfectly sound after twenty years' service in one troop. Not a few horses are condemned soon after being bought, for, although they have the appearance of being all right, a short test shows that they have not the endurance necessary for hard work. In a long campaign animals suffer greatly at times for want of forage and water, but in time of peace the cavalry horse may be said to occupy as enviable a position as any reasonable horse could desire.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

—The man who strikes a woman will hug the devil.

PITH AND POINT.

—Kind words naturally flow from kind thoughts.

—Character is one of the greatest motive powers in the world.

—A Boston pianist has gone mad. Now he knows how the other fellow feels.

—Nothing is more beautiful than virtue; nothing fairer, nothing more lovely.—*Cicero.*

—He—"You are the only college girl I ever liked." She—"Why, how so?" He—"Oh, the others all know so much."—*Life.*

—"What book has helped you most in life?" I asked my friend, as home we took our way one day, and he replied, "My pocket-book."—*Vox Populi.*

—A New York oculist says that only one man in 600 knows how to take care of his eyes. It is evident that more people should take boxing lessons.

—It is well-kown to all experienced minds that our earnest convictions are often dependent on subtle impressions for which words are too coarse a medium.

—"Young gentlemen," said an old doctor to a graduating class of medical students—"Young gentlemen, keep you patients alive—if you can; dead men run up no bills."

—Wife—"Perhaps Miss Gules is a little disagreeble; but think of her family! Why, she quarters her arms on—" Husband—"Pshaw! She quarters herself on us every summer—and I'm getting tired of it."—*Harper's Bazar.*

—A wise man does not often allow it to be seen that his own estimate of himself is higher than that which his associates and people generally who know him well, place upon him.

—Not willing to work.—

The reason why in depths we grieve
For heights to which our hopes aspire,
Is that we rarely care to leave
The pleasant valley of desire.

—*Texas Siftings.*

—The hod carrier lives by the ups and downs of his life.—*Philadelphia Call.* What's the matter with the boy that runs the elevator?—*Carl Pretzel.* The matter with him is that he is saucy and careless.—*Philadelphia Call.*

—At a country boarding-house always talk loud, help yourself first and abuse the place and the people. It inclines your fellow-boarders to think that you have been a superintendent of an insane asylum.—*N. Y. Journal.*

—She didn't say "skill."—Beatrice—"I don't see how you play on that mandolin." Angelina—"Well, it requires a great deal of patience and some skill." Beatrice—"Yes, you were always noted for your patience, dear."—*Tid-Bits.*

—The benefit of advertising is very great. Thursday a Newport man advertised in the *Journal* for his lost dog, and before the paper was printed the dog broke the rope the fellow who stole him had him tied with and ran home.—*Kentucky State Journal.*

—A poem in an exchange is entitled "They Had No Poet and So They Died." That was terribly sad. And the calamity might have been so easily averted, too! Almost any city in the Union could have spared a dozen or more poets, and would have gladly forwarded them, free of charge, to any point where such a singular fatality prevailed. We don't know who "They" were, but they should have made their wants known.—*Norristown Herald.*

MATERIAL FOR A SAINT.

The Commendable Philanthropical Works of Dorothea Lynde Dix.

Dorothea Lynde Dix, an American woman who holds a position in the annals of philanthropy equal to that of Elizabeth Fry Howard and Pinel combined, died a short time ago and received less notice in the newspapers than a police item, to say nothing of the base ball game the same day. She was born in Worcester, Mass., in 1802, and was the daughter of a Boston merchant. Visiting a Massachusetts State prison through curiosity, she was led through pity to enter upon the sisyphean labor of securing proper care for the defective classes. At the beginning of her labors prisoners, paupers and lunatics were almost universally looked upon as demon-possessed. Insane hospitals were few, while almhouses and prisons were in a most disgraceful state. To the labors of Miss Dix are largely due such reforms as have been since effected in American almhouses, jails and insane hospitals.

In 1834 her health broke down and she visited Scotland. Here she found the insane hospitals horribly mismanaged. Through the reforms she brought about they now rank more than the equals of any other country in administrative perfection. From 1837 until the beginning of 1861 she never ceased in her efforts to secure State hospital provision for the insane dragging out a lingering life of untold suffering in county care. Through her unwearied efforts a far-sighted measure passed both houses of Congress in 1854 giving 10,000,000 acres of public lands to the States for the care of the insane, but it fell before the veto of President Pierce.

Among other notable works she organized the army service of nurses during the war. At the time of her death she was living upon a pension granted by the State of New Jersey. Had she lived in England, for example, she would have shared the veneration and love bestowed upon Florence Nightingale.—*Chicago News.*

FOR OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

BE CHEERFUL.

If you would be successful
In what ever you may do,
Rememoer dismal, dreary looks
Will never help you through;
But a cheerful, kindly temper
Will be of much avail,
For a smiling face will oft succeed
Where a frowning one will fail,
Mind you that!
A smiling face will oft succeed
Where a frowning one will fail.

If you'd be truly happy,
However dark the day,
Remember that a sunny heart
Will drive dull care away;
The fret of disappointment
'Twill help you to resist,
For cheerfulness dispels "the blues,"
As the sun dispels the mist,
Mind you that!
Cheerfulness dispels "the blues"
As the sun dispels the mist.

—*Anna M. Pratt, in Golden Days.*

A "FUNNY" PERFORMANCE.

How the Lathbury Boys Learned to Sew, and at the Same Time Did a Great Deal of Thinking.

Tom and Will Lathbury were in the kitchen making kites. They had been busy a long time whittling out the sticks for the kite frames and putting them together, and had been so quiet and good that Hannah, who was putting down a piece of oil-cloth, had said again and again to herself, "Those boys are just splendid to-day." Later in the day she changed her mind. "Hannah," said Will, "will you make us some paste? We're all ready now, all but the finishing."

"Not just yet, boys, I want to finish this."

"Oh, we'll help you, Hannah."

"Much help you'll be." But still Hannah was too good-natured to refuse, and soon the boys, with their hammers in hand, were down on their knees beside her.

"There," she said, pushing them the dish of tacks, "help yourselves, but don't put them too near together. I expect you'll bother me more than you'll help." And they did.

Tack, tack, tack, went the three hammers; what fun they were all having! But if the fun could only have stopped there!

Now, whether Will proposed it or Tom never was known. It was one of those funny things boys think of occasiona'ly; at any rate it was something Hannah never dreamed of, or else she would never have jumped up so suddenly to shut off the stove, for rip, rip went her gingham apron, hem off, band off, and all, for those naughty boys had nailed it to the floor.

"You two horrid boys!" said Hannah, "that's enough to provoke a saint; you're the very worst boys in the world, and I am going to tell your mother." It was too bad, and the boys felt "so sorry."

They had not meant "any thing like that," boys never mean any thing wrong, and how did they know those few tacks would "hold so?"

But Hannah lost no time in telling their mother, and pretty soon they heard mamma going to papa's study.

"Whew!" said Sam, "the joke's all spoiled now."

Perhaps Mrs. Lathbury rapped somewhat louder than usual, for her husband said "come in" so quickly she was in his room and asking his advice almost before she knew it.

Now Mr. Lathbury was very busy writing a sermon, and hardly knew he had said "come in," so when his wife told him of the boys' naughty trick, and asked him what she should do, he answered somewhat dreamily, and yet to the point:

"This is indeed a question of vital importance."

"Why, yes, certainly it is, Richard, and I want your help this time."

"Help, what, what are you talking about, my dear?

"Oh, dear!" said Mrs Lathbury, but added, "never mind, Richard, I see you are very busy, and I will come in again."

"Very well, my dear," and Mr. Lathbury went on, "in order to arrive at a conclusion we must"——but Mrs. Lathbury gently closed the door and heard no more.

"I wish Richard had been less busy, but I do not feel I ought to disturb him now, and yet what shall I do?"

Still Mrs. Lathbury, though she was worried herself, would not "worry Richard." At last she thought of some thing, though she hardly knew whether it would do.

"Boys," said she, going to the stairs, "boys, come here."

"It's a coming," said Will.

"Of course," answered Tom, "when trouble's coming it's always 'boys' with mamma, and 'Thomas' and 'William' with papa."

"Well, I am ashamed, aren't you, Tom?"

"Why, yes! Who wouldn't be? But that won't save us now."

"Boys," said their mother, as they entered her room, "how much money have you in your banks?"

Well that was a queer question, nothing like "the talk" they had expected, to say the least.

"I've got thirty-five cents in mine," said Will, "and I guess Tom's got more."

"No, I haven't; I took out ten for marbles the other day when papa didn't have 'any change,' and I've only thirty-three."

"All right, that will do," said mamma.

Well, "wasn't she growing queer?"

"Now, boys, I want you to take this money, sixty-eight cents, and go down to Mr. Wood's store and buy me enough gingham for two aprons; let me see, yes, five yards will answer, then there'll be enough for strings and all. Then buy two German silver thimbles to fit your fingers, you can get them for five cents apiece, and then come home and I will tell you what else to do."

Then the boys began to see ahead a little, and somehow they felt "queer," and Will said, going out:

"Tom, mamma's too much for us this time!"

Mr. Wood waited upon the boys with pleasure, and thought nothing strange when they bought the gingham—though the boys themselves hardly knew gingham from calico, only, as Tom said, "gingham turns, you know," and as Hannah's apron was a fine check, they knew what to ask for.

But when they asked for thimbles, and had to fit their own fingers, Mr. Wood said: "Well, now, you must be industrious boys, I must say; there isn't a boy in ten knows how to sew; but it's a good thing to know, and your mother must be a very sensible woman to set you at it."

Dear! how their faces tingled! and very glad were they to escape into the street.

"It'll get all over the place, Tom."

"Of course, Will, and I'd rather have ten talkings from mamma, and some of papa's whippings than that."

"Now, boys," said Mrs. Lathbury, upon their return, "I hope you have made a good purchase. Yes, indeed," she said, as she unrolled the parcel, "you have done nicely. Now, I will furnish you with the needles and thread, as I fear you have not much left over, and give you your first lesson in sewing."

Not a word more—nothing like "I am grieved to learn my boys have done an unkindness"—oh, no, nothing like that; in fact no "talk" of any kind, but just two yards and a half of gingham to each boy, a needle, thread, the fitting of thimbles, and all was ready.

At first it required some patience to teach the boys how to handle their work properly, and how to pull the needle through without getting it unthreaded, but Mrs. Lathbury persevered, and finally the boys were left to themselves, and their mother resumed her reading.

For a time the novelty of it pleased Will, who always saw the "fun," in any thing at once, and he said to Tom:

"Mamma's put the *check* on us this time."

But Tom did not feel like punning, and he answered, gruffly:

"Keep still, Will; I feel as clumsy as a bear with a needle."

"No quarreling, boys, or you will have to take out all you have done."

That was the only stern thing their mother said.

Oh, what a lesson in patience was that for boys, and how tiresome it grew after a little!

So hard to keep from quarreling when the thread "kinked up," and so many other things happened.

At last Mrs. Lathbury said: "You may put up your work now, boys; it is nearly time for supper, and after supper, as you have your lessons to get, there will be no time for sewing, but to-morrow when you come from school you may take it up again, and so on every day until the aprons are finished."

"Well, my dears," said papa at the supper table, "I presume you have been good boys to-day, as usual."

Will looked at Tom, Tom looked at Will, and both looked at mamma. Mamma said nothing, and Mr. Lathbury went on:

"By the way, Jeannette, you wished to see me to-day; what was it about, my dear?"

Then mamma had not told, after all. Wasn't she lovely?"

"Oh, never mind, Richard; at the time I needed your help very much, but afterward I found I could do without it."

Then Will winked at Tom as much as to say she had, but papa caught the wink, and then it all had to come out.

"Thomas! William! I am ashamed of you! however, I shall let your mother follow up her treatment this time, but if necessary she may call on me to finish it."

The rest of the meal was passed in silence. But when they were all going up stairs again the boys heard papa say: "Jeannette, you are a wonderful little woman."

"Oh, Richard! I did the best I could without you," and that was all that mamma said, but the boys wondered why she looked so happy after that, when they knew they had done nothing to make her glad.

It would take too long to tell what happened every afternoon while the boys worked on their aprons, for as the days were short, and it so soon grew dark, they were working at them a long, long time.

Hannah forgave them before the third day, but Mrs. Lathbury remained firm.

They lost "lots of fun," were "mortified to death" when the different boys and girls came in to ask them out to play, and found them "sewing on "gingham aprons;" but they did a great deal of thinking; and by the time the aprons were finished papa found it would "not be necessary to follow their mamma's treatment."

Of course "it got all over the place," such things always do. Some people laughed; some said it was "such a queer idea;" a few mothers said they would try some such thing sometime. But the Lathbury boys never forgot it; and whenever after that one of them would propose something "real funny," the other was always sure to say:

"Let's be careful it don't end in gingham and thimbles."—*Christian at Work.*