

IDLE HANDS.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Mr. Thornton returned home at his usual midday hour, and as he passed by the parlor door, he saw his daughter, a young lady of nineteen, lounging on the sofa with a book in her hand.

Mrs. Thornton did not observe the entrance of her husband. She was bending close down over her work, and the noise of her machine was louder than his footsteps on the floor.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the tired woman, letting her foot rest upon the treadle, and straightening herself up, "this pain in my side is almost beyond endurance."

"Then why do you sit killing yourself there?" said Mr. Thornton.

Mr. Thornton's aspect was unusually sober.

"What's the matter? Why do you look so serious?" asked his wife.

"Has anything gone wrong?" Mrs. Thornton's countenance grew slightly troubled.

"Things are wrong all the time," he replied, in some impatience of manner.

"In your business?" Mrs. Thornton spoke a little faintly.

"No, nothing especially out of the way there, but it's all wrong at home."

"I don't understand you, Harvey—what is wrong at home, pray?"

"Wrong for you to sit, in pain and exhaustion over that sewing machine, while an idle daughter lounges over a novel in the parlor. That's what I wished to say."

"It isn't Effie's fault. She often asks to help me. But I can't see the child put down to household drudgery. Her time will come soon enough. Let her have a little ease and comfort while she may."

"If we said that of our sons," replied Mr. Thornton, "and acted on the word, what efficient men they would make for life's trials and duties!"

"You are wrong in this thing—all wrong," continued the husband.

"And if Effie is a right-minded girl, she will have more true enjoyment in the consciousness that she is lightening her mother's burdens than it is possible to obtain from the finest novel written.

Excitement for the imagination is no substitute for that deep peace of mind that ever accompanies and succeeds the right discharge of daily duties. It is a poor compliment to Effie's moral sense to suppose that she can be content to sit with idle hands, or to employ them in light frivolities, while her mother is worn down with toil beyond her strength. Heeter, it must not be!"

"And it shall not be!" said a quick, firm voice.

Mr. Thornton and his wife started, and turned to the speaker, who had entered the room unobserved, and been a listener to nearly all the conversation we have recorded.

"It shall not be!" And Effie came and stood by Mr. Thornton. Her face was crimson; her eyes flooded with tears, through which light was flashing; her form drawn up erectly; her manner resolute.

"It isn't my fault," she said, as she laid her hand on her father's arm. I've asked mother a great many times to let me help her, but she always puts me off, and says it's easier to do a thing herself than to show another. Maybe I am a little dull—but every one has to learn, you know. Mother didn't get her hand in fairly with that sewing machine for two or three weeks; I am certain it wouldn't take me any longer. If she'd only taught me how to use it,

I could help her a great deal. And, indeed, father, I am willing."

"Spoken in right spirit, my daughter," said Mr. Thornton, approvingly. "Girls should be as usefully employed as boys, and in the very things most likely to be required of them when they become women in the responsible positions of wives and mothers. Depend upon it, Effie, an idle girlhood is not the way to a cheerful womanhood. Learn and do, now, the things that will be required of you in after years, and you will have an acquired facility. Habit and skill will make easy what might come hard, and be felt as very burdensome."

"And you would have her abandon all self-improvement," said Mrs. Thornton. "Give up music, reading, society—"

"There are," said Mr. Thornton, as his wife paused for another word, "some fifteen or sixteen hours of each day, in which mind or hands should be rightly employed. Now, let us see how Effie is spending these long and ever recurring periods of time. Come, my daughter sit down; we have this subject fairly before us. It is one of great importance to you, and should be well considered. How is it in regard to the employment of your time? Take yesterday, for instance. The records of the work of a day will help us to get toward the result after which we are now searching."

Effie sat down, and Mr. Thornton drew a chair in front of his wife and daughter.

"Take yesterday, for instance," said the father, "how was it spent? You rose at seven, I think?"

"Yes, sir; I came down just as the breakfast bell was rung," replied Effie.

"And your mother was up at half past five I know, and complained of feeling so weak that she could hardly dress herself. But, for all this, she was at work until breakfast time. Now, if you had risen at six, and shared your mother's work until seven, you would have taken an hour from her day's burdens, and certainly lost nothing from your music, self-improvement, or social intercourse. How was it after breakfast? How was the morning spent?"

"I practiced an hour on the piano after breakfast."

"So far so good. What then?"

"I read the 'Cavalier,' till eleven o'clock." Mr. Thornton shook his head, and asked:

"After eleven, how was the time spent?"

"I dressed myself and went out."

"A little after twelve o'clock."

"An hour was spent in dressing."

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you go?"

"I called on Helen Boyd, and we took a walk down Broadway."

"And came home just in time for dinner? I think I met you at the door?"

"Yes, sir."

"How was it after dinner?"

"I slept from three until five, and then took a bath and dressed myself. From six until tea-time I sat at the parlor window."

"And tea?"

"Read the 'Cavalier' until I went to bed."

"And I can remember when no day went by without an hour or two passed with your books. Did you lie down after dinner?"

"Of course not."

"And didn't you take a pleasant walk down Broadway? Nor sit at the parlor window with Effie? How about that?"

There was no reply.

"Now the case is a very plain one," continued Mr. Thornton. "In fact, nothing could be plainer. You spend from fourteen to sixteen hours in hard work, while Effie, taking yesterday as a sample, spends about the same time in what is a little better than idleness. Suppose a new adjustment were to take place, and Effie were to be usefully employed in helping you eight hours of each day, she would still have eight hours left for self-improvement and recreation; and you, relieved from your present overtasked condition, might get back a portion of your health and spirits, of which these two heavy household duties have robbed you."

"Father," said Effie, speaking through her tears that were falling over her face, "I never saw things in this light. Why haven't you talked to me before? I've often felt as if I'd like to help her; she says, that 'You can't do it, I'd rather do it myself.' Indeed it isn't all my fault!"

"It may not have been in the past, Effie, replied Mr. Thornton. "But it certainly will be in the future, unless there is a new arrangement of things. It is a false social sentiment that lets daughters become idle, while mothers, fathers, and sons take up the daily burden of work and bear it through all the business hours."

Mrs. Thornton did not come gracefully into the new order of things proposed by her husband and accepted by Effie. False pride in her daughter, that future lady ideal, and an inclination to do herself, than take the trouble to teach another, were all so many impediments. But Effie and her father were both earnest, and it was not long before the overtasked mother's weary face began to lose its look of weariness, and her languid frame to come up to an erect bearing. She could find time for the old pleasure in books, now and then for a healthy walk in the streets, and a call on some valued friend.

And was Effie the worst for this change? Did the burden she was sharing with her mother depress her shoulders, and the lightness from her step? Not so. The languor engendered by sickness which had begun to show itself, disappeared in a few weeks; the color came warmer into her cheeks; her eyes gained in brightness. She was growing in fact more beautiful, for her mind cheerfully conscious of duty was moulding every lineament of her countenance into a new expression.

Did self-improvement step? O, no! From one to two hours were given to close practice at the piano every day. Her mind, becoming vigorous in tone, instead of enervated by idleness, chose a better order of reading than had been indulged before, and she was growing towards a thoughtful, cultivated, intelligent womanhood. She also found time, amid her home duties, for an hour twice a week with a German teacher; and she began, also, to cultivate a natural taste for drawing. Now that she was employing her hours usefully, it seemed wonderful how much time she found at her disposal for useful work.

Dry white woolen stockings on shingles cut the right shape and size. Each member of the family should have a pair or more of these stocking boards. Pin the hose over the upper edges and hang on the line by strings to dry. They cannot shrink and need no ironing.

Passengers from San Francisco on Thursday, the 28th ult., at 8 a. m., arrived in New York city at 7 o'clock, on the morning of the 6th, in six days and twenty-three hours, the quickest time yet made across the continent.

A SENTIMENTAL STORY.

SIMON SHORT'S SON SAMUEL.

Shrewd Simon Short sewed shoes. Seventeen summers, speeding storms, spreading sunshine, successively saw Simon's small shabby shop still standing staunch; saw Simon's self-same squeaking sign still swinging, silently specifying: "Simon Short, Smithfield's sole surviving shoemaker. Shoes sewed, soled superfinely." Simon's sly, sedulous spouse, Sally Short, sewed skirts, stitched sheets, stuffed sofas. Simon's six stout, sturdy sons—Seth, Samuel, Stephen, Saul, Silas, Shadrach—sold sundries, Sober Seth sold sugar, starch, spices; simple Sam sold saddles, stirrups, screws; sagacious Stephen sold silks, satins, shawls; skeptical Saul silver salvers; selfish Shadrach sold salves, shoestrings, soap, saws, skates; slack Silas sold Sally Short's stuffed sofas.

Some seven summers since Simon's son Samuel saw Sophia Sofronia Spriggs somewhere. Sweet, sensible, smart Sofronia Spriggs. Sam soon showed strange symptoms. Sam sighed sorrowfully, sought Sophia Sofronia's society, sung several serenades slyly. Simon stormed, scolded severely, said Sam so silly, singing such shameful, senseless songs. "Strange! Sam should slight such splendid sales! Strutting spenhrift! shattered-brained simpleton!"

"Softly, softly, sire," said Sally, "Sam's smitten; Sam's spied some sweetheart."

"Sentimental schoolboy!" snarled Simon.

"Smitten! stop such stuff!" Simon sent Sally's snuff-box spinning, seized Sally's scissors, smashed Sally's spectacles, scattered several spoons. "Sneaking scoundrel! Sam's shocking silliness succumb!" Scowling Simon stopped speaking, starting swiftly shopward. Sally sighed sadly. Summoning Sam, she spoke sweet sympathy. "Sam," said she, "Sire seems singularly snappy; so sonny, stop strolling streets, stop smoking, spending specie superfluously, stop sprucing so; stop singing serenades, stop short; sell saddles, sell saddles sensible; see Sophia Sofronia Spriggs soon; she's sprightly, she's stable, so solicit, sue, secure Sophia Sofronia Spriggs' speedy, Sam."

"So soon? so soon?" said Sam, standing stock still.

"So soon, surely," said Sally, smilingly; specially since sire shows such spirits."

So Sam, somewhat scared, sauntered slowly, shaking stupendously. Sam soliloquized: "Sophia Sofronia, Spriggs, Spriggs—Short—Sophia Sofronia Short—Samuel Short's spouse—sounds splendid! Suppose she should say—She! shan't—she shan't!"

Soon Sam spied Sophia staring, singing softly. Seeing Sam, she stopped staring, saluting Sam smilingly. Sam stammered shockingly.

"Spl-spl-splendid summer season, Sophia."

Somewhat sultry," suggested Sophia.

"Selling saddles still, Sam?"

"Selling saddles still, Sam?"

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shall,"—Sophia snickered; so Sam stopped.

"Sophia," said Sam, solemnly. "Sam, said Sophia.

"Sophia, stop smiling, Sam! Short's sincere, Sam's seeking some sweet spouse, Sophia."

Sophia stood silent.

"Speak, Sophia, speak! Such suspense speculates sorrow."

"Seek sire, Sam, seek sire."

So Sam sought Sire Spriggs.—Sire Spriggs said "Sartin."

A North Carolina "Straight Drink."

Some years since, when they were buildin' the locks on Coal River, I was over thar at Peyton's an' I stopt in at Dr. Kellum's who plyvicked people in that quarter at that time.

Thar was a famine just then, and great sufferin' among men, women and children for want of the necessaries of life.

Leastwise it was about the sam' thing. Thar was plenty of meat, an' abundance of corn, and no scarcity of chicken; but the rivers were dry, an' whiskey run entirely short. Some prudent people had laid in sufficient stock, butmost had not. How to bring up a family 'thout read eye was a puzzle, and the sufferin' was enor'mous.

Dr. Kellum was in trouble, too. He sympathized with his neighbors; but he had a half barrel of ninety-five per cent. alcohol in his office, and as he was consarned he managed to fix up with sugar an' watar, an' ether, an' sich truck, until he made a putty fair drink. Seein' I was a friend of his, he invited me to sample it. Well, it kinder filled the room with the smell, and just then a man from the Mud river country came in, on his way to Raleigh set house. He smelt the smell, an' says, "I've been nigh two weeks from home, an' I'm almost starved."

"O," says Kellum, pintin' to the ask, "that's it. Help yourself."

The chap brightened up, an' he drawed a level tumblerful of that deolol, an' afore you could say 'scat, you beast!' down it went. Kellum, he turned pale.

Says the man: "I'm much obliged to you. That's sartin'!" an' he turned and walked out.

Kellum set as if he'd bin shot, an' then jumped up.

"That won't do," says he, that's nough to pizen a crowd. I'll all him back an' give him an emetic."

We both went to the door. He wasn't in sight. I ran up the back, an' Kellum he run up the road; but it wasn't of no use.

"I shouldn't wonder," says Kellum, "if that chap hasn't gone an' died somewhar by himself. Thar'll be a corpse found directly, an' a lawner's inkwitch, and lots of trouble."

Well, we sot thar for about an hour, talkin' 'bout the poor cuss' melancholy fate, when all to wost in walks the chap hisself, as pict as a wild cat.

"Doctor," says he "I'm gwine a long way up the river, an' liquor's skeerce, an' if it's all the same to you, could you spar' me another tumblerful? It's the most satisfactory liquor I ever drunk."

Steam Plows in Louisiana.

We learn by a New Orleans paper, that Mr. Effingham Lawrence, the owner of Magnolia Sugar Plantation has written a letter in answer to inquiries with regard to his experience in using the Fowler Steam Plough, stating that he has had one set of fourteen horse power, in use for two years past—"ploughing when breaking up with the mould board plough, to a depth from fifteen to twenty inches, and when using the subsoiler, cultivating between the cane rows, running to a depth of from twenty to twenty-four inches."

The first forty acres broken up by steam in the spring of 1868, planted in corn and peas, and in sugar cane the fall of the same year, gave a yield of over 100,000 lbs. of dry sugar, being over 2,500 lbs. or 2½ hogheads per acre. On the

other steam ploughed lands planted the following year, the yield was nearly as satisfactory, notwithstanding a very unpropitious season, while other fields, "where the stand of cane was equally as good as that on the steam ploughed land, but cultivated with the old-fashioned horse and mule power, and received much more labor and attention than the crops on the steam ploughed lands, did not produce more than 1200 to 1500 lbs. to the acre.

Mr. L. thinks he is justified in the conclusion that steam-ploughing saves half the labor and produces a return fifty per cent. better than any other system of cultivation, and that its introduction on the rich lands of the Mississippi Valley, and the vast prairies of the West and Texas, will afford the best solution of the puzzling labor question, and greatly increase the crops produced.

[Country Gentleman.

Forgery—Head Clerk Treasury Department in Limbo.

The Columbia Phoenix says that one of the most cunningly devised, villainous and daring schemes of rascality was recently disclosed in Columbia. W. W. Sampson, head clerk of the State Treasury Department, and one Captain Metcalf, late of the United States army, and who figured extensively in South Carolina at the close of the war as commandant of the Post at Abbeville, Beaufort, and other parts of the State, are the guilty parties, so far as discovered. The facts of the case, as we learn them, are as follows:

The State, in 1859, issued bonds payable in five years, to the amount of \$310,000, in aid of the Blue Ridge Railroad. The bonds were taken by the Blue Ridge Railroad Company at par, to be used by them in the construction of their road. A number of these bonds, which had not been used, were stolen by a raiding party of Federal soldiers, which passed through Pendleton, S. C., about the close of the war. In 1860, two years after said bonds became due, the Legislature passed an act authorizing the funding of past due bonds and the coupons thereon. Under this act it was ascertained, in 1867, by the present President of the Blue Ridge Railroad, Gen. J. W. Harrison, that the identical bonds stolen in Pendleton had been funded, having probably been sold to some innocent parties at the North; but a large amount of the coupons were not presented to be funded. Having free access to the books, Sampson was enabled to find out precisely what coupons were missing; and, proceeding upon this knowledge, he and Metcalf concocted a sweet little plan of appropriating some \$42,000; and if successful, there is no telling to what extent they may have carried their thievish propensities.

Sampson, as clerk of the Treasury, sends on a genuine coupon to a printing house in Auburn, N. Y., where Metcalf now lives, and orders *fac similes* struck off, to the amount of \$42,000. The genuine coupon being merely stereotyped was easily counterfeited; but the printing house in Auburn suspecting something to be amiss, reported the matter to the detectives in New York city, and they to Constable Hubbard here. Plans for their detection were at once set on foot, letters were intercepted, a large batch of the forged coupons seized while in transitu between Sampson and Metcalf, and yesterday, having obtained such unquestionable evidence of the guilt of the parties, Hubbard arrested Sampson here, and at the same time Metcalf was arrested in Auburn. Sampson is now in jail, and bail to the amount of \$25,000 being required for his release, will probably remain there till the time of trial. We have it from good authority that the intentions are that more persons in and about the capital than W. W. Sampson are implicated in his crime.

"God save the State!"

The best cure for dirt—the water cure.

Very Sad.

STORY OF A GOVERNESS IN ENGLAND.

A correspondent of the London Telegraph vouches for the following as a true story:

"A few days ago I stood by the side of a dying girl, her age was seventeen, and this is her history: She was the youngest child in a large family. Her mother was the widow of a clerk in a city bank, who died suddenly, leaving his wife and children destitute. Her sisters went out as governesses; she remained at home until increasing want rendered it necessary for her, too, to make her own living. She found employment as a daily governess. She walked each day four miles to and from her work, and received a few shillings a week. All day long she toiled, getting no food until she reached home in the evening. Who does not remember the hot Summer of last year? Through the glare of that cloudless season this poor child starved on. The sun withered up flower and shrub and also withered the brain of the daily governess.

"Day by day her strength melted away; at last she broke down. She could go no more to the daily lesson; it was too late now to give her food, kindly smiles, or more wages. Her cry from morn to night, as she rocked to and fro, pressing her hands on her burning forehead, was, 'Mother, mother, my brain is gone.' One day she was found with one hand copying verses from the Bible, and with the other had gashed herself with a knife. It was then I first heard of the case. I advised her mother to send her to the hospital for the insane. My advice was taken. I often went to inquire after her. I found the place full of governesses, and all the kindness could do seemed to be done for them. She soon became a raving lunatic.

"One day I took two of her sisters to see her. It was their first visit to the hospital, and they brought some flowers to give the patient. They were just in time to see her die. In her cell, with an angel smile on her young face, lay the little governess. She had fought the fight of life to its bitter end, and all was over now; and with a look as though she blessed the world which killed her, her young spirit passed away to God.

"There was a post mortem examination. Congestion of the brain was the cause of her death—hard work, they said, the cause of the congestion. A little food, a little kind thoughtfulness on the part of those who employed her might have saved her life and the broken heart of her widowed mother.

The birds were singing gayly, the sun was shining brightly, as they laid her by her father's side in a quiet country grave. There were few mourners, but some poor children and an old cripple, whom she taught and to whom she read the Bible on Sundays—her only holidays—came some miles to see the last of the little teacher.

"Sir, in telling this story, I do not cast blame on any one, but I hope those who read it, if they employ governesses, will remember that human creatures are not mere machines; and if they see them fagged and worn, will think of the story of this poor child, whose soul now rests in a kinder world than this."

A correspondent of the Country Gentleman says that tomatoes want water almost as much as ducks, but as the vine is hardy and will stand almost any amount of heat and drought, few supply the water it demands. In order to make tomatoes ripen quickly, they should be watered at least once a day. The evening is the best time to water them.

Mrs. Woodhull never would have announced herself as a candidate for President, had she known it, was a virtual acknowledgment that she was forty-five years old. But "that card is boarded," and she can't take it back now. She is entered for the race, best two in three, to corsets.

Domestic Economy.

Extravagant parents must expect to have extravagant children; and when masters and mistresses do not economize, they can scarcely expect the servants to do so.

There is a vast difference between economy and stinginess. The former is laudable—the latter, despicable. Prudent persons, who study their expenses closely, are likely to set aside three-twentieths of their yearly income for contingencies; six-twentieths for household expenses; three-twentieths for servants and amusements; four-twentieths for education of children, personal expenses, etc.; and four-twentieths for rent, wear and tear of furniture, insurance, etc. For example, suppose your income to be \$1,600 a year, you expend \$600 for food, \$300 on servants, etc., \$400 for rent, while there remains \$300 for an accumulating fund. If your income is fluctuating, be sure and set aside six-twentieths of it for a reserve fund, and divide the rest of the income as above. There is a great deal in management. Some house-keepers will make \$2,000 go farther than others will \$4,000. The habit of spending money needlessly, in the gratification of a host of imaginary wants, is one in which our young men and women are too apt to fall. The folly of this, they can see and acknowledge, and yet they have not the resolution to pursue a different course. We call upon all our readers who are not blessed with abundant means, to ponder upon these things—to abstain from present expenditures, and lay up a stated amount of their income every year.

There is many a man who keeps himself poor, by indulging in the following trifling expenses:

Two glasses of wine a day, at ten cents—\$73 per year.

Three cigars a day, at ten cents each—\$109.50!

Making nearly \$200 worse than thrown away, since salt hogs and the nicotine stupefy the brain.

That \$200 would pay the premium upon a life insurance for the benefit of wife and children, or it would save, perhaps, an overburdened mother form needless toil in her old age. It is pitiful to think of the tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars which are yearly consumed in smoke and in liquors which debase and brutify man, "who was made a little lower than the angels." Well might Jeremiah say: "God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions."—*Heath and Home.*

DISCOVERY IN CHEMISTRY.—Mr. Theophilus Ladislav Zelewskofski, one of the cleverest pupils of Baron Liebig, has just made an astounding discovery in chemistry, viz: the silicious and ammoniac ethers. It is but necessary to pour into a champagne glass a certain quantity of these two ethers to produce almost instantaneously the most magnificent stones; combined with very pure oxide of iron the ammoniac ether produces ruby; with sulphate of copper, the sapphire; with salts of manganese, the amethyst; with salts of nickel, the emerald. With salts of chrome the silicious ether produces the different colorations of the topaz. These ethers evaporate with a penetrative perfume, which several persons have declared to be very agreeable. The salts crystallize very regularly as soon as the liquid part has gone. The corindons obtained through this means are not quite as hard as the natural ones; but if the operation is carefully done the brilliancy is admirable. The silica and the alumina which constitute the earths and clays are principally easily found in the different parts of the globe; and the preparation of the new ethers, though delicate, costs very little. This discovery will bring forth a revolution not only in the jewelry, but in most of our industrial arts.

DELIRIUM OF SPLENDOR.—A St. Louis paper, speaking of a family in New York that made a fortune out of whiskey, says they live on Twenty-third street, in perfect delirium tremens of splendor.