

vain-minded women of the world;" and the speaker waved his hand at the conclusion of this little oratorical flourish.

Then, hitch, hitch, hitch went the chair Miss Kezia-ward. "Don't ye feel sort o'lonely at spells," he asked insinuatingly.

Miss Kezia glanced suspiciously at the rapidly advancing chair. She dropped her knitting and went to the fire and piled up the blazing sticks of wood. Then she came back to the table and set her chair on the farther side of it, thus putting a barrier between her and her visitor. "I'm never lonely, deacon; plenty to do is the best medicine for loneliness."

"But woman's a tender, dependent creatur'. Woman's a vine" (here the deacon assumed his weekly prayer meeting drawl), "and needs auther'n to cling to when the troublous desolation' waves and winds of affliction and sorrier roll over her."

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Miss Kezia with a contemptuous sniff, I shouldn't have expected that a man of your sense, deacon, would repeat such silly trash. I have no patience with the people who are always talking as if a woman couldn't stand alone, and needed propping up, like a rag doll that hadn't any backbone. I'm no vine—no such creeping, helpless thing, I can tell you. I can stand alone as well as anybody, if the Lord so will it, altho' I admit, deacon, that it's pleasanter to have some one keep you company."

"That's jest it; ye hev' hit the nail squar' on the head! It is pleasanter to hev' company in our sojourn on this mortal earth."

The deacon seized his chair with both hands and by a circuitous line of hitching, placed it within three feet of Miss Kezia's table. "You're a forehanded woman, Miss Kezia; I'm a man of promise and influence in the community; it seems to me that it would be a good thing if we could walk hand-in-hand thro' this vale of tears. Providence seems to pint its finger that way." The deacon was thinking at that very moment of the money he would save by putting a thrifty manager like Miss Kezia in the place of his inefficient wasteful hired woman.

Miss Kezia was dumbfounded. She dropped her knitting and the ball of yarn rolled across the floor. "Meroy!" she finally gasped.

"I'll make ye a first-rate husband, and ye'll make me a good wife. We've been members of the same church for 30 years or more, and as we've been members of the *spiritual* family, we'll now be members of the same *human* family."

Miss Kezia straightened herself up in her high-backed chair and drew in her chin, while her voice rang out shrill and clear: "I rather guess it'll take two to make that bargain."

A second look at her aged admirer, who was edging up to her with a sheepish simper, exasperated the good woman beyond control. "The old fool!" she said wrathfully.

The color came into the deacon's thin cheeks, and he started to his feet, looking anxiously towards the door, as if meditating a hasty retreat. But the yarn was wound around his boots and he was forced to remain.

Miss Kezia likewise rose, and folding her hands primly in front of her, remarked grimly: "When you first began your talking I hadn't the least idea what you were driving at. I thought that you were hinting about Betsy Hill, and wanted to take me into your confidence. I never dreamed that you meant me. Why, I supposed that every one in the town knew that I wouldn't give up my freedom for the best man living. Betsy Hill is a pious, likely woman; she'll make a good home for you, and she needs a home herself."

The deacon looked completely withered, and Miss Kezia continued: "If you step around a little livelier, deacon, and pick up the stones on your lots and put them into good fences, and mow down some of those pesky weeds, there's no earthly reason why your farm shouldn't look as well as mine. If I've said anything to hurt your feelings, deacon, I hope you'll overlook it. Why you are all twisted up in that yarn: I'll untangle it."

The delay in unwinding the yarn from the deacon's feet gave Miss Kezia a chance for further remark. "One word more, deacon: have you heard about those western lands?"

The deacon wished he was anywhere out of the sight of those merciless black eyes. "I—I think I've heern tell suthin' about em," he replied meekly.

"I thought so! I thought so!" exclaimed Miss Kezia savagely. "Well, deacon, those lands rightfully belong to my niece Mary; I only hold them as her guardian."

The deacon began to look upon his rejection as a blessing in disguise, for without the western lands Miss Kezia's attractions seemed tame compared with those mild blue eyes of Widow Hill. "I can trust to ye never to mention this!" he asked timidly.

"I shall never speak of it. Now, follow my advice, deacon; make sure of Betsy Hill before another week goes by. You have my good wishes. See to this at once."

"Thank ye, thank ye; I don't mind if I dew." The good woman followed her crestfallen visitor to the door. As a sudden gust of cold night air put out the light she said: "The air is snapping to-night; have a frost, eh deacon?"

And the discomfited deacon felt that he had been nipped by something sharper than a frost. *Emma H. Deneritt, in Lippincott's.*

**THE HUMAN EAR.**—Imagine two harps in a room, with the same number of strings, and each string perfectly attuned to a corresponding string in the other. Touch a string in one, and the corresponding string in the other will give out the same sound. Try another string, and its corresponding tone will be sounded. So with all the strings. So with any combination of the strings. It would not matter how you played the one harp, the other would respond. No doubt the response would be weaker. That is what one would expect; but the response, as regards pitch and quality, would be almost perfect. Now, substitute for one harp a human ear, and the conditions would, according to theory, be the same, except that the responsive mechanism of the ear is much smaller than that of the responsive harp. In the ear there are minute chords, rods, or something in such a state of tension as to be tuned to tones of various pitch; sound a tone, its corresponding rod or chord in the ear will respond, perhaps feebly, but still with energy sufficient to excite the nerve-filament connected with it; the result is a nervous current to the brain, and a sensation of a tone a particular pitch.—*Good Words.*

**CAUSES OF FATIGUE IN READING.**—An important study has been made of this subject by Dr. Javal, Director of the Laboratory of Ophthalmology of the Sorbonne, published in the *Annales d'Oculistique*. The fatigue of the eyes which is so often complained of by literary men he believes due to a permanent tension of accommodation. Reading requires constant, steady strain of the eyes, while many other occupations demanding close attention, do not need constant sight. His researches extend to the question of great economical importance: Given a surface of paper and a number of words to print upon it, what rule will secure the maximum of legibility? The answer is: Other things being equal, the legibility of a printed page does not depend on the height of the letters, but on their breadth. This fact is of special importance in the preparation of school books, and Dr. Javal's suggestions should receive the attention of publishers, type foundries and school boards.

**A MILL-OWNER** says:—Eelskins make the best possible strings for lacing belts. One lace will outlast any belt, and will stand wear and hard usage where hooks or any other fastenings fail. Our mill being on the bank of the river, we keep a net set for eels, which, when wanted, are taken out in the morning and skinned, and the skins are stuck on a smooth board. When dry, we cut them in two strings, making the eelskin, in three hours from the time the fish is taken from the water, travel in a belt.

## BAD HABITS.

The young man who starts out in life with bad habits is handicapped from the start. They will cling to him as the leech does to the skin, and suck the very vitality from all his endeavors to better his condition. Think you, young man, that any of those men who have risen from the very humblest ranks of society, would have reached the position they occupy if they had contracted habits dangerous to their moral or physical welfare? They most certainly would not. They would never have risen from the level in which they were originally placed. They would reap as they had sown.

Many a young man desires to be classed as a "good fellow." It is very pleasant, no doubt, to be told that one is so very liberal with his money. It tickles his feeling of self-love. But is it not pursuing a very dangerous course in thus being classed? Are we not laying the foundation of a course of extravagance that will cling to us all our lives? We do not advocate the other extreme of miserliness. The golden mean in all things should be our endeavor. Then in the pursuit of his extravagant desires, he contracts debts he can never pay. He lives beyond his means, borrows from his friends to keep up appearances, and when asked to pay his debts is unable to do so. Thus he goes on through life, a burden to himself and all with whom he has dealings.

The vice of drunkenness is one of the pitfalls which has sent many a noble heart down to perdition. It may start in with a social glass with a friend, but the end will, if we allow it to control us, be both moral and physical ruin. How many are the brave and manly hearts, with high and noble aspirations, who have been utterly ruined by giving way to the demon of intemperance. Contact with the world reveals them on every hand. With intellect clouded and mind dwarfed, when they should be strong and self-reliant, they rapidly sink into an obscurity and social ostracism, which would not be the case if they did not give way to their evil habits. Instead of perhaps taking rank among the world's great and good, they are found in the circle of the low and depraved.

Another vice that is utterly demoralizing is gambling. The corner-grocery or cigar-store, where dice are shaken for drinks or cigars, may be the first step in the downward course. If it be necessary that one should have a smoke or drink, let him pay for it like a man, and not try to make another do so by shaking dice for it. It is the first step that may lead to the faro-bank, and then when one's salary is not sufficient to minister to the gambling fiend, forgery and other crimes will follow in its wake. And the end! Do you realize it, young men, who so deftly throw the dice on the counter. The prison door closes, and you are lost to the world.

We might enumerate other vices that beset the path of young men who desire to make their way in the world. We have selected these because they seem to be of the most moment. Every young man who desires to succeed in life, has need to have all his faculties in full play. Some of the brightest names in the history of the world's progress have risen from the humblest surroundings. But they did not have any bad habits. They worked early and late for the attainment of their desires. They eschewed all surroundings that tended to dwarf their mental faculties. For the realization of their cherished aim and the goal of their ambition, they willingly sacrificed the passing moment's pleasures. No one can ever hope to succeed without thus doing so. When we have reached the object of our life, although it may not be the full realization of it, the hard and thorny road we have passed over will recur to us with pleasant memories, and cause an inner feeling of pleasure no pen can describe.

**HONEY** used in moderation is wholesome. Very old honey, however, should be eschewed.