

is coming up for adverse criticism. Of course, if it is some of your relatives or acquaintances who have the habit, you can only be as resigned and respectful as possible, but I had a schoolfellow, a girl no older than myself, who had exactly the same kind of a mind. She had confronted me with it on several occasions, and so one day she began, 'You know I must speak'—I interrupted her.

'Must you? Well, then, I've just come from the elocution class, and I'll tell you what the professor said: 'Never speak anything until you have studied it, and feel sure that it is worth speaking, that you are the person to do it properly, and that it will suit your audience.'''

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

Arthur sat on the front doorsteps crying softly. 'What is the matter, little boy?' asked a kind-hearted woman who was passing.

'Ma's gone an' drowned all the kittens,' he sobbed.

'What a pity I'm awfully sorry.'

'An' she promised—boo-hoo—at I c'u'd do it.'

THE MOTHER'S CHOICE.

A mother lost her soldier son. The news came to her in despatches from the war. He had fallen fighting nobly at the head of his regiment.

She was inconsolable. 'Oh, that I might see him again!' she prayed. 'If only for five minutes—but to see him!'

An angel answered her prayer. 'For five minutes,' the angel said.

'Quick, quick!' said the mother, her tears turned to momentary joy.

'Yes,' said the angel, 'but think a little. He was a grown man. There are thirty years to choose from. How would you see him?'

The mother paused and wondered.

'Would you see him,' said the angel, 'as a soldier dying heroically at his post? Would you see him as he left you to join the transport? Would you see him as you first saw him in his uniform? Would you see him again as on that day at school when he stepped to the platform to receive the highest honors a boy could have?'

'How did you know?' the mother asked, her eyes lighting.

The angel smiled. 'Would you see him as a baby at your breast? Would you?'

'No,' said the mother, 'I would have him for five minutes as he was one day when he ran in from the garden to ask my forgiveness for being naughty. He was so small and so unhappy, and he was very hot, and the tears were making streaks down his face through the garden dirt. And he flew into my arms with such force that he hurt me.'

THE LESSON OF THE SEVEN WISE MEN.

Most people have heard of the Seven Wise Men of Greece—Pittacus, Bias, Solon, Thales, Chilon, Cleobulus, and Periander. Here is their story; and the moral of it is worth remembering, if the names are not. As some Coans were fishing, certain strangers from Miletus bought whatever should be in the nets without seeing it.

When the nets were brought in they were found to contain a golden tripod. A dispute arose among the fishermen and the strangers as to whom it belonged; and as they could not agree, they took it to the Temple of Apollo and consulted the priestess there. She said it must be given to the wisest man in Greece; and it was accordingly sent to Bias, who declared that Thales was wiser, and sent it to him.

Thales sent it to another one, and so on until it had passed through the hands of all the men, distinguished afterward as the Seven Wise Men; and as each one claimed that the other was wiser than he, it was finally sent to the Temple of Apollo, where it long remained to teach the lesson that the wisest are the most distrustful of their wisdom.

MADAME AND THE SURGEON.

Velpeau, the eminent French surgeon, successfully performed a perilous operation on a little child five years old. The mother, overjoyed, called at the surgeon's office and said to him:

'Monsieur, my son is saved, and I really know not how to express my gratitude. Allow me, however, to present you this pocket-book, embroidered by my own hands.'

'Madame,' replied Velpeau, in a somewhat bitter tone, 'my art is not merely a matter of feeling; my life has its necessities like yours, and sentiment must give way to these requirements. Allow me, therefore, to decline your charming little present and, if agreeable to you, to request a more substantial remuneration.'

'But, monsieur, what remuneration do you desire? Fix the fee yourself.'

'Five thousand francs, madame.'

Madame very quietly opened the pocket-book, which contained ten one-thousand franc notes, counted out five, and, politely handing them to Velpeau, retired.

THE SHORT DAYS.

The teacher was trying to explain to her class the effects of heat and cold, says *Pearson's Weekly*. She told her little charges that an iron bridge would expand several inches in hot weather and contract a like amount in cold weather.

She then asked a little girl for another instance of the expansion and contraction caused by heat and cold. The child hesitated for a minute or so, and then replied:

'In hot weather the days are long; in cold weather they are much shorter.'

AT A SAFE DISTANCE.

One day a boy was playing with a cricket ball, when it went through a large pane of colored glass in the library. His mother discovered it, and asked, in her sternest voice,

'Who did that?'

'I did, but I didn't mean to do it. The ball slipped.'

'Well, what do you suppose your father will say when he knows it?'

'He knows it now, I told him.'

'You told him? Do you mean that when you saw what you had done you went straight down to his office and told him?'

'No, I didn't go to the office. I called him up on the telephone.'

NOT FOR THE CONSULATE.

The schoolmaster wanted to know whether the boys had an understanding of the functions of a consulate.

'Supposing,' he began, framing his question in the likeliest way to arouse the interest of his hearers, 'supposing some one took you up in an aeroplane, and after a long, exciting flight dropped you down thousands of miles from home in a country quite foreign, what place would you seek out first of all?'

An eager hand was instantly uplifted.

'Well, Willie, what do you say?'

'Please, sir, the hospital.'

AN APT DESCRIPTION.

Very apt was a description of the wilds of a certain part of Ireland given by an English jarvey. He had two passengers with him, one of whom lived in a rich grazing district. This man was astonished at the bleak, miserable aspect of the country they were passing through, and so began questioning the driver as to its quality, powers of production, and what it would feed to the acre.

'Well, sir, replied the driver, 'it might feed a hare to the acre in summer, but in the winter she would have to run for her life.'