THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - - October 27, 1871.

THE FATHER'S ERROR.

Mr. Solomon Winthrop was a plain old farmer—an austere, precise man, who did everything by established rules, and could see no reason why people should grasp at anything beyond what had been reached by their great-grandfathers. He had three children, two boys and a girl. There was Jeremiah, seventeen years old; Samuel, fifteen; Fanny, fourteen.

It was a cold winter's day. Samuel was in the kitchen, reading a book, and so interested was he that he did not notice the entrance of his father. Jerry was in the opposite corner, engaged in ciphering out a sum which he had found in his arithmetic.

"Sam," said his father, "have you worked that sum out yet?"

"No, father," answered the boy, hesitatingly.

"Didn't I tell you to stick to your arithmetic till you had done it?" said Mr. Winthrop in a severe tone.

Samuel hung down his head and looked troubled.

"Why haven't you done it?" continued the father.

"I can't do it, father, tremblingly said Samuel.

"Can't do it? And why not? Look at Jerry, there, with his slate and pencil. He had ciphered further than you have long before he was as old as you are."

"Jerry was always fond of sums and problems, father. They have no interest at all for me."

"That's because you don't try to feel an interest in your studies. What book is that you are reading?"

"It's a work on philosophy, father."

"A work on fiddlesticks! Go, put it away this instant, and then get your slate; and don't you let me see you away from your arithmetic until you can work out those roots? Do you understand?"

Samuel made no answer, but silently he put away his philosophy; and then he got his slate and sat down in the chimney corner. His lip trembled and his eyes moistened, for he was very unhappy. His father had been harsh toward him, and he felt it was without a cause.

"Sam," said Jerry, as soon as their father had gone out of the room, "I'll do that sum for you."

"No, Jerry," replied the young brother, with a grateful look; "that will be deceiving father. I'll try to do the sum, but I fear that I shall not succeed."

Samuel worked very hard, but to no purpose. His mind was not on the subject before him. The roots and squares, the bases and perpendiculars, though comparatively simple in themselves, were to him a mass of incomprehensible things; and the more he tried the more he became perplexed and bothered.

The truth was his father did not understand him.

Samuel was a bright boy, and uncommonly intelligent for one of his age. Mr. Winthrop was a thorough mathematician; he hardly ever came across a problem he could not solve, and he desired that his boy should be like him; he considered that the acme of educational perfection lay in the power of conquering Euclid; and he often expressed the opinion that, were Euclid living then, he could "give the old geometrician a hard tussle." He seemed not to understand that different minds were made with different capacities, and what one mind grasped with ease another of equal power would fail to comprehend. Hence, because Jerry progressed rapidly with his mathematical studies, and could already survey a piece of land of many angles, he imagined that as Samuel made no progress in the same branch, he was idle and careless, and so treated him accordingly. He never candidly conversed with his younger son, with a view to ascertain the true bent of his mind; but he had his own standard of the power of all minds, and he pertinaciously adhered to it.

There was another thing that Mr. Winthrop could not see, and that was that Samuel was continually pondering upon such profitable matter as was interesting to him, and that he was scarcely ever idle; nor did his father see, either, that if he ever wished his boy to become a mathematician, he was pursuing the very course to prevent such a result. Instead of endeavoring to make the study interesting to the child, he was making it obnoxious.

The dinner hour came, and Sam had not worked out the sum. His father was angry, and obliged the boy to go without his dinner, at the same time telling him that he was an idle, lazy lad.

Poor Samuel left the kitchen for his own room, and there he sat and cried. At length his mind seemed to pass from the wrong he had suffered at the hand of his father, and his face brightened up. There was a fire in the room below his chamber, so he was not very cold; and getting up, he went to a closet, and from under a lot of old clothes he took forth some long strips of wood. He was evidently fashioning some curious affair from these pieces of wood. He had bits of wire, little scraps of tin plate, pieces of twine and dozens of small wheels that he had made himself, and he seemed to be working to get the whole together after some particular fashion of his own.

Half the afternoon had thus passed away when his sister entered his chamber. She had her apron gathered up in her hand, and after closing the door softly behind her she approached the spot where her brother sat.

"Here, Sammy? see, I have brought you something to eat, I know you must be hungry."

As she spoke she opened her apron and took out four cakes, a piece of pie and some cheese. The boy was hungry, and hesitated not to avail himself of his sister's kind offer. He kissed her as he took the cakes, and thanked her.

"Oh, what pretty thing is that you are making?" uttered Fannie, as she gazed upon her brother's labor. "Won't you give it to me after it is done?"

To be continued.

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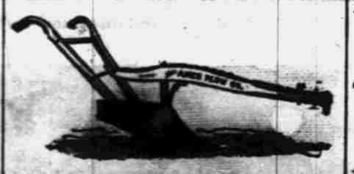

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