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**An Open Confession**

The editor of this department is in receipt of a letter from a reader in Tennessee, who writes as follows:

"I have read your poems of childhood with great interest and pleasure, and the tender sentiment and apparent knowledge of child character contained therein makes me bold to write and ask your advice. I have a son sixteen years old, and he is the pride of my life. But he does not take an interest in his school work. He prefers roaming the hills and fishing in the river near here. He is not inclined to work, although he helps me whenever I ask him. . . . What would you advise me to do?"

The writer is the boy's mother, and we would give a great deal to be of assistance to her. But we freely acknowledge our inability to help her. Every now and then we run across people who know all about raising boys, but as they never had any boys of their own they are unable to point to any practical results. Theories about raising boys are as thick as cranberries in a New Jersey swamp; but practical knowledge is hard to find. If a boy were the same kind of a boy every day in the year the matter would not be difficult, but the trouble is the boy is a different sort of individual every day.

As a puzzle the average boy beats the Sphinx seven furlongs in a mile dash. He can invent more ways of getting into trouble than any fiction writer ever dreamed of. He can make more noise, more dirt and more trouble than an army with banners. He is a mystery greater than the constituent parts of lightning.

The man who is the proud father of a sixteen-year-old son is never so careless as to give advice about raising boys. The training that would make one boy a success would bring another to ruin. You must study the boy, experiment with him, and trust largely to the inherent manliness of the boy himself. Unless he is totally depraved—and we have never yet seen such a boy—he will respond to sympathy. The trouble with most boys of sixteen is that they are given to understand that they are too big to play and too young to associate with their elders. As a result he hikes out to entertain himself, the result being that too often he gets into mischief. If he plays with small boys his father makes fun of him. If he asks his father questions about science, or business, or politics, the father looks up from his paper and says with a scowl: "O, you are too young to understand such things. Don't bother me."

Then the boy goes out and wanders around the street and usually gets into bad company.

Perhaps the best training a boy could have would be parental example. But that is often woefully hard on the parent. It is a whole lot easier to tell the boy what he ought to do than it is to show him by example what he ought to do. We have grave and serious doubt about the efficacy of a father's advice against the use of tobacco when the father has to remove his pipe from his mouth in order to talk plainly.

As a rule the boy, if given half a chance, will turn out all right. If his home is made more attractive than the streets he will remain at home. He will naturally turn to good books instead of bad ones, but it is difficult to make him believe a book is good if

the moral sticks out like a sore thumb.

The author of this department is the father of a boy who is approaching his eighteenth birthday. Just as soon as we can ascertain by experiment just how a boy should be raised we will be more than glad to make our knowledge known to all the world. But just now our stock of knowledge about raising boys is extremely limited. We could, however, write a book of huge size about what not to do.

Give the boy a fair chance. Make him feel that in father and mother he has a couple of true friends who will stick to him through thick and thin. Convince him that father and mother are comrades who rejoice when he rejoices, and mourn with him in his disappointments. Don't nag him because he is careless. Don't growl at him when he wants to know things. Don't chuck him off into the attic room and exhaust all the pretty things in fixing up his sister's room. Get next to him.

"Boys will be boys," but they will be gentlemen, too, if given half a chance.

We realize that we haven't given this mother much satisfaction, but it is because we do not understand boys. We don't believe anybody else ever did. Talk about woman being the "eternal question!" She isn't one, two, three, with a boy.

**A Little Bit of Printer History**

The other day an old time printer, a comrade of the author of this department in the old days of *manu* composition, dropped in on his way to the northwest, to spend the summer months, and an hour was pleasantly spent in talking over the "good old times" and recalling the printer comrades of the old days. And while the "tourist" was talking he recalled a bit of history not generally known even to the craft, and probably never heard by the general public.

"Why, we can remember as late as 1887 and '88 that we used to stand around after '30' was in and laugh at the idea of anybody inventing a machine that could set type," said the Old Tourist. "Remember how we used to spend our wages like princes, and feel secure in the thought that there would always be work at the case? Fifty-five cents a thousand in Butte, forty-five in St. Louis, Cincinnati and Chicago, and work always waiting for you when you drifted in. Well, all of a sudden Otto Mergenthaler brought his machine out, and there we were—dumped without recourse, so to speak. In five years every daily paper in the country was set by machines, and every machine took the place of four hand men. Now the linotype manufacturers are rolling in riches.

"And we printers could have had millions in our international treasury if we hadn't been so sure that type would never be set by machinery. Mergenthaler went broke before he had his machine perfected, and try as he would he couldn't get another dollar. So he thought he would take the printers into his confidence, thinking that they would be more interested than anybody else. He called our international officers together, showed them what he had accomplished, and told them he needed less than \$12,000 to complete his machine and get it ready for the market. The officers looked his model over thoroughly and then decided that Otto was a crank and his machine impractical. They

turned him down and went home. "Mergenthaler was in despair. Finally he managed to interest a couple of men who knew nothing about printing, but who had money to burn. They advanced the necessary funds, and within five years of the time our officers turned him down Mergenthaler's machines were on the market and the factory unable to keep within seeing distance of its orders.

"I think it's safe to say that if our officers had advanced the money when Mergenthaler asked for it we would have had millions in our treasury now, and we wouldn't be paying 10 per cent assessment a week to enforce the eight-hour day. It's a pity that we old time printers didn't have a foresight that would justify with our hindsight."

The writer agreed with the Tourist, divided his remaining dollar with him and bid him goodbye. And while pondering over the bit of history related by the passing friend, there came a whistle up the tube and the man running the linotype declared that if he didn't get some copy mighty soon he was going to turn off the gas and go home.

**Statistical**

One, two, three, four, five—  
 Mighty glad that I'm alive.  
 Six, seven, eight, nine, ten—  
 July Fourth has gone again,  
 And my fingers are all here  
 Ready for another year.  
 One, two—to my surprise,  
 I have still a pair of eyes.  
 And I'm happy to declare  
 I've my usual stock of hair.  
 True, I've blisters by the score  
 But the wonder is that more  
 Do not on my form appear—  
 I'll do better, come next year.  
 One, two—yes, both ears on,  
 Though once one of them was gone.  
 True, one's frazzled pretty bad,  
 But it's on, and I am glad.  
 All my teeth and all my toes  
 Still here, but I ruined my clothes.  
 'Twas a great and glorious day,  
 Spent in quite the same old way.

**Glad Months**

"What month in the year do you like best," whispered Miss Gladiolus McSwat, as the hammock swung to and fro in the soft moonlight.  
 "They change every year," said Willister DeGrubb.  
 "Pray, explain," whispered Gladiolus.  
 "Some of them have five pay days," exclaimed Willister, thinking, with sorrow, of the confectioner and florist bills due in a few days.

**Brain Leaks**

Most self-made men act like it.  
 The Lord loveth a cheerful loser.  
 Things won by chance are usually lost by carelessness.  
 Men do not rise to God by stepping on their neighbors.  
 A woman can never understand how a man can use so many pockets.  
 Men who wait for inspiration usually hunt for the soup kitchen.  
 It is easy to be liberal with the money that other men have earned.  
 A mother always feels cheated if another discovers her baby's first tooth.  
 Corrupt politics is caused by the lack of interest on the part of the honest citizen.  
 Our idea of good nature is to be able to smile and look pleasant when one has a toothache.  
 Too many men lock their good nature up with their merchandise and carry their troubles home.  
 A great many people are starving because of money wasted in tall spires and stained glass windows.  
 It is a good thing for a man that the authorities do not tax him on the value set upon a worthless dog by the baby of the household.