

not be sure; it is prettier shortened, isn't it? I hope you have received your badge safely by this time, I can quite understand your forgetting the address, as I am very careless about that myself. I am sorry you have been seedy. Have you had this awful influenza, or is it only this very hot weather? It seems to have made so many people feel sick and miserable. I hope your trip to Hamilton will set you up, and that you will be well enough to enjoy all the Christmas festivities. I did not see the motor-car chase at West's, but can quite imagine it was very funny; the marvellous places those cars go down and over without being smashed up and the people killed is too funny, isn't it? Cousin Kate.

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Dear Cousin Kate.—I am sending you two paintings for the painting competition. I hope you will like them. Have you received many from the other cousins? I am, yours truly, EVERELL.

[Dear Cousin Everell.—Your paintings arrived quite safely, and I was so pleased to see them, as I want all the cousins to try their skill, and I am glad to say the paintings are rolling in in a most satisfactory manner, and I hope they will continue to come in, as it is so much more fun to have a lot to choose from. It is so hot to-day, and I am busy, so this letter will have to be as short as yours.—Cousin Kate.]

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Dear Cousin Kate, I always look out for the "Graphic" every week, and I think Buster Brown is so funny. I should like to become a cousin, and will you please send me a badge? I am sending a picture for the painting competition, and I think three other little girls that go to the same school as I do are sending one too. I have some silkworms, and I think they will spin soon. I have some mustard and cress growing on some flannel in a plate, and it is growing so quickly. Your loving cousin, KATHLEEN.

[Dear Cousin Kathleen.—I am very glad you are going to join us and become a cousin, and I have sent you a badge. The paintings are coming in quite fast now, at first I thought very few were going to compete, but I am glad to say I was mistaken. Still, I shall be pleased if your little friends send theirs in. I never tried to grow mustard and cress in water, but we used to make wheat and oats grow beautifully, only we used cotton wool. I used to have lots of silkworms, too, and love them; only all the others used to hate them, and I was not allowed to have them in the house, so I had to keep them in the summer-house, and they used to crawl out of the box and spin in the most wonderful places. Do yours ever escape in that fashion?—Cousin Kate.]

### Howard's Essay.

"What was your essay about this morning?" asked Marjory, when tea was over.

"Stupid rot!" was Howard's emphatic reply. "Patience and Perseverance."

"Whatever did you find to say about them?" said Beryl.

"I said that patience was a good thing for girls and men, but I didn't think they were any good to boys."

"The sisters laughed. "What did Mr. Wood say to that?"

"I really couldn't tell you. He talked a lot and said it was clear I didn't know what I was talking about, which was quite true; but Burton minor was trying to catch a fly, and I didn't hear the end."

"I think he was right," said Edith, the eldest sister, as she picked up the tea-things on the tray. "and you do know very little about the subjects."

"It's the sisters who have to have pa-

tience where boys are concerned," remarked Marjory mischievously.

"And the servants," added Edith. "And the schoolmasters," put in Beryl.

Howard gave a disdainful snort. "Precious little of either goes to the making of them," he said.

"I am not so sure of that," Edith continued, as the tea-tray having been sent away, she took her seat at the corner of the table, and brought out her work-basket. "They have to give up their half-holidays sometimes when the boys are tiresome, and I am sure that must try their patience; and look how hard Mr. Wood works to bring on some of the backward boys."

Howard's answer was a grunt; he could not contradict, and he was not willing to agree, so the talk flagged for a bit.

Marjory, with a great love of fun, also liked to think things out, so after a short silence she burst out again.

"When you come to think of it," she said, "the heroes one admires most had both patience and perseverance, or they couldn't have been heroes. Look at Columbus!"

"That was pluck," muttered Howard doggedly.

"And what is pluck?" retorted Marjory, "but the power of keeping on in spite of difficulties, even when you don't want to?"

"Well done, Marjory, that puts the question in a nutshell. You will find men, and boys too, who are described as plucky, generally have both those qualities, but of course they do not come without being welcomed and encouraged."

"That's what provokes me about you, Edith," said Howard, "you always talk as if we could make ourselves anything we liked."

"Because I believe, to a great extent, we can make ourselves anything we like, if we only want to hard enough."

They all understood what she meant, although it was not very clearly put; and Beryl said, "But some people have more of that sort of thing to start with than others."

"That is quite true, but if you haven't much of it to start with, the fight to get it makes you stronger in the end."

Howard said nothing, he did not quite like the turn the conversation was taking, for he had the average boy's horror of a lecture.

But Edith had learned something since her mother died, five or six years before, and left her mistress and mother in one, and she knew when to stop. She had started Howard thinking, and when a boy begins to think in earnest, he has taken one step towards manliness. She would not preach any more, but she would try another plan.

Accordingly a few days later she announced to the family that Cousin Gerald was coming to stay with them. He was a great man, in Howard's eyes, for he had just left school, and was now looking about for something to do. So his arrival was expected with a good deal of excitement; but Mr. Gresham, who had a great knack of saying things at the wrong time, remarked at breakfast that "Gerald was about the best fellow he knew, for he had taught himself a great many things, and had such an amount of patience that he never would be beaten."

Edith caught her breath; Howard whistled softly, and made up his mind to keep such an objectionable person at arm's length.

So when he came home after school he received his cousin's advances very coldly at first, but there was so little of the "prig" about Gerald, and he was so ready to be interested in all their doings that Howard soon forgot his caution, and took his cousin up to his own special domain at the top of the house, where he was so rarely interfered with, and could make nearly as much mess as he liked.

And it must be owned that Howard's attempts to make anything of practical use had as yet resulted in very little

but mess—partly because he had not patience enough to finish anything, partly because he had a habit of picking up a book in the middle of something else, and remaining glued to it until his time was gone. Consequently he never had time to finish anything.

They talked about photography, which was one of Howard's discarded hobbies, and it came out that Gerald had taken several prizes for his photos. They talked about stamps, but before Howard could rummage out the different envelopes which contained his from the rubbish, the tea-bell rang, and they had to go down. But it soon appeared that there was no hobby which Gerald had taken up about which he had not as much information as he needed, and yet he had had to work harder at his school than Howard as yet had had to.

"I can't make out when you did it all, there never seems time for anything here, or else someone is always in the way."

"I don't know how I managed, only of course, I had to make the most of Saturdays and half-term holidays and all the odd time I could get!"

"Seems to me there never is any odd time here," said Howard enviously.

"I know I should have thought myself lucky if I had had a place like yours to work in. I had only a sort of tool-shed, and if I didn't put everything away before I left I couldn't find it when I came back. What do you do with your holidays?"

"Cricket and football mostly, when it's decent weather."

"And when it isn't?"

"Get a book or worry the girls." Gerald said nothing, and Howard went on, "You see when I do want to do anything, the camera's out of order, or they want to have dinner at the wrong time, or I have to go in to town to get a schoolbook, or something."

"Of course, all that makes it more difficult, but it doesn't do to be stopped by difficulties if you really want to do anything."

The talk ended for that time, but somehow it stuck to Howard, and when the next Saturday came, after Gerald's visit was over, he went up to his work-room, which certainly was enough to dishearten anyone, and wondered whether it would really be possible for him to dig up the camera and make anything of it.

Gerald was not so very much older than himself, and had had no more advantages, if so many. Was it true that he had no time? To-day it was wet; the camera was out of order, it was true, but he could put it right if he chose to take enough trouble over it. But then he had borrowed a book he wanted to read awfully. He knew his father wanted a nice photo taken of the girls, and the house and garden; indeed, he had said so when he gave Howard the camera, but the things never turned out right, and Gerald said it was because he did not take time enough over them.

For some time he hesitated, and then with a dim thought in the back of his mind that patience might be of some use after all, he found his camera and began to put it in order. Once fairly started on his work, he grew interested, and as he had started early, without that mischievous "I'll just read one chapter first," he was able to get it set right by the time the bell rang for dinner. He could hardly understand what it was made him feel so happy and comfortable when he went downstairs; he only knew he felt very different from what he did when he had been wasting all the morning, and he was glad to go back to his room as soon as he could, and look up his printing paper and developer and all the sundries. He found that most of them had been spoilt by lying about among the rubbish, and that it would take all the pocket money he could spare to get the photo ready for his father by the

time his birthday came at the end of October.

Nothing could be done that week, and he was surely tempted to give up his project and relapse into the old careless way of doing things. But all the time he was grumbling and telling himself it was no good going on any more, he was trying, in spite, to tidy the room, and at last got it into some sort of order, when it looked so much more tempting that he wanted to begin and do something fresh right away.

"No, I won't," he said to himself, "I'll finish that photo before I begin anything else," and, for the first time in his life, he kept his word.

He had to wait some days before a suitable opportunity came to take the photo, but it came at last. A lovely warm day that tempted everybody into the garden, when the sun was just in the right place and the girls looking bright and pretty. Howard whispered to Edith what he wanted, and by the time he had fetched his camera she had called Marjory and Beryl, and they had taken their places. After a good deal of posing and altering Howard was satisfied, and succeeded in taking one that he thought would do, but to make sure he took two or three more, and assured them at last that one was a very good one. Then he impressed upon them all that it was to be a profound secret. He was not working very hard at school just now; there was always a rather slack time at the beginning of the autumn term, to lead them up gently to the terrors of the Christmas examinations. So he was able to give the more time to his photography. In this he showed a persistence that surprised and delighted Edith. For the "wretched things" would not come out right. One was too dark, in another there was a serious flaw, another he left too long in the solution, and another he took out too soon, and was several times very much inclined to give it up. A listener outside the door would probably have heard expressions that proved the boy's patience was wearing rather thin, but happily it did not snap, and at last he called Edith up to see his results.

She was delightfully astonished at the carefully finished and mounted photograph he placed before her.

"Oh! that's capital, Howie!" she cried. "It looks just as if it had been done at a shop."

Howard looked pleased, but all he said was, "It ought to have a frame, but I've spent all my money."

"We will make a family present of it," said Edith eagerly; "we will give the frame."

"That's jolly of you," said Howard, for the family had rather snubbed his previous attempts, and he felt that the suggestion was a proof of his success.

This proposal was carried out, and in due course the birthday arrived and it was presented.

Mr Gresham gave an exclamation of pleasure when he opened the parcel. "Wherever did you get this done?" he asked. "It is very well done, and just what I wanted."

"Here is our photographer, Father," said Marjory, pushing her brother forward.

And the few words his father said simply repaid the boy for all his trouble, and, better still, that short, determined effort laid a good foundation in the way of habits of patience and perseverance, that helped him all his life.

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