

Paul did not respond, he was greatly disturbed, and he became impatient as the minutes went by, and still his father did not appear. "I suppose I did right," he muttered. "It may be nothing after all, but, upon my word, I did not like the little beggar's appearance! What can be keeping the governor? They are so senselessly fond

of him," he growled, "it was no use alarming him."

At last his father appeared, and Paul went to meet him.

"I say," he began, "there's something wrong with the kid, do for pity's sake hurry up and see him! Ellen has him in bed, rolled up in blankets, for he's shivering like

the ague. It may be nothing—the plaguy little beggar's been sitting in the stream, so perhaps it's only a chill. I'd just like to thrash the wickedness out of him, that I would."

The doctor was already at the door, and Paul finished his oration to himself.

(To be concluded.)



ON GIVING PRESENTS.

"Give thought, give strength, give deeds,
give self,
Give love, give tears and give thyself,
Give, give, be always giving,
Who gives not is not living,
The more we give—the more we live."
G. T. Edwards.

AFTER a somewhat lengthy and varied experience of presents, giving and receiving, I have come to the conclusion that it is a subject which does not receive the attention that it deserves. Casting my mind back to the days of my childhood, it is quite amusing to remember the feverish excitement over birthdays and Christmas Days, chiefly on account (alas for the sordidness of human nature!) of the prospective presents. What broad and scarcely veiled allusions were made purposely in the hearing of our relatives and friends of one's wants and wishes, in the hopes that they might notice them and provide them for the coming festival! And even in days of maturer age, when one was supposed to have learnt some modesty in these matters, I plead guilty to making the most delicate allusions before my birthdays as to what I needed most. In mitigation of this offence, however, let me whisper that parents, friends, and relatives are sometimes very grateful for these mysterious hints as a guide to their purchases.

Now that I have arrived at the age of receiving few and presenting many gifts, it is often a matter for serious consideration as to what to get, and perhaps some of my readers may like a few hints on the subject.

Let me start by saying that children should always be encouraged to give presents made by themselves. Presents purchased at a shop, and with their parents' money, should only in very rare cases be allowed. Whatever their little talent may be it should be developed, and they should be taught that a pincushion or penwiper made, or even a poem neatly copied out, or a duster hemmed, is far more valued than a purchased gift. It also encourages the saving of odds and ends of materials too often wasted and thrown away. And opportunity should be given to the children to work at these mysterious little presents, so that they may come as a real surprise to the recipients.

As to presents for little children, toys always come first, but after they have received a few

really good ones, money should not be wasted in buying more; and if a large number is given to them they should be weeded out from time to time, and passed on to less favoured children in the hospitals and elsewhere.

Then comes the stage when books are acceptable, and let me urge upon my readers never to give these without first a careful perusal of them. Sometimes the pictures are calculated to terrify a nervous child, and remain a dreadful memory for many years, but oftener still the reading matter, though quite unobjectionable in itself, is quite unsuitable for the particular child. One is often tempted by a title which seems appropriate, but turns out to be very much the reverse. I have on my shelf books purchased in this way for presents, but never presented. Next comes the stage when girls and boys look forward to desks and work-boxes, paint-boxes, and fancy work. This is an easier time of life for which to provide suitable presents. But it is for those of middle age and old age that the difficulty comes, and (let me whisper it in an aside) gentlemen are the most tiresome creatures for whom to buy presents. When you have given them smoking-caps, slippers, and ornamental braces, what remains? and then there are many who do not smoke. What is to be done for them? My unerring resource is books. One can scarcely have too many of them at any age, and of whichever sex, and happily of them there is at present no end. For ladies there are (besides books) endless personal ornaments, or articles for household adornment. A plant, a bottle, or case of bottles of scent, a specially pretty cup and saucer, a lace *fichu*, a set of good handkerchiefs or gloves, I have never known any of these to fail in giving pleasure.

I have often wondered why fancy boxes are not more often given as presents; they are so useful for holding Christmas cards, photographs, and other odds and ends. Embroidered or painted by hand on satin or silk, they would form a delightful present. If any of my readers wish to paint on satin, let me remind them, however, that they should use cotton-backed satin, as the other has too deep a pile, into which the paint sinks. I once saw white flowers painted on crimson satin, and then mounted in light bamboo frame for an old lady's knitting-box. The mounting cost but a trifle, and the present was much valued; so

was also a sash and neck-ribbon, painted on the ends by the same person.

But the situation becomes desperate when it comes to wedding-presents. If you (after much deliberation) decide on a clock or a teapot, you feel all the time as if you were only adding to the pile of such articles accumulating for the hapless bride, and she may be heard to groan as each new parcel arrives, "What! another teapot; that makes twenty already!" Or, "How many salad-bowls can I use in a year?" I was once at a reception after the wedding of a friend, where the presents to the bride were exhibited, and she said to me in a stage aside and with a look of despair, "What am I to do with thirty-two watches?" I could only suggest using them in every room in the house (luckily it was to be a large one), till I thought of the awful task for someone of daily winding them up! I never heard the end of those thirty-two, but have often pondered over their possible fate.

It is not easy, however, to suggest a way out of the difficulty, and one must be guided by the circumstances of the recipients and one's own judgment. To those who are not over-blessed with this world's goods one can offer useful articles of furniture and household goods, quite unsuitable for those who are provided with all the necessaries of life.

The most hopelessly difficult for whom to provide gifts are those above oneself in rank or station, who have everything they can possibly want, and yet we sometimes have to think of them too; and then it is hard work indeed.

Let us resolve henceforth to take more trouble to ascertain people's tastes and wants, and to suit one's presents to their needs and pleasures, and thus earn a name for thoughtful consideration, which is a most delightful character to have. In conclusion, as I am not addressing millionaires, let me remind my readers that in these days of diminished incomes and inferior and untrained domestic service, especially of cooks, little gifts of dainty eatables are most acceptable—a well-made cake, a present of fruit, dried or fresh, a country fowl, or a jar of cream, any of these sent anonymously (as I can testify), often help a weary housekeeper along, and tempt a failing appetite.