

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE VICTORIA
TALES AND STORIES.

SUITABLE FOR THE YOUNG.

The Little Word "No."

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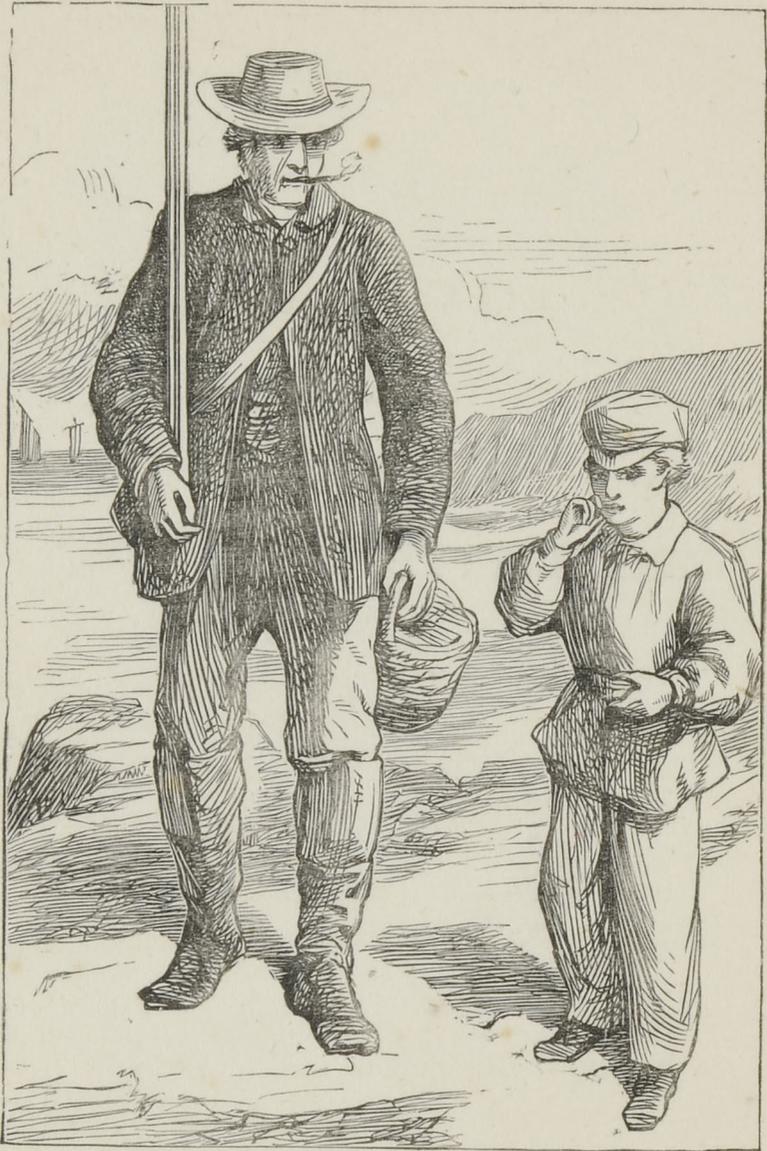
RESEARCH REPORT

1952

(ca. 1859)

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THE LITTLE WORD "NO."



"I DON'T LIKE TO GO, MR. JONES."



THE LITTLE WORD "NO."



“**T**HERE is a word, my son, a very little word in the English language, the right use of which it is all-important that you should learn,” said Mr. Howland to his son Thomas, who was about to leave the paternal roof for a residence in a neighbouring city, never again, perchance, to make one of the little circle that had so long gathered in the family homestead.

“And what word is that, father?” asked Thomas

“It is the little word *No*, my son.”

“And why does so much importance attach to that word, father?”

“Perhaps I can make you understand the reason much better, if I relate an incident that occurred when I was a boy. I remember it as distinctly as if it had taken place but yesterday, although thirty years have since passed. There was a neighbour of

my father's who was very fond of shooting and fishing. On several occasions I had accompanied him, and had enjoyed myself very much. One day, my father said to me,

"William, I do not wish you to go into the woods, or on the water again, with Mr. Jones."

"Why not, father?" I asked, for I had become so fond of going with my friend, that to be denied the pleasure was a real privation.

"I have good reasons for not wishing you to go, William," my father replied, "but I do not want to give them now. I hope it is all-sufficient for you that your father desires you not to accompany Mr. Jones again."

"I could not understand why my father laid upon me this prohibition; and, as I desired very much to go, I did not feel satisfied with my obedience. On the next day, as I was walking along the road, I met Mr. Jones, with his fishing-rod on his shoulder and his basket in his hand.

"Ah, William! you are the very boy that I wished to see," said Mr. Jones, smiling. "I am going out this morning, and want company. We shall have a beautiful day."

"But my father told me yesterday," I replied, "that he did not wish me to go out with you."

"And why not, pray?" asked Mr. Jones.

"I am sure I do not know," said I; "but, indeed, I should like to go very much."

"Oh, never mind; come along," said he. "Your father will never know it."

"Yes, but I am afraid that he will," I replied, thinking more of my father's displeasure than of the evil of disobedience.

"There is no danger at all of that. We shall be at home again long before dinner-time."

I hesitated and he urged; and finally I moved the way that he was going, and had proceeded a few hundred yards, when I stopped, and said

"I don't like to go, Mr. Jones."

"Nonsense, William! There is no harm in fishing, I am sure. I have often been out with your father myself."

"Much as I felt inclined to go, still I hesitated; for I could not make up my mind to disobey my father. At length he said,

"I can't wait here for you, William. Come along or go back. Say yes or no."

"This was the decisive moment. I was to make up my mind, and fix my determination in one way or the other. I was to say 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Come, I can't stay here all day," Mr. Jones remarked, rather harshly, seeing that I hesitated. At the same moment, the image of my father rose dis-

tinctly before my mind, and I saw his eye fixed steadily and reprovngly on me. With one desperate resolution, I uttered the word,

“‘No!’ and then, turning, ran away as fast as my feet would carry me. I cannot tell you how much relieved I felt when I was far beyond the reach of temptation.

“The next morning, when I came down to breakfast, I was startled and surprised to learn that Mr. Jones had been drowned on the day before. Instead of returning in a few hours, as he had stated to me that he would, he remained out all day. A sudden storm arose; his boat was capsized, and he was drowned. I shuddered when I heard this sad and fatal accident related. That little word ‘No’ had, in all probability, saved my life!

“‘I will now tell you, William,’ my father said, turning to me, ‘why I did not wish you to go with Mr. Jones. Of late he had taken to drinking; and I had learned, within a few days, that whenever he went out on a fishing or shooting excursion he took a bottle of wine with him, and usually returned a good deal intoxicated. I could not trust you with such a man. I did not think it necessary to state this to you, for I was sure that I had only to express my wish that you would not accompany him, to insure your implicit obedience.’

"I felt keenly rebuked at this, and resolved never again to permit even the thought of disobedience to find a place in my mind. From that time I have felt the value of the word 'no,' and have generally, ever since, been able to use it on all right occasions. It has saved me from many troubles. Often and often in life have I been urged to do things that my judgment told me were wrong; on such occasions, I always remembered my first temptation, and resolutely said, 'No!'

"And now, my son," continued Mr. Howland, "do you understand the importance of the word 'no'?"

"I think I do, father," replied Thomas. "But is there not danger of my using it too often, and thus becoming selfish in all my feelings, and, consequently, unwilling to render benefits to others?"

"Certainly there is, Thomas. The right use of this word is to resist evil. To refuse to do a good action is wrong."

"If any one asks me, then, to do him a favour or kindness, I should not on any account say no?"

"That will depend, Thomas, in what manner you are to render him a kindness. If you can do so without really injuring yourself or others, then it is a duty which you owe to all men to be kind and do good."

"But the difficulty, I feel, will be for me to know what is right. When I am urged to do something by one whom I esteem, my regard for him, or my desire to render him an obligation, may be so strong as to obscure my judgment."

"A consciousness of this weakness in your character, Thomas, should put you on your guard."

"That is very true, father; but I cannot help fearing for myself. Still, I shall never forget what you have said, and will try my best to act from a conviction of right."

"Do so, my son; and ever remember that a wrong action is always followed by pain of mind, and very frequently by evil consequences. If you would avoid these, ever act from a consciousness that you are doing right without regard to others. If another asks you, from a selfish desire to benefit or gratify himself, to do what your judgment tells you is wrong, surely you should have no hesitation in refusing."

This precept of his father, enforced when they were about to part, and at a time when his affection for that father was active and intense, lingered in the mind of Thomas Howland. He saw and felt its force, and resolved to act in obedience to it, if ever tempted to do wrong.

On leaving his father's house, he went to a neigh-

bouring town, and entered the office of a merchant, in which were several young men nearly of his own age—that is, between eighteen and twenty. With one of these, named Boyd, he soon formed an intimate acquaintance. But, unfortunately, the moral character of this young man was far from being pure, or his principles from resting upon the firm basis of truth and honour.

His growing influence over Thomas Howland was apparent in inducing him to stay away from church on the Sabbath-day, and pass the time that had heretofore been spent in a place of worship, in roaming about the city, or in excursions into the country. This influence was slightly resisted; but Thomas felt ashamed or reluctant to use the word "no," on what seemed to all the young men around him a matter of so little importance. Still, his own heart condemned him, for he felt that it would pain his father and mother exceedingly, if they knew that he neglected to attend church at least once on the Sabbath-day. And he was, besides, self-convicted of wrong, in what seemed to him a violation of the precept, "Remember the Sabbath-day," &c., as he had been taught to regard that precept. But once having given way, he felt almost powerless to resist the influence that now bore upon him.

The next violation of what seemed to him a right

course for a young man to pursue, was in suffering himself to be persuaded to visit the theatre frequently; although his father had expressly desired that he would avoid a place where lurked for the young and inexperienced so many dangers. He was next easily persuaded to visit a favourite eating-house, in which many hours were spent during the evenings of each week, with Boyd and others, in eating, drinking, and smoking; sometimes dominoes and backgammon were introduced, and at length were played for a slight stake. To participate in this Thomas refused, on the plea that he did not know enough of the games to risk anything. He had not the moral courage to declare that he considered it wrong to gamble.

All these departures from what he had been taught by his father to consider a right course, were attended by much uneasiness and pain of mind. But he had yielded to the tempter, and he could not now find the power within him to resist his influence successfully.

It happened, about six months after this introduction to such an entirely new course of life, that he was invited one evening by his companion Boyd, to call on a friend with him. He had, on that day, received from his father ten pounds, with which to buy himself a new suit of clothes, and a few other

necessary articles. He went, of course, and was introduced to a very affable, gentlemanly young man, in his room, at one of the hotels. In a few minutes, wine and cigars were ordered, and the three spent an hour or so in drinking, smoking, and chit-chat of no very elevating or refined character.

"Come, let us have a game of cards," the friend at last remarked, during a pause in the conversation; at the same time going to his trunk and producing a pack of cards.

"No objection," responded Boyd.

"You'll take a hand, of course?" the new friend said, looking at Thomas Howland.

But Thomas said that he knew nothing about cards.

"Oh, that's no matter! You can learn in two minutes," responded the friend of Boyd.

Young Howland felt reluctant, but he could not resist the influence that was around him, and so he consented to play cards with the rest. As they gathered round the table, half-a-crown each was laid down by the young men, who looked towards Thomas as they did so.

"I cannot play for money," said he, colouring; for he felt really ashamed to acknowledge his scruples.

"And why not?" asked the friend of Boyd, looking him steadily in the face.

"Because I think it wrong," stammered out Howland, colouring still more deeply.

"Nonsense! Isn't your money your own? And pray what harm is there in your doing as you please with your own?" urged the tempter.

"But I do not know enough of the game."

"You don't think we would take advantage of your ignorance?" said Boyd. "The stake is only to give an interest to the game. I would not thank you for a game of cards without a stake. Come, put down your half-a-crown, and we'll promise to pay you back all you lose, if you wish it, until you acquire some skill."

But Thomas felt reluctant and hesitated. Nevertheless, he was debating the matter in his mind seriously, and every moment that reluctance was growing weaker.

"Will you play?" asked Boyd, in a decided tone, breaking in upon this debate.

"I had rather not," Thomas replied, attempting to smile, so as to conciliate his false friends.

"You are afraid of losing your money," said Boyd, in a half-sneering tone.

"It is not that, Boyd."

"Then what is it, pray?"

"I am afraid that it is not right."

This was answered by a loud laugh from his two

friends, which touched Thomas a good deal, and made him feel more ashamed of the scruples that held him back from entering into the temptation.

"Come, down with your stake, Howland!" said Boyd, after he had finished his laugh.

The hand of Thomas was in his pocket, and his fingers had grasped the silver coin, yet still he hesitated.

"Will you play or not?" the friend of Boyd now said, with something of impatience in his tone. "Say yes or no."

For a moment the mind of Thomas became confused; then the perception came upon him, as clear as a sunbeam, that it was wrong to gamble. He remembered vividly, too, his father's parting injunction.

"No!" said he, firmly and decidedly.

Both of his companions looked disappointed and angry.

"What did you bring him here, for?" he heard Boyd's companion say to him in an under tone, while a frown darkened upon his brow.

The reply did not reach his ear, but he felt that his company was no longer desired; and, rising, he bade them a formal good evening, and hurriedly retired. That little word "no" had saved him. The scheme was, to win from him his ten pounds, and

then involve him in "debts of honour," as they are falsely called, which would compel him to draw upon his father for more money, or to abstract it from his employer, a system which had been pursued by Boyd, and which was discovered only a week subsequently, when the young man was discharged in disgrace. It then came out that he had been for months in secret association with a gambler, and that the two shared their spoils and speculations.

This incident aroused Thomas Howland to a distinct consciousness of the danger that lurked in his path, as a young man in a large city. He felt, as he had not felt while simply listening to his father's precept, the value of the word "no;" and resolved that, hereafter, he would utter that little word, and that, too, decidedly, whenever urged to do what his judgment did not approve.

"I will be free!" said he, pacing his chamber backward and forward; "I will be free, hereafter! No one shall persuade me or drive me to do what I feel to be wrong."

That resolution was his safeguard ever after. When tempted, and he was tempted frequently, his "no" decided the matter at once. There was a power in it that was all-sufficient in resisting evil.

TRUTH.

BEFORE my dreamy sight
A beauteous vision passed;
A creature more divinely bright
Her shadow never cast.
Her throne seemed ivory,
While o'er her robes of white
Floated an azure drapery,
Glittering with heavenly light.

A chaplet crowned her head
Composed of choicest flowers,
Culled where the saints in glory tread
'Mid amaranthine bowers;
Each leaf and flower a gem,
Whose lustre from afar
Sparkled upon her diadem,
Like morning's loveliest star.

Eternal youth had sealed
Its impress on her face;
The roses on her cheek revealed
Of care and blight no trace.

Her form, no pencil's touch
Nor language can portray,—
Its symmetry, its beauties, such
As shine in Heaven's own day.

In her right hand there gleamed
The Spirit's awful sword;
And at her side in glory beamed
The symbols of the Lord.
Celestial rainbows rose
And spanned her with their hue;
Their blended shades, in soft repose,
A chastened halo threw.

Condensed in awful gloom
The clouds her footsteps were;
Dark clouds, like those which drape the tomb
When Hope sinks in Despair.
In solemn majesty
She stood; the clouds beneath
Were rolled onward, noiselessly,
By the Almighty's breath.



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PRICE ONE PENNY EACH.

THE VICTORIA TALES & STORIES.

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1. GEORGE MILLS; *or, The Idle Boy.*
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7. THE WIDOW AND HER LITTLE DAUGHTER; *or, Christmas Eve in Germany.*
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9. WALTER THORNTON; *or, The Broken Promise.*
10. THE YOUNG CARRIER; *or, The Danger of Bad Companions.*
11. THE BROKEN PITCHER; *or, A Friend in Need.*
12. THE LITTLE WORD "NO."

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