

passed the evening in instructive or cheerful conversation.

The celebrated picture, "Peace and War," in our National Gallery, was originally painted for King Charles I. When the Royal collection was dispersed abroad by Cromwell this picture came into the possession of the Balbi family at Genoa. During the French revolution it was bought by the Marquis of Stafford for £3,000, and by him presented to the nation.

The following story illustrates the kindness of his disposition in spite of its tragical termination. While Rubens was travelling in Spain on some mission, diplomatic or artistic, he visited a convent, where the monks, proud of so distinguished a visitor, escorted him with great ceremony round the chapel. At

sight of the altar-piece, by some apparently unknown artist, which was a noble work of art, he was amazed at its beauty, and spoke loudly in its praise.

"Why, what is this! What masterpiece have you here!" he said.

"It is only the work of a humble lay brother," was the answer.

"Whoever painted this picture is a great artist. Where is he, that I may tell him so?"

The poor lay brother, the unappreciated artist, standing behind the rest, scarcely daring to believe his ears, tremblingly advanced, but the sudden joy of such unhopd for praise from those lips was too great, and, overcome with emotion, he fell down at Rubens' feet—dead.



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU CATCH FIRE.

WE have heard lately of such terrible accidents from fire, that we think a little talk about what to do if you catch fire may be the means of saving some valuable life. These directions seem more especially needed in a paper like this, conducted primarily for the benefit of girls, because girls and women are those who are most liable to be set on fire. Not only are their dresses made of more inflammable materials than are men's, but they float around them and extend beyond their own control, almost in a way that renders them much more likely to be accidentally set on fire than are the close-fitting coats and trousers that men wear.

If any of our readers should at any time make the startling discovery that they are on fire, what should they do? "Run for some water," we hear one reply. "Call for help," says another. "Ring the bell violently, is what I should do," answers one who is accustomed to ring for her maid on every occasion. "Roll yourself in a rug or blanket," replies a quiet, sensible girl. This is doubtless an admirable method of extinguishing flames—when the time and opportunity permit. But now, dear girls, let us tell you of one plan of action which can almost always be pursued, and which, if only it be carried out in time—that is to say, at the very first moment when you discover you are on fire—will, we believe, infallibly succeed. In your bedroom, in the drawing-room, in the hall, in the kitchen, out of doors—anywhere, almost—you can instantly lie down flat and roll yourself over and over wherever you see the flames. Don't stop to ring the bell first; don't run for water; above all things, as you value your own life, don't run screaming for help. Be assured, you can do more for yourself in the first few precious seconds, before the fire has got well hold of you, than all your relations and friends together can do for you afterwards.

If you will only have the courage, whether alone or in company, at once to lie down and roll over and over, you can put the fire out better than anyone else can possibly do for you, so long as you remain standing. You can, perhaps, convince yourself of this fact if you will try a simple experiment. Take a paper spill, such as you use for lighting candles. Light one end and first hold it perpendicularly in your fingers for a second or two, then drop it lighted as it is on to the hearth inside the fender, and there watch it

slowly burning. You will see that that spill, held as at first, resembles some one whose skirts have caught fire—the scorching heat you felt burning your fingers as you held it, gives a faint representation of the scorching pain experienced in face and neck by anyone on fire. But when the spill was thrown on the hearth you could have held the other end from that which was alight, and so long as you did not lift it out of the horizontal position, you would have been able to hold it for some little time without being burnt. Thus you see that by lying flat down you at once relieve your face and neck from the scorching flames, and if you have been prompt, and not wasted one precious second in running for help, you can certainly put the fire out for yourself, and without being injured.

The following story may be relied on as perfectly accurate in the minutest particular. It is an admirable instance of courage and presence of mind under circumstances that would have terrified most. A young girl, attired in a white muslin evening dress, wished to reach a book from the top shelf of a high bookcase that stood upon a chest of drawers in her bedroom. She put her candle down at the further end of the chest of drawers, and by the help of a chair she stood on the drawers to reach the book. She had not allowed sufficiently for the width to which her skirts would extend as she stood against the bookcase, and her dress caught fire. The first alarm she had was from perceiving the room brilliantly illuminated. Picture her horror when she discovered that she herself was the burning torch which thus lighted up her room. Most girls of her age would have rushed screaming out of the room and downstairs in search of someone to help them—someone to put it out. Had she done so, she would in all probability have been burned to death, and very likely have been the means of setting others on fire. But, with brave self-helpfulness, she pursued a far wiser course. Of course, she instantly jumped down from her elevated position, and as soon as she reached the ground the flames had already gained such fierceness that they blazed up into her face, scorching her; but though the tips of her long dark eyelashes were singed, the fire had no time to injure her, so immediately did she throw herself on the floor. She felt the relief from the scorching the very

I cannot close with so sad a story, but will add another anecdote that also occurred when Rubens was in Spain. The fame of the young artist reached Don John of Braganza, afterwards King of Portugal, who invited him to Villa Viciosa. Rubens set out with such a train that the duke, alarmed at the expense of entertaining so pompous a visitor, wrote to stop his journey, sending at the same time with the excuse a present of fifty pistoles. We must suppose that to him economy was dearer than renown. Rubens would have nought of the money, adding, "that he had no intention of painting, but he hoped to pass a week at Villa Viciosa, with which object he was provided with 1,000 pistoles "to spend there."

(To be continued.)

moment she gained the horizontal position. She told us afterwards she had intended to get up the hearthrug and wrap herself in it; but she had no time for this, for the flames were blazing around her even as she lay. Even then she did not for one instant lose her presence of mind, and jump up to ring or call for help, but she bravely rolled over and over—wherever she saw the flames she rolled over on to them and thus put them out. So quickly was all this done that though the whole of the skirt of her muslin dress was burnt, yet the white petticoat she wore under it was untouched by the fire.

The special value of this story is that it shows the immense advantage of promptitude. A few seconds wasted in running for help, ringing the bell, dabbling with water, or even in getting a blanket off the bed, would just have made all the difference between escaping as she did, by God's mercy, with singed eyelashes, or being severely if not fatally burnt.

Fire cannot burn without air; so, to exclude the air—to smother the fire, in fact—is even a surer way of putting it out than pouring water on the flames; because it takes a long time to thoroughly drench a person with water as they stand up, and until that is done the fire goes on burning; but if you lie down and roll, you can effectually quench the flames in a few seconds.

In the same way if a child catches fire, clasp it fearlessly to you, flames next to you, and lie down with it. If you do not press it closely to you you will not be able to put out the fire; but as you lie beside it wrap it tightly in your own skirts, and if only you can roll it on to the flames you will at once extinguish them.

No one, when she discovers she is on fire, can possibly in that moment of terror and agony think out then the best course of action; so let us beg our girls, all of them, to make up their minds very clearly beforehand, so that with the discovery of the flames the thought may flash to their brain, "I must lie down and roll."

We earnestly hope none of you who read this paper may ever have occasion to practise the rule we have striven to impress upon you, but if you ever have cause, and have self-control enough to carry it out, you will indeed be grateful for having learnt so simple a method of conquering so terrible a foe.