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Life on High Levels: Familiar Talks on the Conduct of Life (Part Two)

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Shall the Wife be a Breadwinner?

TO this question the answer is sometimes given unequivocally, "By no means." If the wife be the mother of little children, if she be even partially an invalid, if there is no need that her exertions shall increase the family income, if her taking on her shoulders the labor of partially supporting the household means that she shall be overworked and borne down with care, then let her hesitate long before she accepts such a task. Certainly there is no propriety in the wife's undertaking wage-earning work if the result of her doing so be that she is left to support an indolent husband, a thing almost unheard-of except among the very ignorant or the intemperate. Charity workers often find wives undertaking willing task-work. But no man who is manly, or even decent, will for an instant shirk his own obligations and shift them to his wife, nor take from her weary hands ease which she pays for as with her life blood.

There are circumstances in which it is proper and convenient for the wife to add to the family

income by the exercise of trained ability. Where, for example, she has, perhaps before her marriage, made for herself a place and name in some field of literature or art, in journalism or medicine, or any other profession, it may be wise for her to continue to whatever extent the new conditions make practicable the career on which she has entered, and which has already rewarded her efforts with success. The money she thus honorably earns will enable her, if her husband's means are moderate, to make their joint home more beautiful, and she can pay for service in departments which an unskilled worker can learn to fill. I can see no reason why the journalist, having married, should be obliged to make bread when her forte is really writing editorials; nor why the doctor shall spend her time sewing up long white seams when she could be better employed in stitching up wounds and alleviating pain. There is more than the mere money question here involved, for these workers are assisting humanity on a plane beyond the limited domestic sphere. This must be wisely cared for first, or the other will not, however, be a success.

Women whom I delight to honor have cheerfully and ably taken hold of the heavy end of the load when their husbands have been ill or unfortunate in business, and have filled their houses with summer boarders or with lodgers, or, in the

way which seemed most appropriate, have brought their talents to bear on the situation, usually without complaint and with pluck and perseverance. In such emergencies there has been no sacrifice either of wifely dignity or of those winning graces which make the lady beloved of all who meet her. Her children have generally been judiciously trained, and their mother's business ventures have not resulted in neglect of their truest interests. On the contrary, in such households young people are apt to be exceptionally well equipped for life's battles.

The sum of the matter is probably this: When the necessity arises, let the wife, if her health allow and her judgment approve, assume the breadwinner's rôle, not that this is the ideal thing, but it is a thing to which no sensible person can reasonably object. It is also the separate and personal affair of each wife and each husband, and outsiders who censure or criticize are meddlesome and impertinent, decidedly beyond the confines of good breeding.

When the wife by native genius or acquired skill, or long and costly training, has become proficient in any branch, or at home in any field where education and practice count for much, let her not hesitate to carry her gifts to the marketplace. Her husband will be proud of her, and her generation will not be robbed of her ability

"to serve the present age." And, as women are in temperament and by habit vicarious, her gains will not be selfish nor her triumphs individual; she will bless many homes in adding to the wealth of one.

Only, by way of caution, dear gifted wife, remember that home must take precedence of everything else. You belong first to the man you have married, next to the world; you belong first to the domesticities, next to the region outside your front door. The music, the poetry, the painting, the glamour and the glow which have been around the studies, the arts and the sciences, and the work they have jealously exacted, are all splendid in their developments, though severe in their requirements, the splendor and the rigor both part of the girl's life, rather than the wife's, and thenceforward they are incidental only, not ever to be thrust into the foreground. Hence it is true that a wife must not expect a career, nor hope to work with the absolute single-heartedness and freedom which the spinster may bring to her task. The wife who helps to win the bread, or who adds some of the luxuries which else might be done without, is within her legitimate province, but she must be contented to resign some ambitions, and to clip the wings which would bear her too far above the ground where love has appointed her life work.

Rich Girls and Wage-Earning

CHAPTER XIX.

Rich Girls and Wage-Earning.

THE sweet face uplifted to mine in the sunset light was almost pallid in the intensity of its anxious thought. Ruth had sought my advice on a question of conscience, a question which had deeply stirred her, and which she proposed to settle, not on the plane of accommodation to her own wishes or by the method of sophistry which often lend themselves to reason and which bolster up inclination, but on terms of lofty unselfishness.

"For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win."

was Ruth's motto—a grand motto for man or woman.

"To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

Ruth's problem was simply this, and many young women have confronted it in moods similar to hers. She was not only the child of wealth, but she inherited wealth in her own right, so that while a girl in her father's house with all which he could give her, she had besides an independ-

ence which enabled her to do whatever she chose —buy pictures, go abroad, enjoy every luxury, and indulge every taste—still without counting the cost or fearing to exhaust her income.

Yet Ruth's unsatisfied longing was in this direction. She ardently wished to teach, and a vacancy in the staff of a woman's college was at her disposal. To Ruth's mind no pleasure, no charm of travel, no ease or elegance, was comparable to the sitting in a class room with a group of earnest students, actually in close quarters with real work.

But where there was one person anxious to engage in this profession, as was Ruth, for the love of it, there were twenty-five equally well fitted, equally certain to fill the chair with entire credit and to the satisfaction of students and faculty, who needed the salary. Some of these young women had undergone great self-denial and endured hardships without a murmur through successive years that they might be ready to accept such a post, and either they had to support themselves or there were others dependent upon them, to whom it was more than a caprice to be gratified that they should not be turned away.

There was no doubt that Ruth would succeed well as a tutor or professor. But there was no occasion for supposing that she would succeed much better than would three fourths of the others. Her

taking the place, in plain words, meant that another must forego it, and the salary, to Ruth a drop in the overflowing cup of her life, was to that other the cup itself, allaying thirst and giving strength in time of need.

We talked it over till the last drowsy bird hushed its faint vesper song and the great stars burned in the far sky overhead.

"I might decline the salary," said Ruth. "That course would help the college. Colleges are always struggling because they have not a sufficient endowment."

"You would thus establish a bad precedent," I answered. "The laborer is worthy of her hire, and, rich or poor, the employee should receive the stipend for which he gives his services."

"Then you think I should sit at home and fold my hands because my Aunt Luella left me her fortune. I think it is rather hard."

"I do not think so, Ruth; but I am sure your wealth forbids your coming into competition with women who are poor, and who, needing work which you do not, are fully able to do it as well as you can. You would do a wrong to some one by keeping her from this position. But other fields are open to you. Other avenues are not blockaded as this one is. Why not carry your enthusiasm, your learning, your rare magnetism, and your gift of imparting knowledge and ex-

citing interest to the classes in a working-girls' club, or to a college settlement? Why not go into the foreign or the home mission field, accepting the modest remuneration there offered and turning it into the treasury again for the payment of another worker? In the mission field there is a crying need for volunteers, and the force is not large enough. You do not face supply and demand on the terms which meet you when you consider a professorate in Chicago or New York. If teaching is what your soul is bent upon, there are people to be taught, and you can find them, sacrificing the career of no one else to gratify your own desire.

"A rich girl of my acquaintance went at her own charges last year to a mission field in China. Another is engaged in Gospel work in the heart of an American city. Another has laboriously acquired the art of the trained nurse in one of our great hospitals. She is the daughter of a millionaire, and her home has been a palace, but she will exercise her vocation among the poorest without money and without price. Thus she will not lessen the chances of any other trained nurse who may seek employment in the homes of those who can afford to pay her. Should she enter on the practice of her profession, when there is no need for her doing so, taking an honorarium, no one could accuse her of violating an

obligation because, legally speaking, the field is as open to her as to her friend of limited means, and because there is not one rule for women and another rule for men, and men do not avoid business engagements in similar circumstances. Yet in her case, as in that of the aspiring teacher, there is an unwritten and a higher law which womanly natures recognize. A woman of wealth cannot crowd her sister woman to the wall and feel justified by her conscience.

"Take another case, and a very common one. Hundreds of young women are deft with the needle, and artistic embroidery has become a favorite pursuit in which many girls have attained very great skill. When a girl who verily needs the highest price for her work on linen or silk carries her dainty centerpiece or sachet to a shop, and discovers that she can sell it only for a fraction of its value because she has been undersold by a girl to whom money is no object, and who works merely for pin money, or—save the mark!—to make enough to buy Easter or Christmas gifts, she has a just complaint against the cruelty of the rich. The latter girl has favored herself at the expense of her sister. If poor and rich do equally enter the breadwinning lists, absolute justice requires that they shall do so on equal terms, that the rich shall not cheapen the market value of the work of the poor."

"I think, also, a reservation should be made in behalf of the difference in the kind of work done. A certain gentlewoman writes respectably and turns an honest penny by describing various social functions and bits of domestic experience, which easily find their way into print. Her writing is mediocre, but it has a certain commercial value. She drives about in her carriage, wears velvet and satin, and belongs to the charmed circle of those for whom the paths are carpeted with flowers. She complacently informs her friend that her literary work pays for a crib in a child's hospital or furnishes luxuries to the inmates of an old ladies' home. Does it ever occur to the kindhearted woman that her charities should come out of her private purse, and that her little gift with the pen, never rising above the commonplace, is by no means so remarkable that she should use it to the exclusion, for lack of space, from the columns of the daily or weekly paper of some young or older woman, to whom the work would mean shelter, clothing, and daily bread?"

Ruth and I talked all around the question, the conclusion for that time being that one rich girl would not yet enter the ranks of the paid toilers, though she would show herself ready to do so and be prepared if ever the time came when it should be needful.

The Maiden Aunt

CHAPTER XX.

The Maiden Aunt.

HAPPY and blessed beyond others is the clan which, among its connections, includes a maiden aunt sufficiently unattached and at leisure to fill in chinks, to go to Jessie's assistance when the children are down with the measles, five of them at once, to accompany grandmother to the hospital when she has the operation for cataract, to appear on the scene like a fairy godmother when Molly's wedding feast is making ready, and generally to devote herself to the aid of whichever kinsman or kinswoman stands in need of service. This dear and useful functionary is less common than of old, for the new womanhood in its various manifestations has opened other channels of work for the unmarried lady, and whether youthful or middle-aged, she is no longer obliged to accept support or favors from relatives if she is in health and the possession of her faculties.

This, on the whole, is a great advantage, for the seamy side of the spinster's life, kept well out of sight, and only wet at night with her tears, was

often, in the old days, her dependent condition. She felt that she was tolerated, that she existed on sufferance, and as she went from home to home she was sometimes sorely put to the test to keep herself from repining and fretting, to be amiable and considerate and uncomplaining.

But it being admitted that there were drawbacks in the former dispensation, and that the maiden aunt when we meet her to-day is usually a dear and prized survival of the fittest, we yet hope that she may not quite disappear from among us. She is the children's angel wherever she goes. Invested with less authority than the mother, she makes up for the lack by a tender and winsome influence, which establishes her position and leads the little ones, and the older ones who have reached the stage between childhood and adolescence, to make her their confidante and counselor. To her the boys come with their problems in arithmetic and in casuistry. She listens with sympathy to the story of school trials and triumphs, and the earliest love affairs are poured into her ears. Auntie is at once the mother's prime minister and the comrade of the young people, and when, as happens sometimes, she has a house of her own and abides in comfort beneath her independent rooftree, her home is the rallying place for the young people of the entire family.

The Maiden Aunt

The spinster aunt is invaluable in our Epworth League, albeit we do not think of her as anything more than a gentle and well-bred woman, a little older than the girls, a little younger than the mothers, a woman in touch with life at many points, with philanthropy, with books, with church work, and with affairs of every kind. Her tact is invaluable, and her readiness to assume responsibilities and undertake difficult tasks is sometimes imposed upon. Less impulsive than she was twenty years ago, the spinster is not devoid of spontaneity, and she does not act as a wet blanket on new departures, nor interpose objections when daring new schemes are proposed. We may count on her to visit the sick, to be kind to the stranger, and to act as an efficient aid to the pastor, who often has occasion for unofficial help, and finds it in the elect ladies of the parish who are as much under his orders as if they were soldiers mustered in under a general commander.

The whole state of public opinion has changed with regard to spinsterhood since we who wear silver hair were ourselves girls. In a country where the women largely outnumber the men, it is plain that all women cannot marry but it is also plain that the opening of a hundred avenues for woman's work, where formerly there was but one, has made woman practically independent of marriage. No woman to-day should be tempted

to marry for a home, or for any mercenary reason. The strong probability is that so far as ease of life and freedom from burdens are concerned she will have more of both as a spinster than as a wife.

The term "old maid," conveying always a slight flavor of reproach, has been supplanted by another, quite as distasteful to me, namely, the "bachelor girl." I have never been able to see any particular fitness in this phrase and prefer the good old English term spinster as, on the whole, more pertinent and more expressive of a single woman's state.

The spinster may choose her own rôle, live in her separate apartment, walk unchallenged in her own path, by day or by night. She has found her standing ground and conquered her place and overcome the prejudices of generations.

But in no other capacity will she ever be more gracious nor more well beloved than when she wears the honors of the maiden aunt.

"I have put quite out of my plans," said a beautiful woman, "all thought of marriage. No matter why. An accident on the railway, the stumbling of a horse, the miscarriage of a letter, or a disinclination to try a new path, set it down to what you will, to something which happened, or to my own thoughts, but I am content with my single estate. So now I am going into my life

work, and care for the children of others shall come first with me."

This dear gentlewoman is about to establish a settlement for herself and one or two spinster friends who are unattached by family ties, and they will live in a dark corner of the city where the tenement children cluster thick as bees in a hive and there they will do hand-to-hand work for Christ and the little forlorn lambs who are as sheep having no shepherd. Instead of being "Auntie" to one or two sets of small people, they will be the beloved adopted aunts of a whole neighborhood. May God bless them and make them blessings to all whom they meet.

Hospitality

CHAPTER XXI.

Hospitality.

LOOKING back across the years I am often impressed by the remembered hospitality of my father's house. That dear father had a way of going about the world like a sunbeam incarnate, always cheery, always cordial, always looking on the bright side, and his was the hospitality of the open hand and the cordial heart. Meeting a stranger who pleased him he would unhesitatingly bid the man to be his guest, and my mother was never surprised at a sudden incursion of unexpected people at a meal, or the arrival of somebody she had never heard of, who had come to spend a night or a Sunday at the invitation of the goodman of the house.

I never saw her speechless with amazement except once. It was May, and our carpets were up, and the house, so to speak, was all out of the windows. In the midst of a busy afternoon, the dear mother, with her helpers about her, had paused to take breath, when up to our door rolled a hack, and out of it poured husband and wife and wife's sister and children galore, all of whom had been

asked on the impulse of the moment, some weeks before, to come and make us a visit whenever convenient, by that beloved man, who had never thought of the thing again.

"Where shall they sleep?" "What shall I give them to eat?" "The house is in such a state." "Your father should have prepared me."

Not one of these exclamations came from the mother's lips, but they were in her speaking eyes as she turned her dismayed glances on the inflowing tide of guests, and then on us. Equal as always to the occasion she then advanced to meet them, and somehow they were made comfortable, and the household was none the worse for the experience.

Hospitality of this old-fashioned sort still lingers in country places, and in the South and West, but it has vanished from our crowded and complex city life. Many of us have hardly room enough for ourselves and scarcely know how to accommodate visitors, and so we limit the coming of our friends to stiffly regulated and ceremonious calls on At Home Days, and to formal dinners and luncheons when there are many courses, and we all wear our best clothes and the children are out of sight. The grace of glad welcome, the simple offering of what we have, with a cup and a plate, for the friend who happens in, the doubling up and planning that we may entertain people we

like and keep them with us for days together are getting to be things unknown.

And with its going a very dear and beautiful friendliness is going too. The children miss its educational influence in this new and needful counting of the cost; more than of old there is the thought "for value received," in what we do for our friends and in what they do for us.

When the thought of reciprocity, the commercial thought, enters, when bargaining is admitted, there is gone the fine gilding from the old courtesy which put one's house and all it contained at the disposal of one's friends.

Every guest brings something worth hearing and seeing from his life into ours, and guests in their coming and going broaden the horizon and extend the outlook for every one they meet. This friend has been a traveler and tells of the places he has visited and the people he has met, his conversation illuminating the books one has read, or firing the young people with desire to see and investigate climes remote and curious phases of existence.

The missionary friend is entertained for a blessed red-letter day, and from that time on you are aware of a new interest in her field of labor and in all fields where Christ's servants have carried the banner of the cross.

Sometimes in a serious-minded and sober circle

where people have grown grave and inclined to look too much on the somber aspects of things, the entrance of a merry, it may be a frivolous, visitor acts with the effect of sudden sunshine. She is as unconscious as a child, and as careless of the effect of her words; she lives blithely and brightly and, somehow, the jest and the smile and the frolic and fun follow in her wake, so that her hosts feel younger when she has gone, and wish she would come again.

There are two or three admirable rules which simplify hospitality in our busy lives, and which by host and guest may be observed alike.

The first concerns the host. True hospitality does not require you to make a great strain on your finances, nor to entertain in the style befitting your cousin Midas, but quite beyond your modest means.

Give the friend you ask to your table the best you can afford, no more, and no less. Let the food be nicely cooked and daintily served, but do not strive for too great a variety, or for costly viands which are out of season. Your linens should be white, your china and glass immaculately clean, your silver shining. Beware of speck or stain, of any slipshod housekeeping which overlooks dirt, but when you have arranged for your very best, think no more about it.

When guests arrive for any reason unantici-

pated, make no excuses for the plainness of your fare. They must take you as they find you, and all you need do is to give them a chair and a plate and receive them cordially.

When you invite guests, be explicit as to the time you expect them to come to you and the length of the visit you desire. It is customary, and the custom is very sensible and convenient, to specify in a note of invitation the exact period the visit is to cover, from Friday until Monday, or from Thursday until Saturday, or a certain designated Sunday, the hostess being at pains to inclose a time-table and to mention the train or boat by which the guest will come, stating also whether the family will send some one to meet the guest, or whether the latter will find a conveyance at the terminus of the journey which he or she can take to the house.

Once within your doors give your guest a certain freedom of movement. Do not hover around with perpetual attentions. While a visitor should not be neglected, and while pleasant plans may and should be made for the entertainment of a friend for whom you are to some extent responsible, it is wholly needless to stay always at the guest's side, or to fill every hour of every day with engagements. Most guests prefer to have a part of their time at their own disposal, and with their letters to write, their work or their personal en-

gagements, they can successfully look out for themselves.

If there are children in the household let them help in giving pleasure to visitors, but they should not be brought in upon every occasion, nor should parents be disappointed if guests do not appear impressed with the children's beauty or cleverness. Children are naturally of greater interest or importance to their parents than to other people, and the world is full of these darlings, so that they are not curiosities. Indeed, for the children themselves the best place is a happy, loving, and comfortable retreat in the background.

I have a profound pity for the small men and women who are obliged to minister to the conceit and vanity of their foolish fathers and mothers, trotted out to speak pieces, play piano exercises, and sing songs for the benefit of friends of the family. These little exhibitions are usually in place only on the platform of the schoolroom, and are a mistake when the parlor is their chosen arena.

"Love me, love my dog," is a common proverb, not without appositeness. But everybody does not love dogs, and some people dislike cats. The owners and lovers of pets should not suffer them to annoy or distress those unfortunately constituted persons who regard animals with dread or aversion. This intimation is not a superfluous

taint, for the adoring lover of a cat, dog, or parrot is seldom able to survey his idol from the alien point of view. I abate no jot of tenderness and regard for the lower creation, and I hold in utter abhorrence the man or woman who can indulge in cruelty to dumb animals, yet I have not ceased to think that human beings also have rights in the case, and I am always careful that my guests are not subjected to too much familiarity from the household pets; a cat calmly reposing on the center of one's bed, or lying on the folds of one's gown, may not be agreeable to every one, and it is not always a delight to have a dog or a bird interrupting conversation by the attention it demands.

For the rest, a warm welcome, and so much attention as may leave the guest free, yet insure him every comfort, is the cream of hospitality.

The guest's duties are not less obvious nor less binding than those of the host. On receiving a note of invitation the first obligation is to reply to it promptly, as in case of nonacceptance your friend may have other guests in mind, and punctuality in your response is imperatively required both by good form and by common sense. Having made an engagement, keep it to the letter, allowing nothing within your power to interfere with your promise.

Should a period of any length intervene be-

tween your invitation and its fulfillment, write or telegraph the day before your arrival, lest by any chance your hostess may have mistaken or overlooked the time and train. Be sure to send this reminder if so much as a fortnight has elapsed since the date of the correspondence.

Never make surprise visits. Even among relatives and very intimate friends they are, as a rule, a mistake. Most women like to be apprised in anticipation of an impending visit, and the unannounced arrival may occur at an inopportune moment, when the charm of the occasion will be dispelled.

As a guest one should be pleased and appreciative of whatever kindnesses are shown; above all things, one should conform to the ways of the house, avoid unpunctuality at meals, be present at family prayers, and as far as possible refrain from giving trouble. The ideal guest effaces himself at times, is not always lying like a helpless burden on the hands of his host, but has a sufficiency of resources at hand to provide a part of the time for his own entertainment.

A young lady or gentleman is careful to keep in order the pretty room assigned to the guest. A hostess is sometimes annoyed, and not without reason, by the gross carelessness of those who occupy the chamber of peace which she has lovingly adorned for their reception. My friend, whose

precious toilet service of Royal Worcester was chipped by the heedlessness of a brilliant young theologue who behaved like a vandal in his destructive manner of using furniture and books, sat down and cried when she had speeded away her complacent guest. Be careful of articles lent to you for your enjoyment.

As a rule, a lady refrains from offers of service. If there is but one maid or if there is none she quietly takes care of her room, makes her bed, and relieves her hostess of labor on her personal account.

At the allotted time for the conclusion of a visit the judicious guest says, "Good-bye," and she does not forget on her return to her home to send a graceful note of acknowledgment, the sooner the better, again expressing her gratitude for the pleasant time she has had, and stating that she is, after a pleasant journey, safe among her people once more.

In these days of multiplied congresses and conventions it is often our delightful experience to be entertained by friends whom we have never met. The residents of a town open their houses to crowds of strangers and make them welcome at their boards. I am always filled with a wondering thankfulness when a home is thus graciously opened to me, and I am sure there is an added reason in such cases for the greatest tact, the

most abundant politeness, and the most rigid observation of good manners. In visiting under the roof of a kind entertainer when you go to a convention be sure that you violate none of the regulations of the house, and, so far as you can, assist in making the time thoroughly delightful to all whom you meet. Make light of small inconveniences, be accommodating, and show your appreciation of kindnesses rendered by word and by look.

There is another than merely material hospitality of which this is a symbol and to which it leads. To be open to new impressions, to tender a kind reception to another's thought, to meet a friend with the spontaneity of good-fellowship, to encourage the reciprocal sentiment and the uplifting and ennobling idea, this is the hospitality of the soul.

The Neglected Rich

CHAPTER XXII.

The Neglected Rich.

"HAVE you called on Miss ——?" I asked a young lady the other day. The question was prompted by the fact that my friend was a member of a certain committee charged with visiting members of the church and others who, for one cause or another, were not quite at home with the congregation.

"O no!" was the ready answer. "I don't want to call there. Miss —— is too rich."

"Has anyone called on her or her sisters?" I pursued my inquiry steadfastly, knowing that the girls of whom I spoke were very lovely, and also very lonely, having lately come to the place, where they had few acquaintances, and having left a community in which they had spent years.

"Nobody has called but the minister and his wife," admitted my informant. "We are afraid of their splendor. We are in such different circumstances."

"I have seldom heard so un-American a statement," I commented, while urging my friend to repair her neglect, but the little episode started a

train of thought. In our church plans and work do we not sometimes tacitly overlook the well-to-do; perhaps because a little awed by their accidental elegance or their houses and grounds, perhaps because it seems that they have already so much that they can need no more. But desolate hearts may beat under sheen of velvet and frost of lace, and men and women often need to be comforted and cheered even when they have no stress or anxiety about money.

A mission to the brownstone front might do as much good as a mission to the slums. In how many a fairly ordered home are there found neglect of God and a sorrowful forgetfulness of early associations and hallowed memories!

We have no right to intrude on strangers nor to force an impertinent entrance through barred doors, but the rich who come to our sanctuaries, as truly as the poor, stand in need of cordial and loving courtesies. They should not be omitted from our little feasts nor passed by on our calling days simply because, in a worldly point of view, they are more fortunately situated than ourselves.

Dull Days

CHAPTER XXIII.

Dull Days.

"Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary."

WE may as well accept the fact with philosophy. Look on the bright side as obstinately and as steadily as we may, cultivate a cheerful optimism with all our might, we yet must now and then face a dull day. Possibly we have worked too hard and have been under too intense a strain; perhaps we have met disappointment and defeat where we had bright anticipations; maybe we are homesick and heavy-hearted and strangers in a strange land. There is a reason for it, or there is no reason for it, but accounted for or not, here is the dull day.

The stormy day of sorrow, the hard day of toil, the chilling day of penury, are each sufficiently distressing, but they all take less out of one than the merely dull day. A wise woman said to me once—and then I was too young to understand or to believe her—"My dear, anybody can bear a real trouble. Anybody can cope with real disaster. The intangible, the imaginary trouble is much harder to fight."

I have found out since then what she meant. I know the pall of the simply dull day when life seems to have lost its flavor, when nothing looks worth while, when you wonder if things are to go on forever in the same weary, monotonous routine, and when you long unspeakably for something to happen. And as I know that you have felt in the same way and had the same experience, I am going to give you a bit of advice.

In the first place, accept the dull day as a needful discipline. There is blue sky somewhere, but for you to-day the gray light and the enfolding clouds are best. Otherwise your loving heavenly Father would not have appointed the particular atmosphere and the weather which it has brought. Nothing is ever gained by fighting against the inevitable.

Next, drop your indoor employment and go out of doors, under the open heaven, and into the fresh air. A brisk walk will often tone up the system, set the blood in motion, and drive the clinging cobwebs from the brain. Try the effect of exercise and of coming closer to nature. Perhaps you will meet some one who will cheer you as I did once in St. Augustine when I heard on the pavement the tap, tap of a tiny crutch, and looking pityingly down into the face of a crippled child, met the brave blue eyes as they laughed into mine, and heard the sweet voice say:

"Don't be sorry for me, lady! It doesn't hurt much now, and the doctor says it won't hurt at all by and by."

But the tonic of tonics is to find somebody else whose gray day needs brightening. I do not care how severe the trial, how deep the melancholy, it can be helped by unselfish effort for other people. Come out of yourself and your own sorrow into the life of the world. Come out of the present distress and take hold of the cross under which another faints, and so shall your cross grow lighter.

Remember, too, how near and dear is your Father in heaven. As my beloved Faber puts it,

"Down in earth's duskiest vales,
Where'er my pilgrimage may be,
Thou, Lord, wilt be a ready home
Always at hand for me.

"For God is never so far off
As even to be near.
He is within. Our spirit is
The home he holds most dear.

"To think of him as by our side
Is almost as untrue
As to remove his throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.

"So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth
Myself God's sanctuary."

This is very profound and subtle, and we have to think it over before we fully comprehend it.

But it is only an amplification of St. Paul's declaration that we are temples of the Holy Ghost. And our blessed Lord says, "Abide in me, ... he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

How can we have dull days if we realize the divine indwelling?

If the dull day comes of discontent, of impatience with our lot, of any irritation born of circumstances, the remedy is to be sought in patience, penitence, and prayer. So may we "drop the burden at His feet, and bear a song away."

Of Simple Accomplishments

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of Simple Accomplishments.

IN days not very far behind us, nearly every young woman thought she must have one or two accomplishments. You could not pass down the village street without hearing in every house the monotonous practicing of weary girls who were condemned to sit two or three hours a day counting one, two, three, or running their fingers up and down the scales of the piano. Very soon, the young performer learned waltzes, jigs, and marches, or variations of "Monastery Bells," "Home, Sweet Home," and "The Battle of Prague." Many became so proficient after two or three years that they were considered competent to instruct children, and to be a music teacher was an easy and quite frequent way of earning one's living.

By degrees, as we have emerged from the rude and primitive stage in musical culture, have heard more and better music, and know more about the whole subject than once we did, our feeling on the general advisability of universal piano study has undergone a change. We do not now insist

that those who dislike music or who have no capacity for it shall endure its drudgery of apprenticeship. Their time can be more wisely invested. We have learned that of all arts music is the most jealous and the most exacting, and that only those who bring to it some leaven of love and some native facility can hope to gain more than a foothold on its infinite shore. And, even then, the labor of a lifetime will leave them with much left to explore, much to conquer.

But hand in hand with what is undoubtedly a gain, there is also a loss. Such as it was in the dear old days, the maidens were ready to give of their store, they would sit down in the evening to play for a tired father, they would entertain a home company, they went around to see a friend and lent her a new piece, or borrowed hers, and the simple light-hearted third-rate music did make people happy and added something to the gayety of life.

I find that my friend Celeste, who plays superbly, who has been trained in Munich and Stuttgart, on whose musical education thousands of dollars have been lavished, whose technique is extraordinary and whose musical knowledge encyclopedic, I find Celeste never able to play for me when I ask her. The piano is out of tune, or else she is out of tune herself, she cannot play when not in the mood, or she is out of practice. The

finest performers are generally out of practice and cannot render the least thing from Chopin or Mendelssohn or Beethoven, or any other master, because they have not had time to study as they have recently wished. We have less home music than formerly, though we have finer concerts from professionals.

If at a prayer-meeting the ordinary leader is absent, the pastor cannot often call with confidence on the young people present to sit down and play familiar hymn tunes so that the congregation can join in. An elderly lady or a middle-aged one is more likely to come to his relief than one of the girls.

In the yesterday which has receded far, and which your mothers and grandmothers know all about, accomplished girls were encouraged to sing, to play, to read aloud, not for even a remote hope of utilizing the gift in a pecuniary way, but just to be pleasing. I know several dear grandmammas who still sit in the firelight and in tender musing moods croon old-fashioned lullabys and the sentimental lyrics of their vanished summer. It is sweet to hear them, and you will not wonder that they have never ceased their lives through to be fascinating and most attractive women.

If you study music, why not draw a middle line between the old days and the new? Do not be

satisfied with the mere tinsel, the gewgaws and the jigs, if any such can now be found, but learn to play well enough to soothe an invalid or cheer an aged person, to amuse a child or delight a parent. Learn to play accompaniments so well that you can do this for singers; it is really a rare accomplishment, and one worth cultivating. And be amiable when you are asked to play, and do it so willingly that you will confer a grace on the kindly act.

A talent for sketching is another which should not be despised. The traveler who can transfer bits of landscape, amusing episodes, interesting incidents to his pocket-pad will double his own pleasure and confer a great deal of enjoyment upon his neighbors. A kodak, with some skill in photography, is likewise an acquisition in the line of artistic description, and helps one in manifold ways, especially when travelling.

The accomplishment which is nearest our hand, least difficult of attainment, and on the whole best worth having, is that of reading well. For elocutionary reading of the ambitious order I care little. Its tragedy is too often bathos. Its comedy is overdone. When I see a hysterical young woman tearing a passion to tatters in the effort to "interpret" a great poem or a sketch from some well-known author, I am moved to much compassion for her that she is so sad a spectacle, and

for her audience that they are expected to sit still until she has finished her performance.

Good reading is not of this claptrap variety. To read is simply to take the place of the author and tell his story as he told it, repeat his poem as he wrote it, speak from the heart of the printed page to the hearts of the listeners. Good reading is natural and unaffected. It is intelligible to any, even the deaf can hear the finely modulated clearly accented voice of the accomplished reader.

I am sure that a little investigation will convince most young people that there is a welcome awaiting them, if they will but learn to read, not at a railroad pace over a rough road, but with clear articulation, sympathetic emphasis, and appropriate inflections. There are blind people, shut-in people, weary people who hail such reading, and in the family circle the reader whose voice and manner and readiness to oblige are united will find his services more than appreciated.

The Desire to Write

CHAPTER XXV.

The Desire to Write.

PEN, ink, and paper. They are common enough and not at all expensive, and all over the world, in every clime, in every corner, there are clever young people who feel that here is their medium of expression, ready to their hand, a swift and easy method of giving out burning thoughts and blithe fancies, of winning fame, of writing their names among the stars. The desire to write is as frequently met as the ability to do it successfully is limited.

I am speaking here of the wish to write for publication, not of the very creditable and wholly natural desire to write what one sees for one's convenience of recollection, or for one's friends and family. I am constantly meeting people who declare that it is no trouble to them to write; they are never so happy as when they are writing, the words just flow from the pen's point as fast as their hands can move. Not the easiest reading, dear friends, is this same rapid writing, and not thus have the masterpieces of literature been given to the world.

A widespread impression prevails that there is a sort of magic ring which must be broken before the aspiring writer can get his work taken by a publisher. Editors are more or less surveyed with suspicion by new writers whose manuscripts, sent out with such tender love and longing, are returned to them by post, "declined with thanks." That hateful printed form, so cold, so relentless, so conclusive, is abhorred by the ambitious novice, and the cordially worded typewritten letter which some editors, kind-hearted and gentle in their generation, have substituted for the former formula, is not more graciously received. There is something so very intimate and personal about a manuscript over which you have spent days and weeks, that its rejection involves a severe disappointment. You cannot endure the idea that the postmaster suspects what is in the envelope which brings back the poor storm-smitten dove. You are aware that it is folly, but you nevertheless feel hurt and humiliated when your brain-child returns to you, unwanted, unprized; it is like an insult to a member of the family.

And then, you are so sure that the very papers which will have none of your work, which with one excuse or another send back your story and your essay, are printing other articles not half so good.

You can account for it only on one hypothesis.

The editors are in league together to repress literary merit, except when it is bolstered up by a well-known name.

Did it ever occur to you, gentle reader, that all these people with the famous names once had their feet on the lowest round of the ladder, as you have now; that there is no royal road to success; that every one who reaches the goal must press forward with disdain of toil, with acceptance of drudgery, with endurance of drill and discipline, with occasional defeat and depression, but with ever-increasing strength until the point foreseen from the first has been won at last?

Did you ever consider still farther that the editor ardently longs for the new note, the new name, the work that is well done by the man or the woman who has not been hitherto heard from? That though the competition is tremendous, yet that on the whole the rewards in the writing field are not more difficult of winning than in other fields of achievement?

Editors, so far as I know them, are diligent, conscientious, and faithful, are among the most hard-working of professional men, and are always glad to lend a helping hand to the beginner when they honestly can do so; always, be it added, remembering that their first duty is not to the literary novice, but to the public for whom they provide a daily or weekly literary feast.

What are the requisites for successful literary work?

The first and essential one, without which all others are useless, is the having a message. Unless you really have something to say, do not attempt to write. When people come to me asking me to assign them subjects, adding, "I could write well enough, but I cannot find a topic," I give them up at once. The born writer has more subjects than there are leaves on the trees. They start up before him wherever he goes, and sea, earth, and air for him are populous with fancies which throng upon his brain, and beg to be translated into words.

Have something to say. Then ascertain what there is to be said about it. Study it in its length and breadth; if it has a relation to history or science or nature or political economy, master every possible detail, and when you sit down to write, marshal your facts in order, and present them as in battle array.

Write as you talk, not grandiloquently, not with overmuch rhetoric, but with straightforward ease and to the point. To acquire style, study the best authors. One forms a good style by much reading of the men who have written lucidly and strongly from Plato down through the ages to Drummond and Ian Maclaren.

Write as fully as you choose in your first

draught, then go over this and cut out each superfluous phrase, each needless adjective. Condense, abbreviate, eliminate, be terse and brief, if in this period of many clamorous voices, you hope to have your voice heard.

In writing for the press, be careful about the form of your manuscript. Typewriting is not imperative, but legible handwriting is, black as to ink, white as to paper, correct as to spelling and punctuation. Never send a rolled manuscript anywhere, and always accompany your manuscript with stamps to insure its safe return to you. Send any note or letter about the manuscript under the same cover, not in a separate envelope or by another mail. Give your full name and post office address with great clearness at the top of the manuscript, and count the number of words and state them at the end.

You have now done all that you can do for your article. An introduction written by a famous friend will not help it, for in the world of journalism the sketch or story must stand upon its merits. You can, however, serve yourself by an intelligent choice in sending forth your work. A household paper will not require an abstruse philosophical essay, nor a fashion journal rejoice at a critique of poetry. The periodical to which your work goes has a scheme of its own, and can accept only such articles as fit into its plan.

Against one step I must strongly urge you. Do not set out, without previous experience, without resources, and without friends who can aid you, on a career which bristles with difficulties. A youth, or a girl, determined to enter journalism, comes from the high school or the academy of the village, and finds in the great city no loophole for the work which from afar seemed so tempting. From office to office, from paper to paper, the poor, plodding aspirant goes, encountering disappointment everywhere, finding no rest for the sole of the foot. Do not begin thus.

For the city journalist there is no better school than that of the country newspaper. Serve your novitiate there. Prove your fitness for authorship by writing in your country home till you gain at least a little success.

Avoid writing bureaus and other intermediaries. They do you no good in the long run, and you may as well deal with your publishers at first-hand. Depend upon it, you will not fail if you ought to succeed, for though the world of literature is terribly crowded, there is always room at the top.

About Committing to Memory

CHAPTER XXVI.

About Committing to Memory.

LEARNING by heart, the old phrase has it, when the thing in question is the fastening the exact words of a statement or description in the mind. What we learn by heart we commit to memory, and memory is of all stewards and treasure-keepers the most faithful and the least treacherous. Scientific students tell us that we forget nothing, that even trivialities and affairs of light moment once given to memory's charge remain fixed there forever. Overlaid by later impressions, apparently out of sight and lost to consciousness, some slight touch will awaken the sleeping monitor, and the whole drama of life will be reenacted on the mimic stage. A waft of perfume, a bit of song, the strain of a street organ, the sound of waves plashing on the shore, a face in a crowd, and a train of associations will be revived, the world of yesterday will confront the world of to-day, and another proof will be given that we are beings sharing the immortality of Him with whom a thousand years is as one day and one day as a thousand years.

Therefore it is that we cannot too carefully measure values when it is a little child whom we are teaching and whom we are influencing by means of that which we give it to remember. Our tones, our gestures, our opinions are for us the flotsam and jetsam of our hurrying days, but for the children around us they may set the seal of life for two worlds.

There used to be a good deal of discussion as to whether a child learned most when obliged to repeat from memory the exact words of a text-book, or when allowed to give in his own words the gist of what he learned. Formulas in mathematics and rules in grammar it was conceded must be committed *verbatim et literatim*, but history and science and other studies, most of which were mentioned in a lump as "the English branches," were allowed more latitude. My judgment has never varied, though there are newer methods of teaching now which throw the old ways into the shade, that it is much better to store a growing mind with the ornate words of a good author, than to translate those into the imperfect expressions of a young student,

Certainly there is no wealth comparable to the wealth which may be ours for the asking if in early life we begin to memorize passages from the Bible, from Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Wordsworth, and from the hymn writers whom we love.

Not only are our vocabularies very much enlarged and enriched by the familiarity which is gained by frequent repetition of a beautiful sentiment or a stirring speech or a comforting chapter, but our ideals are elevated and our critical faculties are developed. And much time is saved for us in the busy years when time presses if our minds are our convenient reference books, so that when we hear an allusion in a sermon or meet a quotation in a newspaper we can instantly verify or place it, or recall its context, because it is one of the treasures committed to memory.

You know nothing about it now, my bright-eyed friend, in the blithe strength and gladness of the twenties; but there may dawn a day in the long march of the days when you will not sleep as you sleep in youth. If one must lie awake when others sleep there is great joy and consolation in having some pleasant food for thought. The hours drift by slowly, it is true, but are neither desolate nor unprofitable when stanzas of poetry, thrilling lyrics, fine ballads, and beautiful scenes from favorite books come at a call and give one "songs in the night."

Commit to memory's keeping many texts of Scripture, and a few beloved chapters of Isaiah and St. John and St. Paul; learn by heart the Beatitudes, and, indeed, the whole Sermon on

the Mount. You will find your intellectual equipment vastly greater and your power of assimilation in every direction much increased and heightened by this simple process.

I need not add that there is much rubbish in the world which is of the nature of useless lumber, and is not to be retained in memory if it can be avoided. For instance, take pains to forget transient annoyances and slights which wounded for a moment, but were not worth a pang. Commit to memory no grudge, no vindictive intention, no resentment. These and similar emotions, the offspring of hate and bitterness, should be obliterated from the tablets of the mind, and memory should be taught to drop them out of sight and out of hearing. Our manner of forgiving an injury is often half-hearted and imperfect, unlike that of our blessed Lord whose forgiveness is full, who blots out our iniquities, and our sins and transgressions remembers no more forever.

Remember the glad days, the bright days, the days of the years of the right hand of the Most High. For such days is the white stone, for such a name written in letters of light. But other days, and other seasons of wandering, and error, and temptation, and wrongdoing may be included in the things which are behind us, which we are enjoined to forget while we press onward to the prize of our high calling.

Candor at Home

CHAPTER XXVII.

Candor at Home.

THERE has lately been published a beautiful little book, the story of a mother's life, written by her son. Readers of *Margaret Ogilvy* will recall the perfect candor and openness which prevailed in the little Scottish household wherein the beloved mother reigned a queen.

There were reserves jealously held, so far as the outside world was concerned, and "a stranger" was regarded with a curious mixture of dislike and dread. In our easy familiarity with people whom we casually meet it is difficult for us to understand the aversion which prevailed in Margaret Ogilvy's household against even the admission of an outsider as a servant beneath their roof. They consoled one another under the disagreeable necessity by reminders that the woman could go out on errands, that she need not be seen after her work was done, that somehow they would keep her very much in the background.

I have observed a similar withdrawing from people only slightly known, in ladies whose lives had been largely domestic, or who had not had

much to do with affairs. But the compensation for this in the Ogilvy household was that the home itself was a very sanctuary.

The trust therein was flawless. There were no whispered secrets. Nothing was indirect or concealed from a motive of policy. There was never any walking over thin ice or danger that a mine would explode under one's feet, for the love and sympathy were perfect, the home people in speech or in silence understood one another, and the home interests were entirely in common. The whole picture is exceedingly attractive and winsome, and I am inclined to ask whether we are wise in our customs, whether there may not unfortunately be found that in many of our homes there is a reticence, not to say a deceit, always going on, which has not in its outcome the sweet harvest of homely happiness which that small Scottish household knew. Our sons and daughters are, from motives of mistaken kindness, kept in ignorance of their parents' struggles for a foothold in the world. They would willingly share the sacrifices if they were admitted into the confidence of their fathers and mothers, but, kept on the outside, they misjudge and resent where they might help and encourage. Fathers grow old prematurely in their efforts to meet the demands made by their families, the families straining after a false standard of living, the young people indignant that certain

restrictions are placed on them which seem unnecessary and despotic, while if only the household life were built upon perfect sincerity, burdens would be distributed and trials would grow light. In temporalities, at least, the ideal home should be fortified by sincerity.

The rule works in another way and has its exceptions, which are equally unjust in another department. A year ago, in a Western town, a man died, all of whose life, so far as his family knew, had been a losing battle. Strenuous care had been the portion of his wife, constant and irritating limitations had hedged about his children, and his own days had been passed in a long and exhausting strife to make both ends meet. Lo! when he had been laid to rest with his fathers it transpired that the toiler had been laying up treasures and that he had left a large fortune, into the possession of which the bewildered heirs came, pleased perhaps, but still hurt that their lives had been needlessly hampered and clouded through the father's iron will and relentless self-denial. The wife, kept back like a child from acquaintance with her husband's affairs, was ill-prepared for the altered conditions, and for the older children the change came too late to give them the culture and the wider opportunities they should have had in full measure at an earlier period. Deceit, even for a purpose of ulti-

mate advantage, is never justifiable. Who raises his house on falsehood builds on the shifting sands.

The very tenderness of love sometimes seeks refuge in the veiling of truth in home relationships. We see in one very dear to us a defect of manner, a fault which mars the otherwise lovely and amiable character, and hinders the symmetry which we desire to see from gaining its just proportions; yet we hesitate to speak, are evasive or silent or cowardly, where to speak in plainness and gentleness would be kind. "Experience will teach that child," we say, forgetful that experience is often a very hard taskmaster, whose wounds are grievous and leave ineffaceable scars. Surely from the lips of the home circle the truth might be borne, and the candor of true love might aid the one criticised to escape into freedom from the fault which invited censure.

We err, too, in home relationships, in our attempts to shield some dear one of whom we habitually think tenderly, and whom we try to protect from the world's rough winds. Such a one must at all hazards, we say, be saved from pain, and in our efforts to do this we are driven to many subterfuges, which fall into ruin at the earliest assault of evil. In most cases the gentle and well-meant, though ill-advised, en-

deavors to deceive are not appreciated by their object, and in the end the truth has to be told and it leaves a sting which it would not have had at first.

When our heavenly Father set us into groups and families and households, and gave us the strong bond of blood relationship, the tender tie of kith and kin, it must have been because in this way we could reach our highest development and attain to our noblest possibilities. That each family may arrive at the fullest and most sacred ideal of Christian living there must needs be entire confidence in one another, and a continual and faithful striving to abide in the service and love of God.

But since every rule has its exceptions, we must not overlook the fact that love cannot afford to indulge in a frankness which is devoid of tact and may savor of brutality. The man whose love of truth leads him to comment on his wife's jaded looks, to remark that her gown is unbecoming and her hat a fright, and who calls attention in public to a defect in the housekeeping or a fault in the table service, is behaving like a boor.

Robert Louis Stevenson, than whom few writers are more subtle, takes a text from Thoreau and comments on it after a most delightful fashion. "It takes," says Thoreau, in *A Week on the*

Concord and Merrimack Rivers, "two to speak truth; one to speak and another to hear." "He must," adds Stevenson, "be very little experienced or have no great zeal for truth who does not recognize this fact. A grain of anger or a grain of suspicion produces strange acoustical effects, and makes the ear greedy to remark offense. Hence we find those who have once quarreled carry themselves distantly and are ever ready to break the truce. With our chosen friends, and still more between lovers, for mutual understanding is love's essence, the truth is easily indicated by the one and aptly comprehended by the other. A hint taken, a look understood, conveys the gist of long and delicate explanations, and where the love is known even yea and nay become luminous."

Our young people are a little deficient in the deference toward parents which at once asks counsel of them, and delights to lay open in their sight everything which pertains to the younger lives. Li Hung Chang, in a wonderful letter sent from Peking to a little Brooklyn girl who attracted his notice, said: "If your parents are still living, I hope you are dutiful to them. I have observed that the Western nations are not so dutiful to parents as we are here in China."

Entire candor in the relationship between mother and daughter, for example, would save

the latter from many mistakes and sometimes from lifelong disaster. Yet I have heard daughters say that their mothers were not their preferred confidantes, and a mother, with a look of heartbreak in her eyes, told me one day that "Mary is as distant with me as if I were a stranger. I know nothing of her thoughts; her friends are quite unknown to me."

That the associates of one person or set of persons in the home should be practically unknown, not even on a footing of acquaintanceship with the rest of the family, is not an uncommon, though it is an unhappy, state of affairs.

"I am driven from room to room in my home in the vain effort to find a resting place for the sole of my foot," a mother said, whimsically, with a smile, behind which was the suspicion of a tear. "Lottie entertains her friends in the drawing-room, Lida is taking a German lesson in the library, Tom has a client in the dining room, and Mary and Jane have a seamstress and the sewing machine in my room. There seems to be no place for mother and the mending basket." Yet, except in Tom's case, there was no reason why mother should anywhere have been excluded.

In the ideal household the friends of one are the friends of all, with varying degrees of intimacy. The girls and boys should not hesitate to bring home to the father and the mother those

whose company and comradeship on the road of life make the road pleasant. The small separations which grow bit by bit into great chasms between members of the same family would never come there or would be swiftly bridged if the family habit were to share everything, and especially friends.

"I would not introduce Louis to my sister," I heard a young man say with decision. "He is a brilliant fellow, but unscrupulous and profane. Not the sort of a man I want Elsie to be acquainted with."

The sort of fellow a man does not present to his sister is not a safe or proper comrade for the man himself. The sort of girl whom a young woman does not like her mother to meet in her company is a girl to be avoided. In the home there should exist an unspoken freemasonry of sentiment, so that without speech or much explanation the home people should be able to signify approval or disapproval of those who come within its charmed precincts.

Establish our home life on a rock foundation of impregnable sincerity and few blasts can shake it, few storms menace its security, few perils cross its blessed threshold.

Above everything, let me urge you never to go on in a course of conduct which you feel must be hidden. From time to time we are startled by

the downfall of some one who has occupied a position of honor and usefulness, and the broad white light of publicity streams in with a glow like that of electricity on a series of clandestine actions, of borrowings that were thefts, of associations that were not respectable, of behavior that was shameful. The whole of it might have been prevented had there been an absence of deceit in the beginning. The cardinal vices, as lying, stealing, and the like, have an evil affinity and hang closely together. One often sees a family rallying in its strength in a forlorn and distressful struggle to save a child, who has gone wrong, from the consequences of his sin. Alas! there was a golden moment, had they but known it, when such family rallying might have hindered the thing from so much as beginning, had there been a sympathy and a knowledge so full and so deep that the very temptation would have perished at the birth.

Good Citizenship

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Good Citizenship.

AMONG the chief obligations which confront our educated young people, that of being good citizens takes high place. To live selfishly, leaving our country, our State, our town, to shift for themselves without our aid, is unmanly and unchristian. Our dear home land demands our devotion, our love, our prayers, our work, and there are duties toward her which we are no more at liberty to shirk than we are to neglect or to shame the mother who bore us.

Our country requires of us first of all an intelligent and discriminating patriotism. Not our country, right or wrong; but, please God, our country, right, because her sons are bound to make her and keep her so, to uphold her banners, and to exorcise all which tends to drag her down. Bribery, corruption, and political knavery could have no success in a free land if our young men appreciated the rare distinction of good citizenship and stood steadfastly shoulder to shoulder to guard the country's weal and defeat the country's enemies.

No young man—for that matter, no young woman—should be indifferent to politics. Politics and patriotism should be synonymous. If the girl has not the ballot, she has what is as potential—the power behind it, the power of influence, the power of example, the power of love. In our civil war, on both sides of the conflict, the North and the South, the women fought as bravely and as stubbornly as the men, and there never is a peaceful contest at the polls in which the silent suffrage of good women does not count for as much as the spoken voices of their brothers and husbands. A girl's interest should stimulate her brother and her sweetheart to vote for the side which will best represent the highest interests of the country and the race. A girl's scorn and contempt should humiliate the man who boldly asserts that he cares nothing for his country, not enough for her death or life to go to the polls and vote, not enough for her defense and her honor to undertake any service which she requires at his hand.

That bad men are in politics, that one encounters the low, the depraved, and the vulgar in primaries and elsewhere, excuses no good man from doing his duty. The bad will be swept away when there is a grand uprising of the good. Often the bad are bad because they are ignorant, because they are undisciplined, because life has

been hard upon them, and their environment has been unfortunate. Our bounden duty is to bear with the infirmities of the weak, to be long-suffering with men, but implacably stern and unbending with evil methods, and to throw the whole weight of our personality everywhere and always on the right side.

Our beautiful great country asks very little of her sons when she calls to them, "Elect the best men; keep the courts pure; decide on governmental changes with eyes open and minds informed; hold fast the Lord's Day, give no chance for the European Sunday to break down the American Sabbath; still and forever maintain this country as God's country." When our young men are penetrated with the right feeling concerning good citizenship there will be the old heroism, the old loyalty to the land. East and west and across the sea our flag will be respected, and no man need blush to own himself an American, a child of this fair republic, and the heir of all the ages.

We need to take ourselves to task in that many of us have been derelict in paying what we owe the State. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," cried the devout Hebrew, "may my right hand forget her cunning!" Let us cultivate patriotism by studying our country's history, by remembering her heroes—Washington and Lincoln and

Grant and Garfield; by investigating the sources of her amazing material wealth, her mines of gold and silver and iron and coal, her grain fields and her vineyards and her grass lands; by following her rivers to the sea and climbing her mountains, and loving every foot of her broad territory. We have a country to be proud of—God's country! All she needs now is the loyalty and the consecration of her children—God bless her!—and this our young men must bring to her in good measure, pressed down and running over.

Our Debt to the Ministry

CHAPTER XXIX.

Our Debt to the Ministry.

IN the earlier history of our country the minister was a grand and stately personage whose progress through the town was in a manner processional. Children saluted him respectfully, and if he stopped to speak with them or laid his hand on their heads in kind familiarity, they were filled with awe; a blessing seemed to linger in the air. Mrs. Stowe in her *Old Town Folks* and in *The Minister's Wooing* has given us a picture of the clergyman as she recalled him in the New England of her childhood and in the traditions of a still more remote period, a man clothed upon with dignity as with a garment, a man accustomed to homage, and one who, whether in the pulpit or out of it, bore himself always as a prophet of the Lord.

Ian Maclaren in his portraits respectively of Dr. Davidson and of John Carmichael has shown us the change which time and its vicissitudes have wrought in both the minister and the parishioner. Probably this is less marked in Scotland than with us; but Carmichael is of the

new order, familiar, brotherly, social, impetuous, while Dr. Davidson is fatherly, benignant, and autocratic to a degree.

The minister is, whatever you may think, the hardest worked man in his circle, and the cases are very exceptional in which he is not in labors more abundant than any man in his congregation. Not alone the constant intellectual drain involved in the preparation of sermons and lectures, and the physical exhaustion of delivering them, are taxes on his vitality; but as St. Paul of old he is burdened with the care of the church; its membership is to him as his family, its sorrows are his, and his sympathies are always theirs to command, so that he halves every burden and shares every anxiety in his parish. Parents tell him their plans and confide to him their ambitions for their children's future, and if a boy is going wrong, or a husband has lost his position, or there is serious illness in a household, or any other combination of events, the pastor knows all about it. Then his gifts in money, actual gifts of solid cash, in proportion to his income are usually larger than those of the well-to-do of his flock, for he leads here as elsewhere, while there are few weeks in the year when he is not called upon to put his hands in his pocket to relieve the poor or the distressed. Few men approach the minister in the practice of unobtrusive and unos-

tentatious charity, and when he asks you for a contribution, please believe that he is only asking you to do what he ungrudgingly does himself.

Our first debt to the ministry is, therefore, a debt of gratitude that in a timeserving and mercenary age, when money seems to multitudes the chief good to be sought, they set us an example of earnest unselfishness and of a consecration to duty which cheerfully faces and accepts poverty. Notably our missionaries do this, either at home or abroad, but the ministry is never a profession to be sought for pecuniary rewards. The man who enters it practically takes a vow of poverty and self-denial. Seldom can he save anything from his salary. But for all that his heroism makes life nobler for the rest of us and we owe him a debt.

Next we owe the ministry a large debt for the culture we receive at their hands. Ian Maclaren again, in *The Cure of Souls*, speaks of the diction of a sermon, saying aptly:

"People have an instinct about what they hear from the pulpit, and their desire is the language of the home and the market place raised to its highest power and glorified. Every strong and clean word used of the people as they buy and sell, joy and sorrow, labor and suffer, should be of the preacher's store, but he should add thereto splendid and gracious words from Milton and Spenser, from Goldsmith and Addison, and other

masters of the English tongue. The ground may be a homely and serviceable gray, but through it should run a thread of gold. People have a just satisfaction in seeing their best words serving in great affairs, and receive a shock of delight when now and then a word of royal carriage mingles with the throng."

I have quoted this passage because it is just here that Sunday after Sunday, week in and week out, our pastors lay us under an obligation for the privilege of listening to and absorbing beautiful and lovely thoughts clothed in the loftiest and choicest garb of language. An elevation of style in the common conversation of those who habitually "sit under" a fine and eloquent preacher may be traced to the influence of his fitly-chosen English, as well as to his sermons that "allure to heaven and lead the way."

We owe also a debt to the pastor for his open house and heart and hand, and not less is this debt due to the pastor's wife.

I have an affection for the old Scottish word "manse," designating the home of the minister, and bringing up a throng of beautiful domesticities and simple hospitalities whenever it appears on the printed page. With us, it may be, the pastor lives in his own hired house, and not in a house owned by the parish and set aside for the clergyman, so that "the manse" has only a poetical

meaning; but the minister's wife is as dear and sweet a reality here as in any moss-grown or ivy-mantled manse in the world.

We hear it stoutly affirmed in many quarters that the mistress of the manse is of no more account in the congregation which her husband serves than is any other lady there. She is not included in the contract, has no stipulated obligations, draws no salary, is in every way independent and free, and, so far as the parish is concerned, is a mere private gentlewoman. All of which is in a manner true. At the same time the truth is at best to be accepted with qualifications. Let it be supposed, for example, that the minister, marrying in his youth, has fallen upon those evil days which are the portion of the man who marries for beauty only; let us fancy him with a vain, or silly, or petulant, perhaps with a poorly-educated and ill-disciplined, wife. Does anybody for an instant think that he will not be very much handicapped professionally, his career of usefulness impaired, by this unfortunate marriage? Granting that in any social position a man's rank and value largely depend on the sort of a wife he has taken to himself, is not the man in the ministry, whose candle cannot be hidden under a bushel but must shine conspicuously in the sight of the whole town, in a poor condition if he have not a creditable and sensible helpmeet?

Providentially, ministers' wives, as I have known them, have been usually women of rare loveliness, amazing tact, and charming discretion. They easily take precedence among gifted and agreeable women, and they assume their end of their husband's work with wonderful command of resources and unfailing courage; for the instances are few in which something is not expected of them by the congregation, or else in which, expected or otherwise, they do not with rare bravery and without the least air of complaint share the crosses and the losses of the day, conciliate the offended, soothe the irritated, and in many a quiet, unsuspecting way sustain their husbands in their work of love and constant toil. Blessings on them!

A popular minister's wife makes very secure her husband's position in a difficult parish. A beloved minister's wife helps to win love to her husband.

In a certain parish, where there were peculiarly inharmonious elements, several pastors in turn did their best, but retired vanquished from the field. Finally a man came to the post, fully aware of the various causes of trouble, the jealousies between the young people and the older people, the feuds between certain families, and the clashing of interests which had made the church in question a reproach and a byword.

Meeting the brave pastor after he had held the position with increasing success for several years, I asked him how it was he had not been defeated too.

"Under God," he said, "I owe everything here to Lizzie. She captured all hearts from the first. There isn't a home in the parish where her influence is not felt. The women adore her, the young people consult her. She is the confidante of the whole congregation. I never could have gained a foothold here had I not been aided by my wife."

It is not every husband, not even every clergyman, who is candid and discerning enough to see and own how large a debt he owes to the unselfish and gentle comrade who stands gallantly by his side in all life's emergencies and vicissitudes. I liked the man who acknowledged so ungrudgingly the debt he owed to "Lizzie."

The manse sets a pattern for many another household. Invited to tea at the manse table, the young visitor notes the simple courtesies and delicate politeness of the lady whom she admires, and absorbs something of the latter's loveliness and charm. Advice given by the pastor's wife is accepted and prized where it would be resented if offered by another.

The parish has no right to exact anything from the wife of the minister, it is true. But she can

no more help being influential than a rose can help diffusing its fragrance, and her natural qualifications for leadership, if these she have, cannot be hidden in this sphere of activity. If she does not wish to take the lead officially she can still, by her own excellence, and in virtue of the fact that her husband must be a leader, largely modify the social life of the congregation. She is its first lady, and we are glad to accord her the place of eminence.

When we have admitted to ourselves and others that we owe a debt, the next thing in order is to pay it. How can we pay our debt to the minister?

One of the very best ways to do this is to attend our own church regularly, not allowing the praise service or the eloquent stranger in another church to tempt us from our pew. A minister should be able, looking over his parish roll, to count definitely on the loyal service of his people. Simply by being in their places at each service they help to strengthen his hands, and they uphold him in his work. There is no readier method of weakening a minister's influence and of rendering his efforts abortive than the method of intermittent attendance on the appointed services.

We pay our debt by listening appreciatively to our pastor's discourses. The art of listening well is so little understood that half the sermons preached every Sunday are never heard by large

numbers of the congregation. Test this by asking everyone whom you know intimately what was the text, what the analysis, what the arguments in the sermons he or she last heard? Few people recall much which they heard, because few people listen with real attention. Never look at your watch during a church service. It is to the last degree ill-bred. Pay the same polite attention to the pastor in the pulpit which you accord to him when he calls on you in your parlor.

Then, praise the minister wherever you go. When he says a thing which helps you, take pains to tell him so. Always repeat to him the pleasant things you hear, and bury the disagreeable comments under a loving silence.

If your pastor proposes a plan of work and asks recruits to assist him in carrying it forward be ready for all which you can give, not of money alone, but of yourself. Here, as everywhere,

"The gift without the giver is bare."

Pray for the pastor. We do not forget to help and strengthen those for whom we always intercede at the throne of grace. The name we mention in our closets is sure to possess for us a double sacredness, and we do not forget to work where already we have prayed.

Why Should I Join the Church?

CHAPTER XXX.

Why Should I Join the Church?

"WHY should I join the Church? I can be as good a Christian outside the Church as in its pale."

The question and the assertion are often made by ingenuous young people who honestly desire to do their duty, but who fancy that in uniting with the Church they sacrifice something of their independence. They should be told that joining the Church is not, as they seem to suppose, a cross and a grievous burden, a clog upon liberty and a piece of self-denial, but, on the contrary, a great honor and a great privilege. Probably the state of mind in which they ask the question is one of unpreparedness for both privilege and honor, yet in some cases there are those who have suffered the inconsistencies of Christians, or their own disinclination to take a stand, to keep them hesitating on the border land of decision, instead of ranging themselves definitely on the Lord's side.

Not so does the young man compare conclusions and weigh pros and cons when he is invited to enroll himself in a favorite regiment, or to write his

name down as a member of an agreeable order or association. Here, too, he must join the awkward squad and be drilled, he must serve a certain novitiate; but he appreciates the offered advantages, and feels that he will receive more than he can confer. Too often his unspoken feeling about the Church is that he will confer rather than receive benefit. A distinctly patronizing attitude of mind, which is based on mistaken premises, leads many men to act as if they bestowed honor upon Christ's Church when they bowed at her altars and marched with her hosts. If thus they view the "militant embodied host" which follows the Captain of our salvation, they will enter the ranks as half-hearted and cowardly soldiers. I never read Bishop Heber's splendid hymn:

> "The Son of God goes forth to war
> A kingly crown to gain.
> His blood-red banner streams afar.
> Who follows in his train?"

without a thrill of the heart, it seems so glorious to be numbered in that army of martyrs and confessors, of the excellent of the earth.

The word "sacrament" really means oath, and is borrowed from the Latin, carrying with it the recollection of the vow made by the soldiers of victorious Rome when they set forth to conquer the world. So, when we sit down at the feast where we celebrate in the simple elements of the

Lord's Supper his body broken for our sakes, his blood poured out for us, we take the oath of allegiance and fidelity, we vow to be obedient as those under orders, we accept all that is meant by wearing a uniform and adopting a button and encamping beneath a flag.

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"His dying crimson like a robe
Spread o'er his body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me."

I do not think the full sweetness, the full self-abnegation, the full blessedness of the spirit of that hymn is ever so much as dreamed of before there are full surrender and entire consecration. It is "sell all that thou hast and come and follow me" which makes one a happy and efficient Christian, and nobody out of the Church can do this and live this as absolutely as they can who are in it, because in the one case there are reserves, and in the other there are none.

The most imperative reason for our joining the Church, if already penitent and believing we have joined Christ, is that only thus can we obey the divine command. He said, "Do this in remembrance of me," and, "As oft as ye do this, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." We

have no right to be wiser than our Lord, and often to the soul of the honest doubter there comes great peace simply from dropping resistance and assenting heartily to the command given, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Some dear young people hold back from this positive step because, as they express it, they are not good enough. For that matter none of us is ever good enough in our own poor goodness to so much as approach the Master. It is his goodness, not ours, which gives us power to overcome, and all the promises of Heaven are pledged to him that overcometh. He shall have the white stone with the new name, and the hidden manna, and shall sit, says Christ, "with me on my throne." O, the blessedness of overcoming in the strife; overcoming sinful desires and sinful deeds; overcoming the powers of evil; overcoming the world! Let us confidently take the hand that was once nailed to the cross, and appear at the altar, and sit at the board, just as we are.

"If you tarry till you're better
You will never come at all."

Let each one for himself disclaim all earthly strength, and exclaim in Ray Palmer's wonderfully direct words, appropriating them as his own voluntary confession, glad, full, and sincere:

"My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine:
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O! let me from this day
Be wholly thine."

Another reason for our union with the Church is in the fact that "Ten times one is ten." Every recruit, every volunteer, every man and woman who are added to the rank and file make the army stronger. We have need to set our battle in array, for the adversary and his legions are not idle, and to the holy war it behooves us all to go. The power of numbers is impressive, and where an army corps is disciplined, as well as mighty and vast, the force is that of the individual multiplied by the thousand and ten thousand fold.

I have heard from some vacillating souls a timid and procrastinating excuse to the effect that by and by they would join the Church. They were not yet ready. To-morrow would be time enough. This seems very weak. To-morrow is not yours or mine. We have only to-day. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," cried the man in the parable. And the Lord said, "Let the dead bury their dead, and come and follow me." Christ's command is in the present, not the future, tense.

It is as if one should say to a beggar in rags at

the door of a palace, "Come in, my friend, to the light, to the music, to the feast, to the fire; come in, be warmed and fed;" and he should say, "Not yet, a little longer will I shiver and starve, a little longer I will stand on the threshold, a little longer I will hug my rags and my shame."

But never, dear friend, think for a single instant of joining Christ's Church unless you are willing to give him your whole service. "Lovest thou me?" he asks you, and if you cannot answer with Peter, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," kneel down and plead for a softer heart, for a gentler will, for the grace of the complete surrender.

"O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."

The Christ in His People

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Christ in His People.

ONCE, on a sweet day in early June, it happened to me to enter a darkened room after a long drive over the green hills of Maryland. The instant I had shut the door I was aware of a presence in the chamber, something beautiful and fragrant and wonderfully restful; but at first I saw nothing, and it was only after the interval of a few seconds that I observed in a vase in a corner a flower then new to me, a magnificent specimen of the Magnolia Grandiflora, whiter than the whitest alabaster; with a penetrating, insistent perfume which pervaded the place, the great flower, like a vestal uplifting a censer, making a temple of the little room.

Often and often since then the memory of that experience returns to me, and always as a symbol of the indwelling Christ. Do we realize it as we should, this precious knowledge that the dear Lord, once in the flesh and revealed to our senses as the Man who walked in Galilee, again and again shows something of his beauty, something of his divine tenderness, loveliness, and strength,

as he makes his abode in the hearts of his followers?

How careful ought we to be that we show our Lord's characteristics in our gentleness, our patience, our steadfast adherence to the right and the true! When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he saw evil it shrank from his pure presence ashamed. When sorrow came to him, he comforted the mourning one; when want and suffering appealed to him, his very touch gave instant relief.

Sometimes we forget our opportunity in this dark world to be a shining light, making glad the winding ways and scattering the gloom. In ourselves we have no radiance, but we can uphold our blessed Christ, and he will be a lamp seen of all who pass us by.

"O soul of mine, I tell thee true,
If Christ indeed be thine,
Not more made he himself thy kin,
Than makes he thee divine.
As through his soul there frequent beat
Our human hopes and loves,
So midst thy varying joys and fears
His Spirit lives and moves.

"But O, my soul, as I thy good
And evil ways explore,
I seem to see the Christ in thee,
His earthly life live o'er.
Thou art another Holy Land
(Ah, holy mightst thou be!)
The olden joys and griefs of Christ
Repeat themselves in thee.

"No longing for his coming,
No greeting him with scorn,
No mountain for his praying,
No sea by tempest torn,
No cheer of friends, no wrath of foes
From manger to the tree,
But finds its faithful counterpart,
Mysterious heart, in thee."

If you have never read it I am happy to introduce you in these stanzas to Rev. Dr. Denis Wortman's beautiful poem, "Reliques of the Christ," from which I have quoted only a few tuneful lines.

The thought of the divine indwelling fills us with a hallowed joy, the more so that we have Christ's own word, saying, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . . Without me ye can do nothing."

In lower and less permanent relationships in the earthly life we constantly see examples of the abiding of one person in another, by way of influence, by way of command, by way of acceptance and belief. The patient abides in the physician, the pupil in the teacher, the friend in the friend. Highest and finest and most subtle and intimate of all is this love-life of the soul with Christ, in which he dwells in us as the flower dwelt in my little room, as the light in the lamp, as the radiance in the star. So do we thrill with

the bliss of this tender belonging to him that we are fain to exclaim in moments of rapture:

"O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord,
Forgive me if I say,
For very love, Thy sacred name
A thousand times a day.
For thou to me art all in all,
My honor and my wealth,
My heart's desire, my body's strength,
My soul's eternal wealth."

Looked at from this point of view the inconsistencies of the Christian are very sad, for they are daily misrepresentations of the Lord. If the child, going forth from the home and behaving shamefully, conveys to the beholder a mistaken impression of the training and care he received at parental hands, much more the wayward and erring disciple challenges criticism, for he is wounding his Master, and fighting on the side of his Master's enemies.

As members of Christ's body, the Church, let us take to our inmost hearts the conviction that we must faithfully serve him, and constantly stand forth as his ambassadors. Never let us be ashamed to do this, for did he not say, "If any man be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will I be ashamed in the presence of my Father which is in heaven."

Never let us forget that the only danger to the Christian is in getting away from the Christ.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered."

Furthermore, let us do valiantly, and live joyously, and walk the world as victors, for this is our assurance from him, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

We cannot be neutrals in the warfare with sin and Satan. Either we are on Christ's side and fighting with him, and his light is in our faces and his joy allures us on, or we are ranged with his bitterest foes and are striving against him. "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

Our American Sabbath

CHAPTER XXXII.

Our American Sabbath.

OUR precious American Sabbath, what fate is it to meet in days when Europe sends us its flood tide of immigrants to whom the Lord's Day is not sacred, and when our own pilgrims to older lands return from their wanderings with a weakened sense of responsibility as regards the fourth commandment?

Its fate is largely in the hands of our young people, who are growing up to take possession of their fair inheritance of freedom. As they observe the hallowed day, or lightly treat its sacred hours, the Americans of the twentieth century will march under the white banner of purity and reverence or the red flag of lawlessness and scorn.

Until lately our American Sabbath has been a praise among the nations. But bit by bit, a little more to-day, a little more to-morrow, the old landmarks are being obliterated, and we are ceasing to be known, as formerly, as a Sabbath-keeping people.

To take one feature, and one which is wholly

in the hands of our young men and women to alter, without the delay of a single week. There is no sport in itself less objectionable, in itself more delightful and wholesome, than bicycle riding. But when on Sunday morning we vainly seek our young men in the pews, and are told that they are riding their wheels; when we meet, not single riders, but troops and throngs and armies of riders, young men and young girls, starting off for long spins in the early freshness of the Sabbath morning, we can but own that their personal pleasure and the gratification of the physical nature have taken precedence of principle.

Residents of suburban villages tell us that the tranquillity of the old rural Sabbath has vanished at the ingress of a mob of Sabbath-breakers mounted on wheels.

I know the arguments urged by young men and women who are busy all the week and sympathize with those who are weary because of much and continuous service, for this lot I share. But I do not believe that real rest, even of the body, comes from ignoring God's laws and forsaking his sanctuary. Our young people, though they fail to see it, are like Esau of old, bartering their birthright for a mess of pottage.

Instead of a race of thinkers, of strong, fervent, intelligent men and women, fearless in everything else because they fear God, we are rapidly

degenerating into a set of people at the mercy of every fickle blast of public opinion. Amusement, in its proper place a legitimate and healthful means of recreation, becoming the end of existence, enervates those who pursue it in breathless haste. Outdoor exercise and athletic sports, in themselves admirable and helpful in building up a firm physical life, tend to degradation when cultivated at the expense of mental and spiritual growth.

We cannot afford to compromise on the Sunday question in this country and period. We cannot remain neutral. On every side, with specious excuse and meretricious argument, those who decry the old-fashioned Sabbath-keeping of the fathers are pushing their claims. When the enemy comes in like a flood, then is the time for the Spirit of the Lord to raise up a standard against him.

Almost as insidious and quite as deadly are the attacks made on our American Sabbath from the social side. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," said our Saviour, and he clearly showed by his example that there is no ban laid upon works of kindness or compassion on God's holy day. We may without a compromise with conscience visit our sick friend on Sunday, for it is always right to carry cheer to illness if we can, and equally we may go to

one in bereavement or anxiety if our going will be a comfort. The daughter may run in on her mother, if their homes are separate; the children may very appropriately gather under the old home rooftree. This is not social visiting, which has grown so common in our cities that the informal receptions given on Sunday afternoons and evenings differ very slightly from similar functions on secular days.

The novice in Sabbath-breaking ventures the first time on this hitherto forbidden ground with a trembling step and a telltale blush mantling her cheek. But it takes only a few Sunday evening receptions to blunt her original feeling and take from her the delicate sensitiveness with which she once repelled the advancing temptation, and the epithets "Puritanical," "narrow," and "provincial" fall tauntingly on her ear, awakening an instinctive resolve not to incur such reproach. The offense of the cross has never ceased out of the earth, and, strangely enough, many people are far more distressed at being called "narrow" than at being thought profane or unscrupulous.

It does, however, require a certain amount of determination to refuse the invitation of lovely friends and winsome acquaintances who ask you to come in for an hour informally, "We are always at home on Sunday evenings," and who

listen with a slightly amused smile and a lifting of the eyebrows when you explain that you do not visit at all on Sunday, and that you usually attend church twice on that day. Unless, indeed, you settle the question with quiet decision at the very outset and never yield an inch. Then, as invariably when one takes a decided stand for conscience' sake, your position will be respected and your example will tell for good. "One with God is a majority."

Because this nation was founded on a broad, deep basis of religious liberty, because there sweeps in on our shores the flood of a great immigration from Europe, because we are foolishly hospitable to every shade of unbelief which can exploit itself in a parliament of religions or elsewhere, we must defend our Sabbath. The sweet, still day, when worldly cares are in abeyance, and worldly business retreats, the "day of rest and gladness" given for the soul's protection and defense will be gone from us ere we are aware of it, or at least much of its tranquillity and the sanctity of its observance will have waned.

Whatever influence tends to secularize the Sabbath tends to a general lowering of the public conscience concerning it. The public conscience is the aggregate of thousands upon thousands of individual consciences; as we hold the individual

rigidly to account we shall keep the popular sentiment at high watermark.

We do not need anything Pharisaical. No washing of the outside of the cup and the platter is required, no insistence on rules for the rules' sake only. But we do need a widespread, earnest, and fearless upholding of the Sabbath day, so that legislators shall not openly carry on their deliberations about national and municipal affairs during its sacred hours; so that pleasure-seekers shall refrain from its desecration by their wheeling, riding, driving, or jaunting; so that women in society shall not reserve the Sunday afternoon for their entertainment of friends. While I say these things I do not forget the poor and toiling millions whose only holiday comes on Sunday. The wish to fly from the tenement home, stuffy, close, and bare of comfort, to the parks and the fields is so natural that it makes its swift appeal to the pitying heart. And yet, for the laborer and his family there would be truer rest in Sabbath worship than is ever found in Sabbath junketing. Hendry, in *A Window in Thrums*, represents the extreme view of the strictest Sabbatarian, and Hendry's little home was a chapel of sacred memories and pure traditions, in strong contrast with the house where God is ignored and worship neglected on the Lord's own day.

When we go from home, too, for a vacation or a visit, let us carry our religion with us. One young girl, living her life simply and sweetly in the village where she is summering, can light a candle for the Lord the flame of which will never expire.

"I dread the influx of summer people from town," said a country minister. "They so trample on the Sabbath that they handicap our church work and alienate our young people, and in a hundred ways hurt the cause of Christ."

We must not join such a party. Wherever we go let us remember that we represent a side of life, sometimes unpopular, sometimes alien to the fashionable view, but always with the promise of the covenant-keeping Jehovah pledged to its support. Among the blessed things for which we must not cease to strive we shall not be wrong if we include the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

Of Visiting the Sick

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of Visiting the Sick.

"SICK, and ye visited me!"

The full significance of these benign words is seldom apprehended by us when we are in health, with strength to go about our duties and freedom to move as we will. Illness is a clog upon personal independence, a weight and a fetter; not its pain alone, but its wearing inactivity, its depressing weariness, its enforced captivity, its "often infirmities" of fretfulness and caprice, and its burden of weakness makes it a disciplinary process hard to bear. Slowly, slowly, moment by moment, drop by drop, pass the monotonous days of the invalid, uneventful, uninteresting days when the sands of life run low and flesh and spirit fail together. To some natures sorrow's crown of sorrow, in illness, is remembering happier things. Being laid aside, to one who has taken a vivid interest in affairs and had a hand always at the helm, is a greater trial even than pain itself; that can be borne with heroic fortitude, but the battle with fever and suffering and lassitude tells heavily upon the will and bows the strong soul almost to the dust.

"Sick, and ye visited me!" I think the word of appreciation was meant for those who have soothed the stricken in such cases as nurses and doctors know, cases of nervous prostration, cases of chronic malady, cases of long-drawn-out torture.

An acute attack soon runs its course. It is a brisk fight at the point of the bayonet. We know the worst of it, and take measures accordingly.

But the heart's deepest ache is for the shut-in sufferer, especially if he or she has led an active life and the illness has changed life's whole environment and put one ingloriously in the rear, when one has ever been at the front and in the thick of the conflict.

It must be admitted that there are sick rooms where visitors have no business. In the valley of the shadow of death one has no leisure for the ordinary courtesies; one does not wish to bow and shake hands; one's acquaintances are in the way, and only one's next of kin can be present without intrusion.

Physicians usually indicate the circumstances where visitors may be of use or the contrary in the invalid's chamber. The nurse knows who may see her patient and do him good by a call, and who will excite and tire him. An undiscriminating nurse may cause the invalid a serious relapse

by admitting too many or too loquacious visitors when his strength is not adequate to anything which taxes its resources.

The sick room must never be a thoroughfare over which the world and the neighborhood tramp to and fro. Rather is it a guarded sanctuary, a retreat, an asylum, into which only the gentle, the loving, and the judicious may pass, having first, so to speak, halted and given the countersign to the watchful sentry at the door.

But I have known dear children of God at whose pale lips the cup of suffering has been held for many years. One dear friend was a girl in her bloom when the mysterious malady crept in upon her, which has held her, a tortured victim in a rack, till her hair is white. To see her smile over all that pain, radiant, victorious, to see her move her poor cramped fingers under the quilt in token of her gladness that you have come to see her, is to witness the triumph of love and faith over material anguish.

She welcomes her visitors as if they were angels. They read to her, they sing to her, they bring her flowers, they tell her what is going on in the world, and she lies there and smiles at them, and they leave her as if they had been in the presence of the Christ. As they have. For lo! he is incarnate still in the saints who shall reign with him by and by.

I think of another, gone on into the world invisible, the sweetest, gayest, most queenly of women, living year in and year out under the terror of a great suspense, again and again feeling the dread which forbodes the worst, when one must close one's eyes in the merciful sleep which precedes the surgeon's knife. To her, too, people went, young people particularly, as pilgrims to a shrine, and taking her their gifts, their cheer, their comfort, they never went empty away. When she slipped into heaven one summer morning she left the world behind her lonely. Ill and laid aside, behold a power to bless was still hers, and, missing her as we do, we can rejoice in grief that she has gone to the King in his beauty in the land where the inhabitant never shall say, "I am sick."

No matter what may be our preoccupations and engagements, we who are well ought to bear on our tenderest memories those who are ill. If they are in the hospital, perhaps on a Sunday afternoon we can go and visit and sing for them. If they are well enough to read, we may send them books. The least we can do is to go often to inquire for a sick friend, and every day we may send a message.

"Comfort one another!
Do not wait with grace unspoken
While life's daily bread is broken
Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies."

Of Visiting the Sick

The visitor to the sick must avoid lugubrious topics and melancholy reflections. Calamities and disasters have no place in the right kind of talk around a sick bed. Yet an aggressive cheerfulness assumed for the occasion, or a perfunctory sympathy in which there is not the ring of genuine sincerity, are as much to be deprecated and condemned as the doleful and woeful manner. Tact is golden, common sense is invaluable in the conduct of life, whatever the emergency, and I sometimes feel like proclaiming this from the very housetops. St. Paul in a sublime passage exclaims, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, . . . I am nothing." Our modern experience leads us sometimes to paraphrasing this on a lower plane: "Though I possess every grace and excel in every accomplishment, and lack common sense, I am a disappointment and a failure."

Tact and common sense united with Christian courtesy will certainly prevent a person from lingering too long where his transient presence is desirable. No one should ever be hurt or offended by exclusion from a sick chamber. The family and attendants are presumed to gauge accurately the situation, and the caution born of love would keep the visitor away if absence were best.

Our danger is, however, not that we will go

too often, but that we may go too seldom, to see our dear friends who are laid aside.

That darkened upper chamber is quite apart from our hurrying life on the high road. We are summoned here and there. All our swift hours are filled to the brim and running over with engagements. Day after day flies by on wings, and we awaken some morning to be shocked that a month has passed since we last remembered that we had a wounded comrade or a friend descending to the brink of the silent river.

"Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." It is the voice of the Master, and its accents are penetrating and sweet. And among the jewels which sparkle in that "inasmuch" none shines more brightly than this, "Sick, and ye visited me."

Attention to the Old

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Attention to the Old.

"BUT," cries a bright girl, reading this title, "how shall we pay attention to the old? The old resent our attention. They prefer to wait on themselves. They are difficult and unreasonable, and we cannot be blamed for neglecting them."

Well, my dear, what you say is in a measure true. The old are often difficult to get on with, and they do resent officious attention. Sometimes they only find out that they are old by the quick and intuitive aversion which they feel to being relieved of ordinary duties on the score of their apparent infirmities.

"I cannot keep my seat in the car while an old lady stands," was the first intimation which had ever dawned on the consciousness of one active woman that she had outlived her youth. She told me that it was hard to adjust herself to the novel situation; that she went home, looked in the glass, took note of her gray hair and the faint lines on her forehead, and acknowledged that time had set his seal upon her, and that

eighteen might with justice pronounce her "an old lady" at fifty-four. "But I didn't feel old," she added.

The fact which youth does not apprehend and consequently cannot accept is that the old do not feel old. This mysterious ego, living in the house of clay, is possessed of immortal youth. The tenement rattles about one's ears, but the indomitable soul still surveys the world with the eager wistfulness of childhood's days. Nothing is altered, except that experience has overlaid the child's immaturity.

The physical inability to undertake new enterprises and endure fatigues is so often in direct contrast with the mental impulse to these that the man chafes as against restraint, and his determination to go on as formerly gives him an appearance of crossness which he does not really feel.

This generation has recently witnessed a magnificent spectacle. A man, past eighty-seven, a scholar, a statesman, a leader, has stepped out into the arena and summoned Europe to the judgment seat. Mr. Gladstone's utterance, his superb eloquence, and his convincing arguments on the situation of Greece, with the concert of Europe against her on the side of Turkey, is the most splendid achievement of the period, and the achievement of a very old man. Beside his ripe wisdom the crudities of youth are put to the

blush. Yet, except as to the house he lives in, who shall call Mr. Gladstone old?

There are many things we all would like to do if we could, but the opportunity does not come in our way. There is one thing which we have the great privilege of doing every day of our lives, and that is the paying honor and reverence and gentle unobtrusive kindness to those who are older than ourselves.

I never can say too often, nor with too much emphasis, that the crowning grace of manner in the young is deference. So many other fine qualities are the dower of American youth that it is a pity they do not always possess this also. A too great self-assertiveness, an impertinent familiarity in the tone and speech of youth as it addresses age, make us often regretful that our young men and women cannot be spectators of their own behavior from the platform of the angels.

Whatever else may or may not be ours, if we live long enough we shall arrive at the inn upon the road marked with the sign "Old Age." The progress thither may be leisurely, but it will be sure. Such measure as we mete to others now may one day be meted unto us.

To be patient, tender, thoughtful, considerate in our dealings with the old, is to obey the Scripture injunction to rise up before the hoary head. It is to strew flowers and not thorns in the path

which is leading away from the roseate meadows of morning to the groves thick with evening shadows. It is to brighten lives which are growing lonely, for, as life goes on, so many companions fall away from the old that they are often as those who stand in the front rank, almost solitary. How few remain who call your grandmother by the pet name of her schoolgirl days! How few of his old classmates still greet your grandfather when he goes to the annual alumni gathering of his *alma mater!*

You and I, to-day, can perhaps roll a stone away from the path of a dear old friend. We can at least refrain from wounding the feelings of one whose feet are tottering and whose faculties are less responsive than once to the call of the present.

With peculiar tenderness and sympathy should we minister to the aged over whose intellects a cloud has fallen. They live in the past almost wholly, the present is to them remote and puzzling, but they are back in their old homes, with the scenes of childhood revived and the dreams of youth again beckoning them onward. Second childhood! Let us hope that it is a beautiful time to those who dwell in its Beulah land.

One cannot but regard with deep and sorrowful indignation the sight of an elderly person, feeble, with waning intellectual powers; one who

has done the day's work and left it behind her, treated now as if she were in the way. "Anything is good enough for mother," I heard a bustling daughter say. "She is childish, and doesn't notice." But I feared she did.

It was an August afternoon, silent and languid with lily scents. The year was ripening, flowers and fruit were everywhere, and already on the hillside the brier vines were turning red.

Shall I ever forget the thrill of horror with which the hamlet was for an instant almost paralyzed when, out of the brook, was dragged, lying face downward, in a lilac calico gown, an old, old woman who had drowned herself there? Poor thing! They said she had been restless and flighty and had lived with her children, who were good to her, but she always complained that she was useless and an incumbrance, and she had nothing to do. Finally her mind went astray, and she lay down in the brook and died.

I fancy it would be better usually to let the dear old people work as they wish to, even if the work tires them, even if they do it blunderingly. They are grieved to be told that they may sit with folded hands; they prefer to take their share in the housekeeping, and to go to the shop on busy days and lend a hand. One splendid old gentleman of my acquaintance at eighty-six looks over the books of a certain firm and sees that they are

correctly kept, teaches a Bible class every Sunday as he has done for fifty consecutive years, goes to market, and when he chooses takes a journey across the continent to visit his distant children. His is a green old age because still a useful one.

Do you like to read Tennyson? If so, you must enjoy his wonderful ballads. Here is a bit from "The Grandmother:"

"As to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet."

"Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you;
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie plowing the hill.

"And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too; they sing to their team,
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream,
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed,
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

"And yet I know for a truth there's none of them left alive,
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five;
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten,
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

"For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve,
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve;
And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I,
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by."

Of Giving as Worship

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of Giving as Worship.

OUR lives would be singularly incomplete if there were in them no chance for giving as worship. I am of the opinion, and very strongly, that we ought to hail every opportunity to give something for the advancement of religion, for charity, for the missionary effort of the Church, as a means of grace, a way of increasing our generosity, and of reproving our natural selfishness. Instead of suffering in ourselves any impatience with the collection box we ought to hail it with love and joy, remembering the blessing of our Lord bestowed upon her who crept meekly to the treasury and dropped in her two mites, all that she had. We must not misunderstand the spirit of this beautiful story. There is no merit in the modest and unobtrusive giving unless it be also liberal giving, and the distinction in the case of the poor widow whom Christ praised was that in proportion to what she had her gift was munificent. When to large liberality is added the essential of retiracy from public approval or recognition, the

quality of not letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth, we have the perfect style of giving. Crown this gift with prayer and bestow it with thankfulness, and it is the beautiful offering which has in it the incense of the pure heart. It is the giving which is worship.

All our gifts to the Lord's altar should be of this sort. And to have them thus they must be part of our scheme of life, love must consecrate them, and faith must send them forth. They should be, first, systematic. A certain portion of our income set apart and sacredly devoted to the Lord should be put aside every week, and nothing in ordinary conditions should interfere with this. When everyone contributes as God prospers him, and does it regularly, we shall cease to see the chariot wheels of progress blocked because funds are lacking. Many small streams running from many sources compose at last a mighty stream flowing out to the great sea.

Gifts should, secondly, be loving. Not the churl's nor the miser's gift, grudgingly offered, but the full-hearted, free-handed gifts of those who yearn to help on in this world those needing help, are the gifts which will be accepted. Let the gift, though periodical as to design, be spontaneous as to each impulse, and its blessedness will return in your own life.

They should, thirdly, be intelligent. Look

abroad over the wide field, and if you cannot bestow your largess everywhere select the portion of the vineyard wherein you will work.

All the missionary work is not done on the home or in the foreign field by the missionaries. Part of it is done there. Part of it is done by us when we send them forth; done when we subscribe to missionary papers, when we support mission stations, when we resolve that our church boards shall not groan under loads of debt, nor our representatives suffer because we withhold supplies. In every organized charity there are quiet people back of the bureau who are its sustaining and supporting members, without whom it could not go on for a single month.

Do not let us overlook the fact that our giving of money is only one part and a small part of our giving. We must give our time. This means that we must faithfully attend meetings. We must give our thoughts. This means that when the time comes to vote we will not do so without the background of information which should make the vote honest and individual. We must give our prayers. This implies that our whole heart is in the cause, for we never earnestly pray for anyone or anything without thereafter loving that better than ever before.

The giving which is worship must needs be self-denying. Nobody is ever entirely converted

when the purse is held in reserve. The disciple who would be as his Master must not hold dearest houses or lands, or father or mother, or wife or children. Still down from the clear heaven above us rings the trumpet call, "If any man will be my disciple, he must forsake all, take up his cross, and come and follow me."

We are never to criticise the giving or the withholding of others. We have in this to do solely with our own consciences. But young husbands and wives should have a fair understanding on this point, and in the household planning of the provision for the future, as well as for the present, the amount fairly due from us to God should be considered and bestowed. "How much owest thou to my Lord?" is a home question which none of us can shirk.

Never must we in our most secret thoughts plume ourselves on our liberality. We cannot give in any hour of our lives as our Saviour gave himself for us, counting not even his own life dear. We are always unprofitable servants if we measure our service by Christ's goodness to our unworthiness.

But we are stewards of bounty received from heaven, and our privilege is to so administer what we have that our Lord shall overlook our defects and accept our sheaves when we bring them to him at the end of the day.

Milestones on the Road

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Milestones on the Road.

EVERY birthday is a milestone on the road of life, the road which leads us home. As we pass the milestones one by one we seem to have made but little progress, the fifth, the tenth, the twentieth come, and then, later, the others, until insensibly we change from youth to maturity, from maturity to the second childhood of which we have been talking. It is well to keep our own birthdays, stopping at each for a brief retrospect of our yesterdays, and pausing to sow the seed of good resolutions for more beautiful to-morrows.

A little daily text-book, with a stanza and a quotation or a bit of the word, is a pleasant reminder of our friends' birthdays, which otherwise we would not be able to keep in memory. The friends' names written over against the right date serve to remind us that those we love are standing to-day beside *their* milestones, and we can pray for them or send them a letter or flowers or a gift. As the value of a gift is not in its costliness but in the sentiment it conveys, the simplest

trifle lovingly sent will thrill with delight the heart of its recipient. The being thought of, remembered, this is what helps to make the hard places smooth and to keep people happy and full of courage. If for no other reason than that the world is pleasanter when those who dwell in it are kind and demonstrative it would be worth while to cultivate the amenities of social intercourse.

In one dear household known to me birthdays are always borne in mind at family prayers. Relatives and friends whose names are in the little daily devotional book are mentioned to the Lord, with a plea for their special blessing when their names occur in the regular order, and never do the birthdays come round, be the place ever so far away, that the intimate acquaintances of that home do not feel strengthened by the thought that they are thus remembered, for by prayer we know that "the whole round world" is "bound by gold chains around the feet of God."

Birthdays are not the only anniversaries which we keep; there are milestones as marked which belong to the individual history in a still more subtle sense. I suppose that Jacob must always have returned in tender and glad solemnity to the night when he lay at Bethel with a stone for a pillow and had that wonderful dream of the angels going to and fro on that ladder which

reached from heaven to earth, and to that still holier night when he wrestled until morning with his unseen antagonist who gave him the new name "Israel," because as a prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

To some of us there are hours known only to God and ourselves, hours of soul-conflict, hours of emphatic decision, hours of struggle and triumph. No more important milestone do we ever reach and pass than the one which sees us definitely pledged to live no longer for selfish ends, but for altruistic and Christian objects. The day we give ourselves up to God in complete surrender is a monumental one in the story of our lives.

Then come the days of courtship, of wedlock, of successful endeavor, of poverty perhaps, and disaster. The day our ship sailed away, the day our ship came in, the day our dearest friend died, the day we made a friend, are all eventful and lifted out of the commonplace. But for these marked days we might become too strongly bound by routine; these days save us from jogging along too complacently in the deeply beaten ruts.

Our white world milestones are Christmas and Easter, the most glorious days in the year, the one celebrating our Lord's coming to the earth, the other forever testifying to his resurrection.

The angels heralded the wondrous birth at Bethlehem in Judea, and

"Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still celestial music floats
O'er all the weary world."

The universal good will at Christmas-tide, the surging joy, the loosened purse-strings, the mirth and melody, and the pleasure of little children, all witness to the presence of the Child among us, all seem to bid us listen again to the Gloria in Excelsis.

Nobody is churlish, nobody has a grudge, nobody is hard and forbidding at Christmas, for lo!

"The star rains its fire,
And the beautiful sing,
In the manger of Bethlehem,
Jesus is King."

Easter strikes a deeper note; Christmas is the opening anthem, Easter the triumphant chorus. Lord of life, victor over death, at Easter-tide Christ comes to us leading captivity captive.

There is not a green grave in the whole earth, not a vacant chair, not a wounded heart, for which Easter has not its comfort and balm. "Therefore let us keep the feast not with the old leaven of malice and insincerity, but in singleness of heart, praising God."

For our national holidays, Thanksgiving and others, we must stand on guard, for the tendency

among us is to exalt that which is merely utilitarian, and we do not always prize as we ought a day when we have a right to throw business aside and simply enjoy ourselves. All work and no play is quite as bad as all play and no work.

To plan for pleasure is a praiseworthy thing, and I wish there were more neighborhood frolics and social excursions and merry picnics arranged for our holidays. Festal times and gala times make the sober and serious times more enjoyable by contrast. A boon in a community or in a family is the person who has a gift for the details of an entertainment and who can bring people together, get them into pleasant relations, and make an affair of any kind go off creditably.

A woman of whom I think here is not young, nor has she ever been very beautiful, or talented, or conspicuous in any degree. Her one lovely gift is in her lovableness and her genius for keeping her home at the highwater mark of pleasure. "You might put her down in the center of a desert," said her husband, "and she would stand in the tent door and smile as if she were on the steps of a palace." She is never cross or fault-finding, and she never forgets to say "Thank you" for the smallest favor. In short, one of her sweetest peculiarities is that she has an agreeable word to say and a happy knack of doing the right thing in the right place wherever she hap-

pens to be. The day which tells her years should be marked with golden letters, for she has a way of going about the world like an angel.

Such a woman is sure to make holidays gayer and working days cheerier than another can, for she has "a heart at leisure from itself."

I like to think of all our earthly life as a road leading on to the home in the Father's house. Let us not be chary of loving kindness on our pilgrim path! Let us not only love one another, but tell one another how dear and precious are the chances for happy meetings, and how we regret the partings. When I was a little girl we used to sing in school,

"Be kind to each other,
The night's coming on
When friend and when brother
Perchance will be gone."

When the lonely days come with our dear ones gone, when the moss drapes the milestones and the gray mists veil the sky and the sea, let us have no heartaches over our sins of omission, no regrets over harshness which might have been averted.

So let us live that all life will be luminous in the light of our Father's face.

"Looking forward to the haven
Where the ships shall all come in!
Looking upward to the triumph
Where we shall be done with sin.
Looking onward to the love feast
With the Master entered in.
Looking ever to the ending
Where the blessing we shall win."

The Value of Odd Moments

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Value of Odd Moments.

IN this hurrying age there are few of us who who are not often somewhat discouraged because the time at our command is inadequate to all the demands we wish to make upon it. Our waking hours are filled with imperative duties, relentless in their sway. We are bound to others; employers, places of responsibility, work which engages our attention—we are not free to follow our bent; and if we attempt too much in our times of leisure, it is at the peril of sight or nerves or temper or health. So there comes for us a mood of discouragement, and we look out over the years that are coming with a sense of impatience, as if they were to stretch on like a long, weary day, on a long white, uninteresting road.

There are two aspects of the case which we overlook in our temporary moods of dissatisfaction with the thing that is, while we are vainly longing for the thing that is not, but which we would like to see. One of these is that drudgery *per se* is not a bad thing for anyone. The

necessity for daily plodding on, along a certain line, holds us firmly to an ideal of duty, cultivates in us a sense of responsibility, and in the end enables us to accomplish much more than we could do by sporadic effort. Good old Dr. Wayland used to tell his classes tersely that nothing could stand before days' works; and we know from observation as well as from experience that those who make solid gains in the end in any line are those who forge steadily ahead, not especially caring for moods and tenses, but performing the task of the hour within the hour to the best of their ability. No one is wise who underestimates the opportunity given for character development by the unobtrusive, ever-recurring daily task, the engagement which must be met, the place at the desk or behind the counter, or in the committee room at which one is expected, and where one quietly fills in the little space which belongs to him or her.

Apart from this, however, anyone who is really in earnest about self-improvement will not fail to find that there are many odd moments in the day which may be used to advantage, and if not neglected will give one the chance of stepping up and out into a broader sphere. We are very apt to look doubtfully at the few moments here and few minutes there during which we are detained and in which we

have nothing to do. Yet a distinguished and eminent oculist once told me that if people whose eyes are not strong would rest them for three minutes at the end of each half-hour they would find great advantage at the end of the day.

I met a friend one morning crossing a ferry. He took out of his pocket a Greek Testament, which he read with absorbed attention during the seven minutes which the boat occupied in crossing the river. Some time afterward I asked him about this, and he said that he had made it his habit for a long time to keep up his Greek, either in the Testament or the classics, by simply carrying a book and reading it in his daily trips across the ferry to and from his work.

A very busy friend, charged with the care of a large establishment, showed me some time ago a really elaborate and beautiful piece of embroidery, such a lovely piece of work as one sends down in a family as an heirloom. I said, "When do you find time for such work as this?" and she remarked, "In the morning one or two members of the family are apt to be a little tardy in coming to breakfast, and as I like to pour their coffee myself I always linger until the last one has appeared. Then I have a few moments every day in which I wait for the post-

man, for the butcher and the grocer, and while I am detained in this part of the house looking for them I simply have my embroidery, my silks, my patterns, and do a little bit each day. In the course of a few months I have something to show for my labor."

A poor mechanic, struggling under the load of small wages and a large family, once sent to me to borrow some books. Supposing that he cared only for what might be entertaining I selected something which I thought would please him, and gave it to the messenger, his little tow-headed, freckle-faced son. The next morning there came to me a very kind and polite note from the man, saying, "Dear Madam: I thank you very much for your goodness in being willing to lend me books, but as I have only odd moments in which to read I cannot spend my time on anything so light. Would you kindly send me Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, or a volume of Macaulay's *Essays*, or else some really good work of biography?" I was pleased to accede to such a request from such a source, and even though my friend has never been able to rise into a position in which his daily labor has been well rewarded, I have great gratification in knowing that his children are turning out well and that they will probably have a better vantage-ground in life than their

father, as, if they imitate his example in the care of their odd moments, there is no knowing at what point they may finally arrive.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe did not, it is true, write her great book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in odd moments, but she had so accustomed herself to working under pressure, and to carrying on her literary employment while superintending her household, baking the bread, and looking after the various affairs of her life, as the wife of a professor, that the story grew under her hand while her other work went on.

Lucy Larcom, in her story of a *New England Girlhood*, shows us the employees of Lowell factories educating themselves by diligent study in their "between times," and one need not go back to Lowell mills nor to well-known names in literature for examples of equal success in broadening one's horizon and preparing one's own path to a career.

Such a young woman as one whom I know, whose sphere of service was originally in the folding room of a publishing house, but who took pains to improve her handwriting and her arithmetic and then acquired the art of bookkeeping by study in the evenings, is an instance of the rewards which follow painstaking and faithful endeavor. A vacancy occurred in a bank, and the teacher of Miss Emily's Bible class recommended

her to fill it. She stepped from one sort of work to another without the loss of a day, and has easily kept the pace there with her fellow-clerks who are graduates of colleges. She possesses exactness, accuracy, the habit of attention, and a cheerful willingness to undertake any extra duty without complaint or air of injury. Consequently she is worth much to the institution which employs her, and in a comparatively brief time she has had two promotions with increase of salary in each case.

There is no reason why one should rest contented with a certain measure of attainment if by perseverance and thrift of time and watching for opportunity one may reach a higher altitude. Thus a girl who is already a proficient stenographer may try for greater speed, as well as entire accuracy, and her general usefulness will be augmented if she practice a careful attention to detail and cultivate a sort of economy akin to that of the bird that weaves every dainty thing she can find into the lining of her nest.

No knowledge, no scrap of information, comes amiss to the young woman whose ambition is satisfied with nothing short of excellence in her chosen department. She will discover, moreover, that it will do her no harm to take up, if not in her odd moments, yet in her occasional evenings, the study of bookkeeping, or of spell-

ing, or of rhetoric. The wider our acquaintance with branches having some relation to the one which is particularly our own the more probable it is that we shall be able to rise to places of efficiency and trust. To him who is faithful in the least there comes the open door of service where he can be faithful in much, and the successful ruler over one city shall in good time hear a voice saying to him, "Be thou ruler over ten cities."

Two young people start out in life with apparently equal equipment, and their chances of success seem so nicely balanced that one can hardly predict which will outstrip the other. Watch them as the years slip by. You discover that one remains stationary; he makes no progress; younger men pass him in the eager race of life; he grows rusty and behind the times. The other little by little climbs, each foothold being kept as it is gained, each advance making sure another in due time. His motto might be, "Without haste, and without rest," for he never seems hurried or worried or preoccupied, but no point once won is ever lost, for he is bent on making every talent serve him, and he goes on conquering success by patient well-doing. He does not lose odd moments. He is on hand when he is wanted. His pluck, diligence, and fidelity stand him in good stead.

Far be it from me in this chapter to urge on

any young man or woman that breathless and rushing sort of effort which takes no note of the need of recreation, which leaves no space for prayer, which has no margin for meditation. Odd moments are not wasted which are given to resting when one is tired, or, above all, to the cultivation of the soul's communion with God. Idleness and inertia are very different from leisure and introspection. The latter have their beautiful uses, the former are dead weights on progress.

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." This is a legend to blazon on the tablets of the mind and memory. And when you are doubtful as to the voice which speaks to you, the call which urges you to go here or go there, say to yourself, "What, were he here on earth, would Jesus do?" and pray for the right answer, and be not disobedient to the heavenly vision. For Jesus is yet present with us, as if still He tabernacled in the flesh, and if we but walk as under orders, we shall not wander from the path. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!"