

Fireside Selections.

Winter.

Now evenings come full early, mornings late;
And rest of summer's green and autumn's gold,
The disrobed earth, in helpless abject state,
Lies shivering in the cold.

Sheeted in one white waste of snow she lies,
With breasts and arteries bound by Frost's keen breath—
Lies numbed beneath the cold and cruel skies,
With numbness most like death.

And nature sits and waits, bereaved, forlorn,
Watching the days drag onward one by one;
And still the same wide snow-world night and morn
Darkens and dawns upon.

No bird in brake or field, throughout the day,
Deigns to essay a ditty ere so brief;
Save that a robin from some orchard spray
Pipes now and then for grief.

Strange, that from such stagnation as is here,
From out such seeming utter, utter dearth,
A quickening life can spring in the new year,
And all bright things have birth!

Human Life.

After awhile—a busy brain
Will rest from all its care and pain.

After awhile—Earth's rush will cease.
And a wearied heart find sweet release.

After awhile—a vanished face—
An empty seat—a vacant place.

After awhile—a man forgot—
A crumbled headstone—unknown spot.

Reading.

Let us take time for reading. It will never come if we wait to have every speck of dirt removed from every article we use. We can always find something else to do, and conscientious housekeepers, with little taste for mental pursuits, are apt to make great blunders. "The life is more than meat, and body than raiment," which means—if I may be allowed to preach a wee bit of a sermon—that you yourself, with all your immortal faculties, are of more, vastly more, importance than your house and furniture, and clothing and cookery, and these are utterly worthless if they serve as hindrances instead of helps to your individual culture. No kind of labor is degrading if done from a worthy motive, and no motive can be nobler than the womanly desire to make a pleasant home. With this end in view, with love as prompter, washing and darning and scrubbing are elevated from drudgery to a noble place. But our home cannot be attractive and profitable to our families if we ourselves are dull and harassed. Our brothers and fathers and husbands and sons need cheerful and intellectual companions at home, far more than they need nice dinners and spotless linen. It is necessary that good housekeepers should also read and reflect and listen and converse.

Stick to It.

Nine persons out of ten ignore the golden secret of content; they are constantly striving after something different from that they enjoy.

We do no deprecate enterprise, but it is the habit of constant change that we protest against—the habit of shifting from one pursuit to another.

There are thousands of almost penniless and disappointed men, picking up a precarious living at the very extremity of life, because they have, in the course of their existence, tried a hundred different things, and abandoned all in turn, simply because they did not succeed at once.

To few men it is given to do more than two things well.

There is scarcely any pursuit that, if followed out with a singleness of purpose, will not yield a rich return.

Select some useful occupation, stick to it, and success must crown your efforts at last.

Choose it now—make no delay.

Don't waste your time, and your strength, and your opportunities, by always meaning to do something—do it!

Only weakness come of indecision.

Why, some people have so accustomed themselves to this way of dawdling along from one thing

to another, that it really seems impossible for them to squarely make up their minds to anything.

They never quite know what they mean to do next, and their only pleasure seems to consist in putting things off as long as possible, and then dragging slowly through them, rather than begin anything else.

Don't live a single hour of your life without doing exactly what is to be done in it, going straight through it from beginning to end.

Work, play, study, whatever it is, take hold at once and finish it up squarely and cleanly; and then do the next thing without letting any moments drop out between.

It is wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make of a day; it's as if they picked up the moments that the dawdlers lost.

And if you ever find yourself where you have so many things pressing you that you hardly know how to begin, let me tell you a secret: take hold of the very first one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest all fall into file and follow after like a company of well-drilled soldiers; and though work may be hard to meet when it charges in a squad, it is easily vanquished when brought into line.

You may have often seen the anecdote of the man who was asked how he accomplished so much in his life.

"My father taught me," was the reply, "when I had anything to do—to go and do it."

There is the secret—the magic word "Now."

Signs of the Weather.

If the dew lies plentifully on the grass after a fair day, it is a sign of another. If not, and there is no wind, rain must follow. A red evening portends fine weather; but if it spreads too far upwards from the horizon in the evening, and especially morning, it foretells wind or rain, or both. When the sky, in rainy weather, is tinged with sea green, the rain will increase; if with deep blue, it will be showery. Against much rain, the clouds grow bigger and increase very fast, especially before thunder. When the clouds are formed like fleeces, but dense in the middle and bright towards the edge, with the sky bright, they are signs of a frost, with hail, snow or rain. If clouds form high in air, in thin, white trains, like locks of wool, they portend wind, and probably rain. When a general cloudiness covers the sky, and small black fragments of clouds fly underneath, they are a sure sign of rain, and probably it will be lasting. Two currents of clouds always portend rain; and, in summer, thunder.

A Gardener's Lesson.

Two gardeners had their crops of peas killed by the frost. One of them was very impatient under the loss, and fretted about it very much. The other went patiently to work at once to plant a new crop. After awhile the impatient, fretting man went to his neighbor. To his surprise he found another crop of peas growing finely. He wondered how this could be.

"These are what I sowed while you were fretting," said his neighbor.

"But don't you ever fret?" he asked.

"Yes, I do; but I put it off till I have repaired the mischief that has been done."

"Why, then you have no need to fret at all."

"True," said his friend, "and that's the reason I put it off.—Etc."

A good maxim for worldly men, is to be chary of offending those persons whom they observe to have good memories. Revenge is chiefly a function of good memory. You cannot expect those persons who remember well to be as forgiving as other men. Memory is a faculty which has, comparatively speaking, but little choice in the exercise of its functions. It would surprise men of feeble memories, if they could know with what clearness and intensity a long past injury or insult comes back to the mind and soul of a man of potent memory. He flushes up with anger at the remembrance as he did at the first reception of the insult or the injury. He must be a man of extraordinary sweetness of disposition if he can always continue to forgive. In short, with the majority of mankind, forgiveness is but a form of forgetfulness.

An Inspiration for the Young.

Here is a little story with a moral that should inspire every youthful reader. Study it well, and lay the lesson to heart.

A nut dropped by a squirrel fell through the opening in the middle of an old mill stone which lay upon the ground, and, being thus protected, grew into a thriving sapling that shot up through the opening. In a few years it had increased so that it filled the space and was firmly wedged to the inside of the heavy stone. Still it grew, and in a few years more, little by little, it lifted the entire weight clear from the earth, so that a man could sit beneath it. All was done by atom after atom, borne by the sap to the growing trunk.

Think of this, little man, puzzling over "long division" in arithmetic; little by little of thinking and working will take you through fractions, rule of three, and those terrible problems at the end of the book by and by; but be sure that little is not neglected.

And you, hard working lad on the farm or in the shops, look at Franklin, Watts, Morse, Field and thousands more who have lifted the weight of circumstances that would hold them down like mill-stones, and who have, by their steady perseverance, risen above their fellows, easily bearing their burdens, and keep "pegging away."

Lie Down and Rest.

Dr. Hall says the best medicine in the world, more efficient than all the potencies of the materia medica, are warmth, rest, cleanliness and pure air. Some persons make it a virtue to brave disease, to "keep up" as long as they can move a foot or crook a finger, and it sometimes succeeds; but in others the powers of life are thereby so completely exhausted that the system has lost all ability to recuperate, and slow and typhoid fever sets in, and carries the patient to a premature grave. Whenever walking or working is an effort, a warm bed and a cold room are the first indispensable steps to a sure and speedy recovery. Instinct leads all beasts and birds to quietude and rest the very moment disease or wounds assail the system.

Roses for Persia.

Sending roses to Persia seems very much like sending coals to Newcastle, but our English cousins have been doing this. The *Garden* says that the floral decorations at Buckingham Palace, during the Shah's temporary residence there, consisted almost wholly of roses, selected with a view to recall to his mind his own Persian "gardens of Gul in their bloom;" and so struck was His Majesty by the splendid display of these flowers which daily met his eyes, that he has sent an order to London for an extensive assortment of the same kinds to be dispatched immediately to Persia.

Home Courtesies.

A correspondent gives us this experience; "I am one of those whose lot in life had been to go out into an unfriendly world at an early age; and of nearly twenty families in which I made my home in the course of about nine years, there were only three that could be distinguished as happy families; and the source of trouble was not so much the lack of love, as the lack of care to manifest it." The closing words of the sentence give us the faithful alienations, of heart aches innumerable, of sad faces and gloomy home circle. "Not so much the lack of love as the lack of care to manifest it." What a world of misery is suggested by this brief remark! Not over three happy homes in twenty, and the cause so manifested and so easily remedied! Ah, in the "small, sweet courtesies of life," what power resides! In a look, a word, a tone, how much of happiness or disquietude may be communicated. Think of it, reader, and take the lesson home with you.

Gilding and Silvering Silk Thread.

In a process that has been patented in England, gold or silver leaf is rubbed on a stone with honey until reduced to a fine powder. The silk thread is soaked or boiled in a solution of chloride of zinc, and, after being washed, it is boiled in water with which the gold or silver powder has been mixed. When washed and dried, it will be found coated with a fine layer of gold or silver, which may even be polished in the usual manner.

When your pocket-book gets empty, and everybody knows it, you can put all your friends in it and it won't "bulge out" worth a cent.

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