

what others should do for them, and forget altogether what they might do for others. "Blind me with seeing tears until I see."

R. S. V. P. to kindness. No doubt it is our duty to be kind, looking for nothing again, but the kindness is strangely oppressed and chilled when no response is given. Children are taught, or used to be taught, to say "Thank you." Many people no longer children have forgotten to do it. It is a rare thing to find anyone who can say "Thank you" pleasantly and gratefully. And yet in ninety cases out of a hundred this is all that a benefactor desires. Perhaps the shyness comes half from shyness, half from pride. Gratitude is really felt, though it is not expressed. Yet what strange instances of downright thanklessness everyone comes to experience. I have known a man hand over the careful savings of careful years to save a friend in difficulty without receiving at the time, or at any time, even so much as the most formal expression of thanks. I have known cases in which great efforts were systematically and patiently made to better the lot of a fellow creature without special claim, and these efforts were resented rather than appreciated. I believe, indeed, that it needs more love in a human heart to take service graciously and gladly than to render service. And yet we should never drop from our prayers those sentences of Henry Ward Beecher: "Remember all who have ever shown us any kindness. May we never forget to be grateful." One dark feature of human life is the way in which people take for granted the kindness of those in the home with them. They ought to be if possible, more grateful for the thoughtful love that watches over their ways and anticipates their wishes in the home circle than for anything they receive outside. And yet how many have nothing to say about it till they have lost the opportunity of speaking!

R. S. V. P. in conversation; I mean in conversation where you have fair play. There are talkers who address you, to use Queen Victoria's happy phrase, as if you were a public meeting, and want no further response than a public meeting can give them. They do not even deserve what they want. But the great majority of people need response. It is not enough simply to listen, but if you are to draw out delicate natures with no great faculty of expression you must respond. Response is often to be found in a smile, in the sudden lightening of the eyes, in a tear. It may be quite sufficiently given in a "Yes," or in a "Go on," provided the words are spoken in a genuine earnestness. There is no abiding enjoyment in talking to people who do not respond, who listen and half comprehend and half forget. But how happy to find someone who really cares to know what we feel, and think! In George Macdonald's great novel, "Robert Falconer," he tells us that his hero's first love was his violin. It understood him. Whether his mood was merry or sad, it responded. One of the great things to be done for the happiness of human life is to teach people to talk, to take pains about talking, to do their best to show the best that is in them to other people. Dull country towns and villages would become more desirable as places of residence than cities if that could come to pass, for the only reason I ever saw for wishing to live in a big city is that in a big city you can gradually find a sufficient circle of congenial spirits. But everywhere there are men and women enough to support one another's social needs if only they would take the trouble. As they do not take the trouble, they soon exhaust each other's mind. Conversation, even between the most intimate, ought to be carefully prepared for; that is, each should reflect previously over what he is going to say to his friend, each should think over the probable experiences and circumstances of his friend.

R. S. V. P., once more, to the invitations of nature. Everywhere nature is saying to our dull eyes and ears, "Oh, look at me; oh, listen to me." Most of us see nothing, hear nothing. We go for our walk, and we cannot tell when we come back what flowers are out, or what were the colors of the skies. I knew an old minister who had great happiness in his later years after reading Ruskin. He said Ruskin had enabled him to discover the sky, and so his life was doubled. Our present system of education I regard, speaking generally, as maniacal, but there is no use talking about it, because it will take generations to see that it is even not quite what it should be. But why should not children be taught to know the names of flowers and trees and stones? Why should they not be taught in some measure to observe, and to repeat their observations? When a boy, I had infinite delight in Longfellow's poem "Hiawatha." It first taught me to hear the voice of the woods, to discover that nature was not the dead thing I had fancied it, but full of life and utterance.

"Up the oak tree, close behind him,
Sprang the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
In and out among the branches,
Coughed and chattered from the oak tree,
Laughed and said between his laughing,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!"

And the rabbit from his pathway
Leaped aside, and at a distance
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Half in fear and half in frolic,
Saying to the little hunter,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha."

A Plea for Home Music.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

"Play something for us, Maude."
"O, mother, don't ask me. I'm out of practice. I haven't touched the piano in a month."

"But any little simple thing will please your father, child. He likes to hear his old favorites, the tunes and variations you knew before you went away to study.

Often since we've been alone he's looked at the piano, shut up there cold and dumb, and said, 'It won't be like that when Maude comes home.'"

The young girl shrugged her shoulders irritably, a trick she had learned from her music master, and answered, positively: "I have forgotten those silly jingling things, mother, and I wouldn't play them if I could. As soon as I've gathered myself together and feel that I can do myself justice, I'll play, but not just yet."

The mother sighed. She and her husband had made many sacrifices that Maude's musical education should be complete. The cost of her lessons, of keeping her in town, of buying her the new instrument and furnishing her not only with music but with opportunities to hear great performances had been a severe tax on their resources and on their strength. Now she was acknowledged to be an accomplished musician, wonderful for an amateur, aspiring to be a professional, yet Mr. Burrows shook his gray head sorrowfully as he confided to his wife: "We never get any good from it all. Seems as if Maude doesn't get any good from it herself."

At prayer-meeting, the week after her return from a year's absence, it had happened that the pastor's wife, who usually played the hymns, was absent. The minister asked whether some one of the young ladies would not take her place for the evening, and had pointedly addressed Maude, after a pause of silence and waiting: "Will you not help us, Miss Burrows?"

Maude had declined, to the deep disappointment of the old people, to whom it appeared incomprehensible that after all her study she should not be able to render so very small a service. Fortunately, the pastor played a little himself, and was not, therefore, entirely dependent upon others, but he said to his wife later, and she agreed with him, that he thought any young woman who played at all might learn to play simple sacred melodies so that at a moment's notice, if the occasion arose, she could be of use in a gospel meeting. In this opinion the minister does not stand alone. There are many who share it with him.

A thorough musical training, with its discipline of ear and hand, its marvelous technique and its intellectual breadth need not wholly exclude the less while it gives the freedom of the large. The girl whose own refinement of taste is satisfied only with classical music may still, if she choose, give rare pleasure to a homely audience of her own people and her neighbors to whom the harmonies she prefers are an enigma to which they have no clue.

I thought of this one evening lately as I sat on a veranda, where the moths flitted about the fragrant vines, and listened to Chopin and Schumann deliciously played by a young woman, from whose slender fingers the music rippled and dipped in a golden shower. Her repertoire was wide, her attainments catholic and her memory phenomenal. And when there was a modest request from a timid, old-fashioned acquaintance for a former favorite it was not preferred in vain to Dorothy, who could dash into college songs, glide into dreamy nocturnes, play the sentimental pieces no longer in vogue and accompany a quartet or a soloist with equal facility and willingness. Such ease and grace were not uncommon at an earlier period, but as our ideals have become higher, our standards more exacting, young women have overlooked the fact that a little home music to give enjoyment to the domestic circle and to chance visitors is a charming contribution to the satisfaction of life.

"Why should we not carefully cultivate the memory for music, so that we may not be obliged always to depend upon the score," is a question for the consideration of amateurs who are not willing to carry their notes wherever they go. The musical memory is as susceptible of cultivation as the memory for history, arithmetic or spelling. And a question for parents is, "Why should not the boy as well as the girl be taught the piano, the violin or some musical instrument?" To a youth at the period when childhood passes into adolescence music is a resource; it provides agreeable occupation for leisure and is a partial defense against temptation. Then, too, the responsibility for making and keeping home the dearest and happiest place on earth is as much laid upon sons as upon daughters. The boys as well as the girls should join in making the household cheerful and attractive.—The Congregationalist.

Something to Say.

"He has something to say," was remarked by one in our hearing the other day, when speaking of her minister. The utterance made an impression, and we thought of it at once as a portion of possible grist for our Commonwealth mill. Perhaps the mental and spiritual condition indicated by the words is not so common as it ought to be, but upon its existence depends the acceptableness and the usefulness of our modern ministry. If there is something to say on the part of its representatives people will listen; if this is wanting the audience will very likely be absent. Nothing in these days can really take its place. Mere unction or anecdote or clap-trap, which is another name for cheap sensationalism, will find itself out of place when masquerading for it. In connection with the preaching of the gospel as with the presentation

of other great themes the people want to listen to those who have something to say.

In a recent editorial in the Independent we find these words, which illustrate the point we are seeking to make: "The old truth, the truth they are perfectly familiar with, they will be glad to hear if it be told in a fresh, lively, interesting way, with illustrations that are taking, in an earnest, confident, masterful manner, with an agreeable attractive elocution and out of a clearly loving heart backed by a noble character. These are the things old that Scripture tells us the preacher should bring out of his storehouse." To have something to say, therefore, it is not needful always to have something new. The great themes of the gospel have been presented throughout the centuries, but as they are taken into individual minds and become mingled with individual experience and shaped to new and individual purposes, these old themes become new. As this process obtains among the ministers of the Word, we fancy it will not be thought that they are growing old. The passing of the years will give additional weight and the fusing of these great themes in the alembic of personal experience will give them additional power. Congregations get hold of this fact sometimes, and possibly where there seems to be a lack of this appreciation of age there is the absence of this growth. We are quite positive that where there is a man who in relation to the gospel and cause of Jesus Christ has something to say that takes hold of the heart and of life which grows out of it, he will not lack for listeners. We are pleased to see recently that one of the Methodist Bishops was impetioned by the constituency of some localities to send them old ministers, and not those who were untried and inexperienced. Perhaps they had had their fill of the one and now were swinging back to what we are inclined to think should be the preference, other things being equal, of a Christian congregation. At any rate, they seemed to feel that they would more likely find the older and more experienced preacher having something to say.—The Commonwealth.

A Reverie.

BY JOSHUA DENOVAN, L. L. D.

My life is in its evening hours,
The toil, the strife, the heat are past,
Long shadows shroud the drooping flowers,
The cool calm quiet comes at last.

With backward gaze I sometimes view
The weary road I've left behind,
And sadly wish I could anew
Live o'er my life among mankind.

How should I prize (say I) the days
Of healthy, hopeful, plastic youth!
How shun the idle, vain and base,
Crush pride, curb passion, dig for truth.

Then strong with manhood's weight of brain,
Masculine spring and force of will,
Fight out my destiny again,
With loftier aim and better skill.

And make my life a grand success,
A monument both strong and fair,
Thus runs presumption to excess,
Thus build I castles in the air.

Alas! such crazy waking dreams!
Experiences, history, blot them black,
I have no faith in my best schemes,
Nor would I dare ask my life back.

No; I have sinned and failed and strayed,
And I would fail and sin again
Were not God's grip upon me laid
To guide, support, compel, restrain.

My life is in its eventide,
My friends of other days are gone,
No trumpet blows my victories wide
Am I and Failure left alone?

What's failure or success, pray tell,
Socrates met a penal doom,
The Baptist's head in prison fell,
And Paul the aged died in gloom.

And gloom, how dark, hung round the tree,
On which Jehovah's Fellow bled;
Oh what a failure seemed to be
The life of that dishonored head.

Now what is failure or success?
I dare not say till time is done;
God's will is right, this I confess,
And leave the past with Him alone.

The future vast as e'er it was,
Beyond the world's high noon is bright,
God's life in me will never pause,
Past earth's cold clouds I mount to light.

My tottering infancy is o'er,
My raw apprenticeship is past,
I soon shall stand on you bright shore
A full grown, perfect man at last.

Go back to mend my faulty life?
To purge my sins out one by one?
Back to the labor, lies and strife?
No; not one step, with these I'm done.

My back is on the age of sin,
My face is toward the golden age:
Christ's there, He smiles my welcome in,
I haste to my great heritage.

Oh, what a heritage is mine,
The destiny of Christ and me
Are one, His wealth, His joy divine
Are ever mine, whate'er they be.

My life is in its evening hours,
The toil, the strife, the heat are past,
Long shadows shroud the drooping flowers
The cool calm quiet comes at last.

—The Faithful Witness.