

..HOUSEHOLD..

Family Antagonisms.

(By Caroline Benedict Burrell, in the 'Congregationalist and Christian World'.)

(Concluded.)

In cases such as these, unless a moral issue is in question, after remonstrances have failed and time has been permitted to bring the sober second thought to headstrong young spirits, but one course is open to the parents—to yield with all the grace they may. They may be mistaken in their fears for their child, or perhaps a blunder he makes now may be a lesson for life, a blessing in disguise. At any rate the time has come for the individuality of the child to be respected and better almost anything than bitterness and alienation. Let the boy or girl go out from home without reproaches and feeling that nothing can ever alter the love of the parent.

It would seem as though when a young woman has settled down at last under her father's roof, presumably for life, there could be no further danger of antagonism, yet the deepest and most painful troubles often begin at this point. She has nothing to do—no one needs her! Her mother prefers to retain the housekeeping; she is tired of study and music; society does not claim her; she is a fifth wheel. So she broods until she grows morbid and bitter, and instead of being a blessing in the home she is a source of misery.

The cure is so simple that one would think it obvious, except that the state of things persists. All that is needed is congenial employment somewhere, preferably at a distance. Even though her mother has looked forward all the years to her daughter's companionship, and the father disapproves of women earning their own living, she still should go, and her mother should make the way plain for her. There is work for her somewhere, with pay or without; in a settlement, or in travel or in some sort of situation. She will see her home from a new standpoint once she is free from the bonds that chafed, and the day will come when she will return to it a sweeter and nobler woman, with love, not antagonism for all.

With affection and good sense it is seldom that family difficulties continue into middle life. When the strenuous age is outlived things generally settle down. Angles are softened all around; parental strictness is a thing of the past; little by little the whole circle meets on common ground. And yet sometimes this happy day never comes. The opposing mental and physical differences are too deep to be obliterated. The hard reserve bequeathed to one from some unlovely ancestor, and the morbidness that descends to another are never to be overcome. The son or daughter strikes F sharp and the parent F natural, and there is discord. Some families go down to their graves speaking different languages, and no amount of kindness on both sides can make them understand one another.

In such cases, unhappily not rare, no way is open but to accept the limitations and make the best of them. Tears and prayers only exasperate; reproaches only harden, since misfortune, not fault, is at the bottom of the difficulty. But a strong fight against permanent alienation can be tacitly decided on and philosophy, humor and a determined

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looking toward the brighter side of things may all be brought to bear on the problem. Above all—and this point is usually overlooked—it must be recognized that, underneath all coldness of manner and peculiarities, love really lies hidden, warm and glowing. There may be discord, indeed, but perhaps it is not so much that as a suspended harmony, and surely in some other world will come the blending into a perfect chord of those tones which seem now only to jar.

Religious News.

The October issue of 'The East and the West' contains an extremely interesting article, by Dr. Lavington Hart, on the present opportunity in China. 'It is needless to insist,' he writes, 'on the opportunity herein presented to the Christian educators of the West. Never before in the history of the world has there existed such a body of students. Their all but countless numbers stagger the imagination; the certainty of their overwhelming influence on the future of their own country, and, indeed, of the world, appeals strongly even to conservative stayers at home. One who has lived in their midst is struck chiefly by the unexpected readiness they have shown to bury past ideals and accept the new régime, as well as by the pathetic eagerness and patience with which they take in the new learning.'

No less an authority than Jacob Riis declares:

We in New York let our city grow up as it could, not as it should, and we woke up to find ourselves in the grasp of the slum, to find the population of 2,000,000 souls living in an environment in which all the influences made for unrighteousness and for the corruption of youth. We counted thousands of dark rooms in our basements in which no plant could grow, but in which boys and girls were left to grow into men and women, to take over, by and by, the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. That was our sin and we paid dearly for it, paid in a tuberculosis mortality of 10,000 deaths a year, half of which were due directly to the dark and airless bedrooms; paid in an indifferent citizenship that was a dead weight upon all efforts for reform for years. You could not appeal to it, for it had lost hope, and we have paid for it in treasure without end. It is a costly thing to forget your neighbors.

Some one has said that the great foes of missions are prejudice and indifference, and that ignorance is the mother of both. A returned missionary, a man of conservative judgment and extended missionary experience, a man who knew the conditions in the home Church as well as upon the foreign field, said: 'I have no hesitation in saying that the greatest single obstacle to the speedy evangelization of the world is to be found in the home Church, in the hearts of individual Christians who are prejudiced or indifferent because of

ignorance concerning the missionary movements of the day.' Many other missionaries have made practically the same reply, that the greatest obstacle is not fever in Africa; nor the acquirement of the language in China; it is not the callousness of the Hindu, or the blackness of heathenism; but it is in the hearts of individual Christians.

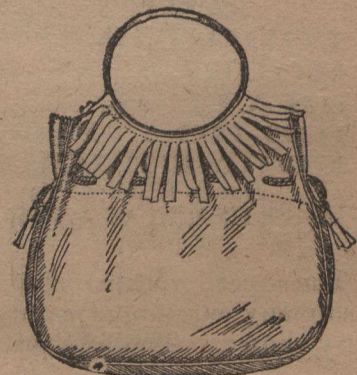
If you were to take twenty representative Christian laymen of New England not more than one could talk to you intelligently about the great missionary movements of the day; could tell you in what lands the missionary society of his own Church was at work, what are the prospects of success, and what the difficulties, unless he chanced to be a member of a missionary committee.

The Church is failing to do her duty. The hour demands an educational campaign.—S. Earl Taylor.

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