

## HOUSEHOLD.

## A Recipe For Cheerfulness.

By Annie A. Preston, in 'Christian at Work.'

That was a March day, indeed. The wind was blowing with a force that it only exerts in New England when it has the brown dead leaves of autumn to sweep away and the chill moisture of melted snow to dry out of the brown earth so that the sun's rays may penetrate and warm the hearts of all the waiting summer verdure.

'Ugh!' shivered Mrs. Blanchard. 'I don't know how anyone can help being blue. This weather is almost enough to drive one distracted. John says I remind him of the old woman who used to say that if she lived through March she knew she shouldn't freeze to death that winter.'

'Well, happily, the winter is nearly over.' 'Yes, but it is still, cold, and the fire gets the better of me, and it takes so long to kindle it, and John comes in and exclaims, because the rooms are so chilly, and he says that is the way I go to work to have so many colds, and I don't know but it is so; but I can't always be thinking to get up and fix the fire. I presume I am naturally of a melancholy disposition. I don't know. I never used to think much about it.'

'You are not quite well, I fancy, and are nervous.'

'No doubt I am somewhat nervous, but I am so constantly depressed. John says that my crying so much is one thing that keeps me sick.'

'Do you have many callers?'

'No, not very many, and when any one comes in, as you have come now, it mortifies me, because the house looks so badly. But I am so blue all the whole time I don't care how things look—unless some one drops in.'

'Don't you care for John's sake?' asked the caller, who was an elderly woman, with a kind, pleasant face and manner.

'I don't know whether he really cares much or not. He never says anything, no matter how badly the house looks, or how irregular the meals are—for the fire always goes out at meal time. It makes him down in the mouth, though, to have me so out of sorts and low spirited.'

'I don't believe much in low spirits,' said the caller. 'But if one is so afflicted, I think there is a cure. I have a recipe at home which I will send you. The children shall bring it to you on their way to school tomorrow morning, and if you follow it out carefully, you will, I am sure, find it a complete remedy. I don't think that the dear Lord wants any of his children to be unhappy.'

'How can they help it when everything goes wrong?'

'Things ought not to go wrong. God expects his children to trust in him and to do their simple duty hour by hour without looking backward with regret or forward with foreboding. There is in the bible abundant comfort for you if you will only look for it.'

'Well, the fact is, I cry so much and my eyes are so weak, I can't read, and there I am, left to my thoughts, which one can't help, you know. I dare say, now, if the truth could be known, you are as sorry for John as you can be this minute, and oh, dear me! I can't blame you!' And the young and pretty wife of a year burst out crying.

The older woman, being at a loss for words in the way of comfort, glanced out of the window, and seeing a team, exclaimed, 'There is my brother Jacob. I shall be glad to get a ride home, the wind has increased to such a gale. You must excuse me for taking such a hurried departure. I shall send the recipe over in the morning. Good-bye.'

'If you send it I presume I shall have nothing in the house to carry it out with.'

'Well, you can do your best, and when you feel able, come over and tell me how the remedy affected you.'

When good Mrs. Niles arrived home she took from her writing-desk a dainty little blank book that had been lying there for a long time. It was a thin little leaflet with a fancy cover and leaves of thick, firm ruled paper. They had happened to be giving them away at one of the large stores one day when she was in New York.

She smiled at her conceit, as she looked over her pencils, black, red, blue, yellow

and green. When she was young she had quite a local fame as a teacher of penmanship, and now she proceeded to fulfil her promise to her young neighbor. On the first page of the little book she wrote, 'A recipe for the cure of low spirits, by F. W. Faber.' Then she penciled in different colors and styles on every leaf in turn this sentiment:

'Exactness in little duties is a wonderful source of cheerfulness.'

When the book was full she tied a fresh rose-colored ribbon through the centre with loops to hang it up by, put it in a little box, tied it up neatly, and the next morning sent it by her grandchildren to her neighbor, Mrs. John Blanchard, as she had promised.

She heard nothing in particular from the young woman, and made no immediate inquiries, but two or three times not long afterward she heard by the way of the neighbors:

'John's wife is getting better, they say.' 'John's wife has actually sewed in the sleeve of that grey coat, and put on the missing buttons, too.'

Then, again, she heard, 'John's wife has got the window curtains all rolled up straight and even; it makes the outside of the house look quite respectable again, they have been askew so long.'

Next Mrs. Niles's daughter-in-law told her that John and his wife were at church; that she looked as bright as a rose; and that he seemed prouder of her than he did the first Sunday after they were married.

'Her health must be improved,' said the older woman, quietly.

'Oh, that is the mysterious part of it. She told every one that she was quite well, that Mrs. Niles had sent her a remedy that had cured her. Now what was it, please? The children said they carried over a little package for you.'

'I will tell you, dear, whenever I think you are in need of it. I am glad it took such immediate effect. I am quite anxious to see her.'

'Oh, she sent her love, and said that the very first call she made would be upon you, because she felt so grateful to you.'

The very next afternoon young Mrs. Blanchard came in bright and fresh from her walk, daintily and jauntily dressed, and with a cheerful smile on her face.

'I've got to tell you all about it,' said she, 'so I am going to take off my things, for I couldn't go through the whole story during a mere formal call. When I received your package and read the little book all through I was very angry for a few minutes. Then when I thought what you said, that I could do my best with what I had, I was still more vexed; for I really have everything to make my work easy. The house is well furnished, and John is a good provider. By that time I was cold, as usual, and when I got up to mend the fire, and found it all gone, and started to light it again, I felt grateful for the first time for my good supply of dry wood and kindlings.'

'That is what I have to use first in carrying out my recipe,' I thought, and the idea amused me. I smiled, and just then, catching a glimpse of my face in the glass, I actually looked again, to make sure it was I. Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? Then I wondered if my poor John would know me, if he saw me with a smile on my face, and I resolved to try it and see.

By this time I was quite interested in this wonderful cure, and determined to do faithfully every little thing I thought of, when I thought of it. The stove was in an untidy condition, and I was glad to have wing and brush right at hand and plenty of polish ready for use. 'The floor needs sweeping and I have a nice broom,' was the next. While I was putting the room to rights, dusting, and looking after the fire as it needed replenishing, I thought of what you said about the bible, and I took down from the shelf the one my mother gave me for everyday use, and opened it for the first time for weeks, although I profess to be a Christian, as you know. As the leaves fell apart my eyes rested on these words: 'In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.'

I put a paper weight across to keep the bible open, and went about getting dinner. At first I combed my hair and put on a collar and fresh apron, and I found everything ready at hand. I thanked God and my heart grew lighter and lighter. I set the table with a fresh cloth, browned the steak just right, mashed the mealy potatoes and fried onions because John is fond of them, and actually, when the dear fellow came in expecting to find things just as he left them after breakfast, and me huddled up in an

armchair crying, with a shawl wrapped around me to keep warm, and found instead everything in order, a good fire, a steaming dinner, and a smiling wife, he couldn't speak for a minute or two, and I didn't wonder; I nearly broke down myself. The teakettle boiled over just then and that saved me; for that was the next duty to attend to. John noticed the open bible and I pointed out the text. 'I have not been very thankful lately,' I said, 'but I have been very thankful all this morning for my pleasant home and for you, John.' 'I fear I am not much of a subject to be thankful for,' said the dear patient fellow, but I would not listen to that kind of talk. I asked him to say grace at table, for we had been neglecting it, and he was glad to do so.'

'Since that we have had devotions regularly, and I have kept busy about my work, and although I have really accomplished a good deal, I have not been much tired, for I have looked to the Lord Jesus for strength hour by hour. We began again on Sunday to go to church and Sunday-school, and we are going to the Endeavor hereafter, and, dear Mrs. Niles, I am as happy as I can be.'

'Now,' she went on presently, 'I want to ask how you knew just what I needed, and how you had the courage to prescribe for me. Someone else might have thought of the remedy without prescribing it to me.'

'I was moved by the blessed Spirit,' said Mrs. Niles. 'I firmly believe in his promptings, and I try to obey, even if at first a seemingly unpleasant duty is presented. Surely I ought to be willing to accept any suggestion affecting my duty to God or my fellows. I think Christians are often remiss in speaking in love of personal matters to each other. Our lives, especially those of women, are made up of little things, and not wholly devoid of trials in each individual case, and we should help one another. There is in the holy scriptures something to suit every need of life. If we followed their teachings closer, we should live fuller lives and move joyously along on the plane the loving Father has marked out.'

## Baby's Sleep.

Never permit baby to be wakened for any purpose whatever; it gives the little one's nerves a shock which is most injurious. After it is nursed at night, put it back into its crib and if it is well and comfortable it will soon fall asleep. It should never sleep in the bed with an older person. A brass or white enamelled crib should be selected when possible. Place the crib so that the light will not fall on the baby's face. A screen or light canopy should be provided to prevent the danger of contracting a cold from draughts; curtains cut off the supply of fresh air and, except a mosquito netting in summer, should not be used. A child, until two years old, should take a long nap in the morning and afternoon.—N. Y. Observer.

'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. God has appointed us guardians of a fountain the streams of which flow to the ends of eternity.'—W. T. Ellis.

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