

A WORD ABOUT HOME AND MARRIAGE.

By the REV. CHARLES FULLOCK, D.D., Editor of *The Fireside*, etc.

I. First a word about Home.

Young men who have gone out into the big world of business life, be sure you never forget home! Let your aim be to give joy at home, and draw home bonds tighter and tighter. Remember you are in trust with home happiness. Don't forget what a young man can do. You can make a mother's heart merry, and a "glad" father, or you can bring down grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. So live that you may often "dream that home is heaven"; so die that you may "wake and find that heaven is home."

Cultivate home affection. Nothing will grow without cultivation—except thorns and weeds. Keep up home letters and home gifts. Trifles, into which you have thrown some personal effort or handiwork, will brighten home for many a day, and bring back the "sevenfold" blessing to the filial hearts that prompted them. Perhaps swift thought reminds some of us of "failures" when you were at home. Aim now like Zacchæus, to "Restore fourfold." The Divine Friend who became his Guest shall enter your now distant dwelling-place, and though it cannot indeed be Home, hallowed memories, like visions of angels, shall still recall the old familiar spot.

I once was a guest at a house, between church services, and I happened to say I thought that at family prayers there always ought to be one petition for the increase of home love. I was startled when I saw two or three young men and women shedding manly and womanly tears. I was surprised; and it was presently explained to me that I had touched a very tender chord. It was a loving family, or they would not have been so sensitive; but "one was not," and memory did the rest. The love of home should be the pole-star of the young man's love.

II. A word about Matrimony.

I like "a congregation of one"—though matrimony implies a congregation of two—but still "two in one." If you speak really heart to heart to one, you must reach others,

Like the stone in the lake the circle widens to the shore.

I once said to a railroad worker: "I want to ask you a question you have never probably been asked before—are you a married man?" The young man looked rather astonished, but he civilly and pleasantly gave me an answer: "No, I am not, sir." "Well," I said, "I want to give you a word of advice. Remember marriage sometimes means 'married'; and my word of advice is that when you kneel down every morning—(I did not assume he was not in the habit of kneeling down; 'Charity hopeth all things,' and the spirit of judgment never opens the door of the heart)—just ask God, if you are to be married, to find you a good wife." I told him, I remember, about the good Lord Shaftesbury. When his heart was yearning for a resting-place in wedded love, a settled home, and the joys of domestic life, he formed in his mind the ideal of the wife he desired to find. Then he wrote in his diary: "I pray for her abundantly. God grant me this purest of blessings!" The prayer was fully answered—all prayers are in God's way and time—always better than ours—his ideal was found; and in after years he bore this testimony: "Often do I recollect the very words and sentiments of my entreaties to God, that He would give me a wife for my comfort, improvement and safety. He has granted to the full all that I desired, and far more than I deserved. Praised be His Holy Name!"

I advised my railway friend—are we not all friends and brethren on life's journey?—to follow Lord Shaftesbury's example. Let me advise all young men to do the same. I hope you will all be married in due time. But don't forget what Ruskin says: "A great many difficulties arise from falling in love with the wrong person." Only begin with "looking up," and you will go safely forward. A "help-meet" is what you want; and a help-meet is God's gift. He that findeth such a wife in such a way "findeth a good thing." But if a mistake is made you will have to repent at leisure. Happy the man who knows by experience the truth of Luther's words—"The utmost blessing that

God can confer on a man is the possession of a good and pious wife, with whom he may live in peace and tranquillity; to whom he may confide his whole possessions, even his life and welfare."

Whittier, the American poet, sings sweetly of such a wife:

"Flowers spring to blossom where she walks
The careful ways of duty;
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her
Are flowing curves of beauty.

"Our homes are cheerier for her sake,
Our door-yards brighter blooming,
And all about the social air
Is sweeter for her coming.

"Unspoken homilies of peace
Her daily life is preaching;
The still refreshment of the dew
Is her unconscious teaching.

"And never tenderer hand than hers
Unknits the brow of ailing;
Her garments to the sick man's ear
Have music in their trailing."

—Home Words.

"HE'S A BRICK."

Is this heading slang? Well, it is a very ancient form of slang. The meaning is given us by Plutarch in his "Life of Agesilaus, King of Sparta."

On a certain occasion an ambassador from Epirus, on a diplomatic mission, was shown by the king over his capital. The ambassador knew of the monarch's fame—knew that, though normally only King of Sparta, he was ruler of Greece—and he had looked to see massive walls rearing aloft their embattled towers for the defence of the city, but found nothing of the kind. He marvelled much at this, and spoke of it to the king. "Sire," said he, "I have visited most of the principal towns, and I find no walls reared for defence. Why is this?" "Indeed, Sir Ambassador," replied Agesilaus, "thou canst not have looked carefully. Come with me to-morrow morning and I will show you the wall of Sparta." Accordingly, on the following morning, the king led his guest out upon the plain, where his army was drawn up in full array, and, pointing proudly to the soldiers, he said: "There thou beholdest the walls of Sparta—10,000 men, and every man a brick."