



"My dear," said the gentle voice, "there is nothing whatever to say about me. I have done nothing and been nothing. Oh, no; you must find someone else. There are others far more prominent and important."

And so truly unwilling did the dear lady appear, so genuine her alarm at the thought of a printed word, that we forebore to press the request—and turned to other topics.

Yet, mothers often yield to daughters and sons and the love of partial friends; and their pleading words, "for our sakes" won shy assent from one of the best beloved, the most tenderly revered women in Toronto—Lady Galt.

It is only needful to make mention of her name, to bring before a thousand eyes the vision of one, magnetic in her sweet and gentle womanhood, who, in the late afternoon of life, sits in the western light with folded hands—yet mighty in strong sweet influences.

The magnetism of character is a marvellous thing; and the power of a woman, frail it may be to helplessness, gentle, pure and saintly, has never yet been fully gauged.

It is the mother-power, the secret of whose mystery and divinity rests only with God.

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The Galt homestead is too well known to need description; even if walls meant anything in home life. The comfortable double house of dusky white brick in its encirclement of elms, situated on Pembroke Street, has been for forty years one of the chief centres of cultured social life in Toronto; and from it have gone forth sons and daughters to enter into life's activities and break fresh fields in Canada's domain.

The history of the Galt family is not one for us to tell here. It is interwoven with the early days of the century and province, when John Galt, the English wit and writer, who with Hood and Hook, Dickens and Thackeray adorned the Twenties and Thirties, came across as Commissioner of the Canada Company to look into certain business interests, and so won upon the good-will of a certain little settlement called Slade's Mills, that it adopted and bore the name of Galt,—a name which has evidently brought all prosperity to one of the prettiest and brightest towns in Ontario.

It is sufficient for our purpose to know that Judge (now Sir Thomas) Galt, with his gentle wife, came from their pretty hill-environed namesake to make their home in Toronto forty years ago, and in the midst of

busy activities, so to rear their children, that each should go forth strong and upright citizens of British blood and Canadian freedom—worthy descendants of the genial ancestor who crossed the ocean seventy years ago.

Lady Galt was Miss Perkins, a member of



LADY GALT.

a well-known family; her mother died when she was young, and she and her sisters were brought up in strict discipline under the care of an aunt. During a portion of her childhood she was educated in a convent in Eastern Canada.

These quiet and repressive early days may in some measure account for the characteristics which have always distinguished this gentle lady—her devotion to her home, her love of retirement, and her marked spiritual womanliness.

Home duties, home loves and interests have bounded Lady Galt's life. She is not a woman of the old time entirely, since she is in touch with modern interests; her sympathy comes in quick response to all who seek it; her charity is boundless. Yet, neither is she altogether with the new; since, as she says, she has "never been on a board," and has no mission.

One of the perplexities of our modern woman,—to Lady Galt,—is how the former finds it possible to fulfil her home obligations,

and still be "on the board" of one or a score of zealous organizations.

But she holds an exalted conception of the duties of mother and wife; and her loyal interpretation of the same has left neither time nor inclination for outside shining.

Lady Galt is the mother of nine children—sons and daughters; all of whom, save one, have left the homestead, and are established through far stretches of the Dominion, from Halifax to Winnipeg.

During the days of their early childhood, Toronto was gay with the presence of the military, and the official position of Sir Thomas (then Judge) Galt necessitated a large social life; but Lady Galt never permitted her social duties to interfere with those of the home life. Her children came first always, and to them she devoted herself almost exclusively. Every evening she gathered them about her for Bible reading; day by day she instilled in them the virtues of truth and uprightness, and above all, that sense of absolute honor that is the crown of all true manhood and womanhood.

Lady Galt lived in her home;—she made it the happy place of her children's young days,—and now it is a Mecca which draws them as pilgrims from far places, to worship the mother who is their saint.

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Come away with me to the cosy old homestead, with its encirclement of budding trees. It does not matter about the 'days,' or the times and seasons; for, when afternoon creeps down the hours, we always find Lady Galt in her drawing-room.

The atmosphere enwraps us as we enter,—an atmosphere of warmth, of cheeriness and peace. Flowers are here and there—Ascension lilies sunning themselves in the western windows; a cluster of yellow daffodils perhaps, and somewhere, by their sweet odor, we know there are violets. A clear coal fire burns brightly in the open grate, and beside it sits the gentle lady we have come to see.

Life has its limitations for her now: it is many years since her eyes have permitted her to read or sew; but the dimness of her afternoon days does not prevent her from seeing through the eyes

of her friends,—who are so ready to read to her,—or those other eyes of lovely inner vision. Her sympathy is ready, her interest real in the topics we touch upon; while her beautiful charity falls like a soft, white mantle about us.

Speech grows gentle and kindly in Lady Galt's presence, since she believes the best always of all things and people. But beyond this we feel instantly the power of a sweet and holy woman's life,—one who has lived always purely and simply, and now, in the late afternoon of her day, can find only a great tenderness for all created things.

She is not left long alone. Oftentimes the laughter of children is about her,—fair grandchildren, perhaps, from Winnipeg; children of Mrs. Stuart Tupper, or those of her son who resides in Toronto. She is fond now, as always, of young people, and has a drawer of sweets reserved for the little ones; while for those of older years she has charming books.

It is a feature, in the large circle of Lady