



AROUND THE HEARTH

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"A grey eye is still and sly,
A roguish is the brown;
But in the black eye's sparkling spell
Mystery and mischief dwell."
The eye of blue is ever true;

JUST IN PASSING

SITTING behind me in the observation cabin of the boat *Princess Royal*, between Vancouver and Victoria, were two women talking. I could not help hearing the conversation, which was a friendly one, dealing with their traveling experiences, the leaving of their homes, and many little details of family life. One exclaimed, "How I love to study faces, don't you?" "Yes," the other replied, "I do; faces always attract me. There seems so much written in some countenances. Don't you think so?"

"A little extract I had once read came into my mind—'Every time we look into a face, we are gazing through a window. The external face, the form, the color, the contour, is simply the glass, and through that we see the individual. If we can see peace enthroned, with joy and content, intellect and kindly love, then are we prepared to pass our judgment as to the beauty of the face.' And so it would seem that in the expression the beauty consists, rather than the form or coloring. People do not agree as to what constitutes beauty in consequence of the varied types. There are so many really beautiful faces in the world, perfect of form and contour, aristocratic, self-possessed and intellectual. There is the piquant, saucy-faced beauty, with irregular features, yet pretty and bewitching. We have the pale face, the rich in coloring, the perfect complexion, the different colors of eyes, shading of hair, form of mouth, shape of nose; and from these details physiognomists delineate the character of the individual.

The most perfectly formed face can be spoiled by the expression. The most exquisite mouth can be disfigured by a sarcastic smile, or a scornful curl of the lip, and "whether the eye be black or blue," if it looks coldly and proudly from beneath long sweeping lashes it does not draw admiration. Faces attract and repel only as the spirit through the outward expression is revealed. The plainest face can radiate a kindly interest, a cheerful optimism, an intelligent brain; the faded eye can look out peacefully on all mankind, the unshapely mouth may show nought of discontent, or sneer. Thus far I can discriminate, study and admire, but have no faith in my own judgment further, and do not fully endorse that verse I quoted, because there are blue eyes that are not true, and grey eyes that are noble, and brown eyes that are sad; but, say, black eyes are mysterious, like great unfathomable wells, inscrutable and full of mystery.

I HAVE a fault of procrastinating in some matters, but, really, I never noticed that I had until after I took a certain trip some years ago, and we all bunched together in the Pullman—there were just eight of us—and in the twilight amused ourselves in various ways, one man undertaking to tell our peculiar qualities of character by our features. "You are apt to postpone anything, and it often needs some impetus to force you to perform certain work." He was stopped right there and told he was wrong, and I believed he was, but I kept track of myself somewhat after that, and he was right. I do put off things that I do not like doing—mending for example. It piles up, and up, and, oh, the effort to start at that pile and work to the bottom! It will never get ahead of me again, I vow, but it does.

Then there is the cleaning of the silver. Those two jobs are my bugbears in housekeeping. I leave it until some unexpected company is announced, and in the preparation for their arrival, in desperation, attack the tarnished silverware, and when it reflects credit on my efforts, and shines and sparkles, I am certain it will never be left so long again. But it is.

Now, if it is true that our countenances reveal so much of our character, and if every one had the gift of reading them, what an interesting time we would have! How anyone can correctly read a face, head or hand, is something beyond me, and is a science of which I profess utter ignorance. Do not ask me if I believe in it, for some readings strike the truth so hard, some revelations so amaze me, that I am unable to answer. There seems something very mysterious about it all, a complete stranger being able to unclasp your faults and reveal your thoughts, explain your past and foretell your future.

And how we all love to dip into the obscure, to have unfolded the closed book, and peep with inquisitive eyes into the years ahead! How can they do it, we inquire, when a person looks at our palm,

and describes our home, and our children, tells about our finances, our friends, enemies, travels, health, abilities, and what not? There are many forces in this old world we do not understand, and among them is this occult science of clairvoyancy, mental telepathy, mind-reading, what you will; but as for me I am on the outside.

MEETING old acquaintances, and discussing old times, inquiries about old friends, usually begin with, "Oh, yes; John Brown, is he there still? How is he getting along?" This "getting along" meaning usually his financial progress, but bringing in its wake many details of home and family life, their prospects, their marriages, births and deaths. And how interesting it is to see the eagerness with which people listen to old friends and neighbors, inquiring individually for each member of a family, and how they are succeeding in life. Are they still satisfied with the old conditions, or launched out and away from the associations of their early life? Have they made a name for themselves? Has life been a success?

Listening to these conversations found me sifting through my brain for a definition of what a successful life means. To accumulate money, and live on a grand scale, travel around and make a big display, does that denote success? Doesn't it count that a man toiling humbly and faithfully, living an earnest, honest life, bringing up his family to regard truth and right as their highest ideals, and yet remaining what we call a poor man; doesn't that count for a success, or must we call such a life a failure? Ask the children of a man who has gone quietly on year after year, giving them an education, preparing them for useful lives, setting an example of industry and cheerfulness, inspiring their minds with lofty thought, yet failing to pile up riches, if their father was a failure. Methinks I see the indignation flash as they tell you he was the grandest man in all the world. A success? None more so.

Years hence, ask the children of a woman whom I visited in the West, if their mother was a success. She said this to me: "There is one thing I try to impress upon my children, *not to do mean things*. I have done a few things that I deeply regret. They were not *bad*, but what one would call *small*, and somehow they stick, and every little while they crop up in my mind, and make me wish I could forget them. So I instil it into my children that it does not pay to act meanly, for the future years will bring retribution. We haven't much money, but we can be rich in ourselves, and we do have a good time, for I missed so much in my childhood that I am determined my children shall enjoy, and one is plenty of good advice," she laughingly added. Who of us but can recall some mean thing we have said or done? On the spur of the moment, under great provocation, the word or act has been committed, and remorse drives it home occasionally "lest we forget—lest we forget!"

WE attended a large church in Seattle. My friend whispered, "I am so sorry our own minister is away to-day. He is a grand orator. Some special service in Victoria has secured him for the occasion." The choir was splendid. As we settled down for the sermon, all hats were removed. There was no request made, it was the adopted ruling of the church. They were simply held in the lap, and as quietly replaced when the sermon was ended. It was so sensible that other churches might well pattern after—no noise, no fuss, a matter-of-fact proceeding, that attracted no attention, and gave unbounded satisfaction to those sitting behind wearers of large hats.

The minister was a stranger, an old man, and hence the disappointed remark. Talk of power, rhetoric, and eloquence—I could not resist it—my program furnished the paper, my friend the pencil, and I took notes, some of which I want to tell you about, and leave you to draw some conclusions. The text was, "Some cried one thing, and some another." He applied these words to the physical, mental, and spiritual necessities of our lives, to conditions educational, social and political. Some claim that vegetable growth is what makes a person strong, and prove it by the horse, because its food is of the vegetable variety. Then others try to show by the daring and courage and strength of the lion that animal food is what creates such power and vigor.

Some people have been taught as religiously as their prayers, "Early to bed, and early to rise." Others claim that to rise early, before the sun has risen to dispel the noxious miasmi of the night vapors, is to invite asthma and other diseases. There are people who cry out against denominational religion being taught in colleges, saying that

students should be allowed full scope to form their own religious beliefs, unbiased and unprejudiced. Others believe in molding young people's minds in religious matters as an important part of their education. Some say that the study of ancient languages, Greek and Latin, is a waste of time, and advise that students devote their energies to more practical knowledge; others advise just the reverse. There is one set of people who say, "Education makes the man," and another who say, "The man makes himself," that the most influential men are those who have never been inside of colleges. There is a diversity of opinion on all reform, on matters of prohibition, franchise, protective policy, free trade, and financial basis.

Then he wound up his remarks by a masterpiece of eloquence calling upon his hearers to notice the lethargy of a people who have come to a time when they wonder at nothing. "Even the birth of a nation in a day does not excite us. It is high time we awakened from our mental and spiritual slumber. We have to reach conclusions on questions of education, of constitution and government by our own intelligence. We must use the pickaxe of our own intellect to dig out of our brains, and the dynamite of our soul's convictions to search out of our own experience, the fundamental principle of things. We are independent agents, we must assert our own individuality in our investigations. Do not belong to the know-nothing party, who cannot exercise their reasoning faculties, and who do not prove by their conduct or speech that they are free agents, or even responsible beings." This is the sermon in a nutshell—draw your own inferences.

THE loss of the *Titanic* will, by the time this is published, be, to the majority of people, a subject which will have passed into history; but, as I write my page, the world is passing through a nightmare of agony and suspense unequalled by any catastrophe it has known in the form of a marine disaster. From the first intimation of the terrible calamity until the last harrowing tale from the survivors had been heard, the people of two continents, at least, lived at a tension so great as to be indescribable. There were four forms of suffering—those at sea, who lived through the horrors of that shipwreck, and who, without protection, felt the physical discomforts of cold and exposure on the open sea, and watched that queen of the ocean dive to her death, carrying their nearest and dearest down to a grave in the icy waters—a grave two miles deep.

There were the anxious relatives and personal friends of those who set sail on that ill-fated steamer, whose minds, torn by hope and anxiety, could not grope with the awfulness of the peril of their loved ones. Then the great sympathetic heart of those outside the two realms—the public at large, who watched, and read, and listened, and were awestricken at the appalling loss of life; and whose hearts were swept with waves of pity, grief, and sympathy.

Of the sixteen hundred souls who perished we draw a curtain over their suffering, and only dwell on their bravery and self-sacrifice. There are heroes buried with the *Titanic* whose names will live only in the memory of those who mourn their untimely death. There were men of unlimited usefulness, wide influence, gifted, talented, wealthy, who went down side by side with the ignorant, obscure, and unknown. Rank and money profited nothing, gained no advantage; only this was counted, that weakness held first place, and was supported by strength. Gallant, chivalrous manhood stood the test, and all ages will honor and reverence the fearless men who stood back and placed helpless women and children in the lifeboats, and faced their doom, bravely and unflinchingly.

The financial loss, enormous though it be, is as nothing compared to the loss of human life. The millions of dollars expended in perfecting what was supposed to be an unsinkable ship, the personal belongings of many wealthy and notable people on board, the treasures picked up in travel in foreign lands, the valuable papers and manuscripts of world-famed authors and journalists, representing years of study and research, the thousands of letters that will never reach their destination, the entire belongings of emigrants, and the luxurious palace itself; all went to the bottom.

What was the cause of that dreadful accident to the ship? Where shall the blame be attached? "Some cry one thing, and some another." Not all the inquiring committees, nor the conjectures, nor the censure, personal and general, that can be heaped on individuals or companies can alter the fact, nor place the fault; but it can evolve a better order of control, and sufficient lifeboats to save passengers and crew, and less desire for speedy transit. It has been a severe experience, but lessons never to be forgotten should be the outcome of this national tragedy.