

SERVICE AND THANKS.

Much of the satisfaction and happiness which we enjoy through life comes from seeing things rounded off and completed; from witnessing the fulfilment of natural cause and effect; from noticing that something which we had a right to expect has actually taken place. We all like fulfilment. A finished picture or poem, a plant in full bloom, a promise faithfully carried out, give us unfeigned pleasure, while the uncompleted effort, the broken friendship, the flowerless plant, the unfinished life, create a feeling of disappointment and pain.

Among the things which seem naturally to belong to each other, and which cannot be severed without offending our sense of unity, are service and thanks. Together they form a rounded whole, which satisfies our sense of fitness. One flows from the other as naturally as warmth from the sunlight. The trifling act of courtesy or kindness, followed by the simple "thank you" that falls so easily from the lips of the recipient, is a small thing, but a complete and finished one. The slight token of good-will on one side, and the slight acknowledgment on the other, make a perfect transaction as far as they go. From so trivial an occurrence as this up to the sacrifice of property or life for another's welfare the same law holds good. Service, whatever it may be, is worthy of thankfulness. Kindness on the one hand needs gratitude on the other to preserve the equipoise. Benevolence and appreciation fit closely into each other. Generosity has two hemispheres—one that of the cheerful giver, the other that of the grateful receiver, and one is as necessary to its perfection as the other. It is not only the one who does the service that needs the thanks; all the world feels defrauded if they are not forthcoming. Who has not felt a burning indignation on seeing the devotion of a parent to a thankless child, or the self-sacrifice of a patriot to an ungrateful and unappreciative people? Our natures revolt at it, justice condemns it and sympathy sickens at the sight.

Thanks are not, however, anything like pay for the service of kindness, of devotion, of self-sacrifice. There is no question of recompense or reward in the matter. They are but the natural result, the crowning development, the flowering out of the generous action. They finish what has been nobly begun and carried out. They assert an obligation which no material benefit can ever cancel. Who wants to be paid back for a kindness, or what wealth could ever repay a generous devotion? What we do want is the intangible emotion of gratitude that wells up in the heart and fills the sympathies and overflows in words or deeds, because it cannot be redressed. The thanks that belong to service are no formal set of words; they are the natural language of the heart; they may be expressed in a thousand ways, but they all come from the same source. Sometimes a look, a smile, a pressure of the hand, may convey them perfectly, and again the highest honours of a nation may but faintly shadow forth. Whatever else may claim reticence, then, this emotion of gratitude does not. Let us cherish the sentiment with the tenderest care, and give it the freest expression, knowing that only in this way can we bless those who have blessed us.

Yet, though service and thanks naturally belong to each other, we often find them divorced. There are many uncompleted things in the world, and this is frequently one of them. There are many persons living lives of sacrifice, who are unappreciated, mistaken and misjudged. We are all conscious at times of disappointment, when we have given up something precious to us, or performed some hard task for another, or perhaps devoted years of service to the welfare of a worthy enterprise, to find no echo of appreciation, no blossom of gratitude, no answering sentiment of sympathy. It is unnatural, incomplete, and we feel hurt and impatient. This is not altogether unreasonable. There is a great difference between doing anything *for the sake* of the thanks, or appreciation, or gratitude it ought to bring, and merely looking forward to them as a natural result which we may justly expect. A wise and loving parent gives years of effort, sacrifice, and toil for his child's welfare. He does not do it for the *sake* of filial gratitude, yet he may well feel grieved and disappointed if his child should fail to evince it. So it is impossible for any of us to feel quite happy and satisfied without the need of sympathy and thankfulness to which we are justly entitled. And yet there is a good which may grow out of this loss and incompleteness. It is a sure, though a severe test of our motives. We may be earnestly engaged in trying to benefit our child, our friend, or our city. We, perhaps, succeed in conferring upon them some great advantage. We have a right to expect that they will thank us, and hold us in their esteem. But, instead of this, we receive only coldness and indifference, and are naturally pained at the ingratitude. Now, if our motive has been chiefly to obtain the good-will, or approbation, or affection of those we have served, our failure is complete, and our efforts will cease. If, however, we have been pure and sincere in our desire to do good, the consciousness that we have succeeded in that will support us, and will send us back more heartily than ever to fresh endeavours. The plant that is not allowed to blossom often grows stronger, healthier, and fuller, and so when our natural desire for gratitude is nipped in the bud, we may find a deeper meaning to our work, and even a keener joy in its success, for its own sake, than from the most lavish praise or the most hearty gratitude.—*Philadelphia Ledger*.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

Doubtless our last article has provoked the ire of many a busy mother who believes that if she did not sew and slave from morning till night she could not keep up the respectable appearance of her family; but we believe in nine cases out of ten half the sewing would suffice if the children were plainly dressed. To us it seems really pitiful to note the amount of labour that has been expended on children's clothing; and when, as is too often the case, the material is evidently not worth the time spent in making it up, we cannot help wishing that the mothers might gain some truer ideas of domestic economy.

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not object to the little ones being prettily, or even expensively attired, if the parents are wealthy and wish to display their means in that way; but, under no circumstances should a child's clothing be elaborately made and trimmed. And although it is not fashionable to dress little girls as miniature women, it is a fashion never copied by the better classes. The English, and indeed all old-country people, invariably dress their children plainly, or at least simply. A child's dress may be covered with embroidery and yet simply and childishly made, easily laundered and likely to wear longer than many frilled and flounced dresses of poor material, thus probably costing less in the end than those which the economical mother worries over with many weary stitches. "But," says the poor mother, "it is because we cannot afford expensive material that we are obliged to put so much work upon the common stuffs to make them look decent." This is what we have heard so much of in the *Spectator* lately,—"fallacious nonsense." The more, poor material is cut up and trimmed, the poorer it looks. And do these mothers consider their time worth nothing except when spent in sewing? Would they deem it wasted if devoted to forming their children's minds instead of fashioning their garments? Ah! the sweet impressionable moments of childhood fly quickly past; and the opportunities strengthening our influence over the little ones, will soon be gone. It is now or never we must impress on their young hearts the love of all that is good and beautiful; the horror of everything low and base, and the high standards of honour, honesty and duty. If we do not form their characters they will soon be formed for us, and perhaps after a fashion far from our fancy. While we are busily stitching the fair outward garments they may be imbibing thoughts and ideas that will render them far from lovely within.

It is strange that although we are all ready to follow the fashions, no matter to what extent of folly and extravagance they may lead us, yet when the highest ladies of the land set us good examples, we are chary about imitating them. We all know how plainly and sensibly the Countess of Dufferin dressed her family, and any picture of the Princess of Wales and her children will prove that she has the good taste to attire them in the simplest of suits. Plain, inexpensive serges and linens, made in simple, girlish styles, may do for the grand-children of our Queen, but the grand-children of Canadian grocers, and butchers, and bakers, must have the latest fashions and the showiest styles. Ah, well; it is a great thing to be great—to have ancestors—to feel that our respectability does not depend on our clothes. And it is a great responsibility to feel with the Frenchman, who, being twitted about his lack of ancestors, replied "I am an ancestor." Alas! if we are our own ancestors we must struggle to prove our own greatness; and we feel that we have no other claim to greatness, we must try to prove it by our fine clothes and great show of wealth; for unfortunately, we Canadians are not a wealthy people.

Comparatively few among us may be said to have even a fair competency, and those who make most show have often least foundation for their pretensions. The women who outdressed us all at Cacouna and Murray Bay, and St. Anne's, and Point Claire a few years ago, have already retired from fashionable life. Like Jonah's gourd they sprang up suddenly and have shrunk back as suddenly to their native obscurity. And what are they the better for their few years' affluence? Their fine clothes are no longer fashionable; their pampered appetites crave the rich foods that are not forthcoming; but what benefit have they attained? None. Had they spent but a tithe of the money on good books and good deeds, but a tenth of the time in the pursuit of knowledge, how many happy thoughts and bright memories might now remain to console them for their vanished splendours. Had they always dressed and lived according to their station, they might still be able to maintain the same style. Had they stuck to their old friends they might not now be mourning the loss of the new; and best of all, had their children been reared simply and sensibly, they would not now feel the loss of luxuries which they never needed and can scarce hope to ever again attain. Let us take example by others and rear our children to love plain clothes and live on plain food, and above all to look upward and onward to the higher life. Thus we may make the present much pleasanter for ourselves, and the future full of bright possibilities for our children.

A FORGIVING BUTCHER.—Let us not rashly assume that butchers are without taste and gallantry. Mme. Hassona, playing Desdemona in Rossini's "Othello," at Moscow, made a deep impression on the audience, especially in the romance, "Assisa al Pie d'un Salice." At this point a butcher who had a long bill against her, rose from his seat, and, frantically waving his handkerchief, exclaimed: "I forgive you what you owe me!"—*The Theatre*.