



## THE RETURN.

There was a peevish clattering from the direction of the chicken coop, and a sleepy, grumbling "quack" from a duck. Hearing the sounds, Mr. Brady half rose from the chair where he sat in front of the house. Then he leaned back again, tilting it against the wall, and closed his teeth firmly over his pipe. "I'll not do it," he announced after a few puffs. "I said I'd not do it—an I won't." "Kate," I says to her—always callin' her Kate when I'm lettin' her see who's master here—"Kate," I says, "make up yer mind to this: if ye go, I'll not feed thim, not once!" "Aye, I says that to her—an—" Mr. Brady paused, took a few more puffs at his pipe, and then concluded—"an' she went."

A few years ago the Brady cabin stood in the wilderness. The city, with its noises and its lights, lay far to the south, and there were few streets near the rocky hill where the Brady pigs grunted and the Brady goats browsed and the Brady chickens cackled and the Brady children played. But the city had crept insidiously nearer until its lights flashed at the base of the hill and its noises beat about it. As Dan Brady smoked his pipe and listened to the drowsy complainings from his chicken yard, he looked far down upon long alleys hung with gold and silver blooms of light, upon tall houses, their straight sides checkered with sheets of brightness. So much glitter hurt Mr. Brady's eyes. He passed the back of his hand across his face, knocked the ashes from his pipe, restored his tilted chair to a level, and went into the house.

It was the house he and Kate—she had been "Kitty" then—entered together twenty-seven years before. There had been a lean-to kitchen added since, and the ladder by which the loft had been reached had given place to stairs leading to a plastered attic. That had been done when the girls were half grown, and Dan's wages were raised. He scowled at the stairs now and stumped over to the little walnut shelf where a clock, a blue cup and saucer, a vase, and a crucifix kept rather incongruous company.

Dan started to wind the clock. Then he stopped, stared at the shelf, and uttered one profane ejaculation. The photograph of Loretta was gone—red plush cover and all. "I didn't think that of Kate," remarked Kate's husband. "I'll advertise her: left me bed an' board—not responsible for anny debts of her contractin'—only she niver contracts anny. An' Loretta was her daughter, too—the child!"

Dan stared at the emptiness where Loretta's picture had been. Then he struggled with himself.

"I'll not let this upset me," he announced to the clock. "For twenty-seven years I've told Kate that I'd have none of her brother's family enter me house; an' for twenty-seven years they've come when they pleased—which was whiniver they was out of a job or a drawin' of tay or a pair of shoes or a house to live in. An' for twenty-seven years we've—well, we've had words over it. 'If it weren't for the children,' she's said time an' time again. 'I'd leave yer house meself, for a cold-hearted brute ye are, an' me brother Ned's little finger's worth the whole of ye'; an' 'If 'twere not for the children,' I'd answer her. 'I'd put ye out to go an' see how ye'd like livin' with yer precious brother Ned.' An' now, all the childer bein' married—or dead—he looked towards the empty space on the mantel—"we—had words again."

He wound the clock very slowly and his mind went on and on.

"Go," says I to her. "Ye've had Ned Burke's wife here while I was out—there's grounds in two teacups. An' ye've lint him money again—the change is gone from the glass sugar bowl—an' ye'll either pass me yer word to have no more to do with thim or ye'll go an' stay with them." An' she—she turns on me an' I'll go, she says; fine an' glad Ned an' his wife'll be to have me—an' fine an' glad I'll be to go. "Go, then," says I, pointin' to the dure as I'd done many's the time in twenty-seven years. But this time she wint! For Theresa was married last week, an' there were no more children to stay for. An' whin she was startin', says she to me, "Dan," says she, "ye'll feed the chickens reg'lar!" An' I—niver misdoubtin' but that she was goin' to stay, I says, fine an' glad. "Kate Brady, ye'll stay an' feed yer own chickens—or they'll starve." An' she niver called a name, but "So be it, thin," she says, an' sighs an' goes off down the path.

Mr. Brady's musings had reviewed the case with tolerable accuracy. Had it not been for Kate's ne'er-do-well of a brother and his eternally needy family, she and her husband would have dwelt in remarkable amity. Used to poverty in the land of their birth, Dan's wages here spelled prosperity for them. Dan was sober, Kate was thrifty, their sons and daughters good tempered and, except Loretta, sturdy and capable.

But always Ned Burke, for whom Dan had an inborn antagonism, and for whom Kate, fiery, obstinate, and loving, had affection that throve on her husband's opposition, had been the insurmountable bar to happiness. Scarcely a week had passed without its quarrel over Ned. There were constant mutual threats—Kate would leave, Dan would turn her out, Dan would thrash Ned, Kate would have the law on her husband, and so on, wrangling forever, spoiling the peace that love made possible otherwise.

Dan finished winding the clock, and the room was still. Then a dog barked loudly in the distance. From the roost a cock crew with loud insistence upon the dawn. The face of the clock said eleven.

"I thought she'd be back before this—the foolish woman," said Dan. "I'll wait no longer for her."

The chickens, roused by the noises, stirred and grumbled. A duck uttered a harsh call in the darkness.

"She's a heartless woman," said Mr. Brady, righteously indignant, "to be lettin' the poor, dumb things starve to death."

He walked to the door to close it, but, arrived there, stood and looked out across the dark mass of the hill to the deep valleyed, glittering streets.

"A walk'll do me good," he said, and took his hat from the nail behind the door.

Once outside, his steps had a definite aim. There was no loitering. He found his way swiftly along the rutted, rocky path. He was near the street when a shawled figure met him.

"Dan!" came a little call from the shawl.

"Kitty!" cried Dan. Then he drew himself up stiffly.

"That is Kate," he said, "were you comin' home?"

"I was comin' to see if ye'd fed the chickens," was the prompt, unfriendly retort. An' where were ye goin'?

"I was comin' to bring ye home to feed the chickens," said Dan severely.

He turned and walked by her side towards the cabin standing upon the hill crest, blocked in black against the sky.

Their lips were long unaccustomed to tender speech, and they went on awkwardly. Suddenly Kate's voice broke the stillness.

"I dunno but ye're right," she said with an elaborate indifference, "about Ellen Burke. She's been a poor wife for Ned these years."

"Oh, I dunno," replied Dan, airily; "she's had not much of a chance—nor him either, what with sickness an' one thing an' another. Ye might ask them to come home to dinner, with us after mass next Sunday. There's two of thim chickens'll be right for killin'."

"I'll niver kill wan of thim chickens, Dan," cried Kate with sudden fire. And slipping her hand into his, they went up the hill together. —*Anne O'Hagan.*

## THE QUIET HOUR.

## A Plea for Amusement.

"Am I wrong to be always so happy? This world is full of grief; Yet there is laughter of sunshine, to see the crisp green in the leaf. Daylight is ringing with song birds, and brooklets are crooning by night, And why should I make a shadow where God makes all so bright? Earth may be wicked and weary, yet cannot I help being glad. There is sunshine without and within me, and how should I mope or be sad? God would not flood me with blessings, meaning me only to pine. Amid all the bounties and beauties He pours upon me and mine: Therefore will I be grateful, and therefore will I rejoice; My heart is singing within me! Sing on, O heart and voice!"

This is a column especially devoted to religious subjects, and some of you may think the above title a little unexpected in such a connection. The old ascetic idea of making life as miserable as possible, crushing down the body in the hope that in some mysterious way the soul may be benefited, is still strong in men's minds. Our Lord has said, "Consider the lilies of the field," yet we refuse to consider the countless flowers scattered broadcast over the world, and seem to fancy that only necessary things—such as grain or potatoes—are of any real consequence. If you are talking about religion, they say, you have nothing to do with amusement. Religion may ennoble work and suffering, it may even inspire men with joy and gladness; but surely pleasure and amusement, in the ordinary sense of the words, are not religious acts. We might mix religion into a game with a sick child or into an amusing book read to an invalid; but to play baseball or tennis or lie in a hammock for an hour, reading, for our own amusement—that can hardly be done for God's glory! Can it not? Then it ought never be indulged in. Who has drawn the invisible line between things secular and things religious? If we are only religious on Sunday or when we are saying our prayers, then we are missing the best part of Christianity. It is a religion for every day and every hour. God fills all space; does He not fill all time too?

What are our orders? "Whether ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." We might call eating and drinking secular acts, but the Bible says they, and everything else, should be religious. "Whatever ye do," must include amusement, or else if we are going to be real Christians, amusements must be shut out of our lives altogether. You who are young would surely feel this to be cruel and unjust, and even impossible. It is one great evil of modern education that it is apt to grind children down until their lives have little or no play-time in them. Does God wish or command such cruelty? See the result of such a course. Deprive a child of his birthright—a reasonable amount of play—and he becomes dull and stupid, and never entirely recovers from the loss. This fact is expressed as a truism in the saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

To return to the flowers. God has filled the world with beauty and joy, as well as with useful and necessary things. Even the potatoes have their blossoming time, the corn is decorated with silk tassels, and the orchards are like fairyland every spring. The snow comes down in beautiful crystals, the leaves, even in decay, are clothed in brilliant colors. The sunset sky is beyond the power of any earthly artist to copy. Dandelions and buttercups are like golden balls scattered thickly in the lovely green grass. Birds and butterflies give pleasure both to ear and eye, the changing seasons break the monotony of life and give fresh zest to existence. How tired we should get of winter if it lasted all the year, but we thoroughly enjoy the skating, sleighing or snowshoeing when it comes as a welcome change. Surely God would not have heaped the world so full of pleasant things if He had not intended His children to enjoy them. There was only one kind of fruit in the Garden of Eden which Adam and Eve were forbidden to taste.

There was surely a good reason why our Lord worked His first miracle at a feast, providing not a necessity, but a luxury; thus sanctioning innocent pleasure. Yet to make *pastime* (note the word) the *business* of our lives is a crime. To deliberately set ourselves, year after year, to "kill time" is to murder one of the greatest gifts of God. There is so much work to be done, and we are so powerless to accomplish it all, that it is no wonder conscientious people often think it a sin to relax their efforts except for needful sleep and food. But both bodies and minds are brighter, and more able to work with a will, if a reasonable amount of relaxation and pleasant amusement is taken. To work steadily on without a holiday year after year is most exhausting, and it often results in an enforced rest by the doctor's orders.

In order to devote our very best powers of mind and body to God's service, we must not strain either too far. Our Lord said to His disciples—and, remember, the command has been written down for our learning—"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." Some kinds of amusement are more exhausting than work, and some people seem to consider that amusement is the end and aim of their lives; but an intemperate use of anything is always wrong. The abuse of pleasure does not prove that the right use of it is not valuable and necessary to the complicated

machinery of our human nature. Laughing is just as natural as crying, and far more useful and satisfactory.

One thing more: Don't be satisfied with having a good time yourself—see that other people have a chance to enjoy themselves too. Look after the elders of the family: don't let them feel that life is a treadmill, while you are doing nothing but amuse yourself. Pleasure is certainly carried too far when it is enjoyed at the expense of other people. Think how many hours of hard work are put into the doing up of your pretty summer costumes, and the preparing of your nice picnic baskets. Who does all this hot work? Does she ever have an outing or a thorough rest?

A young man told me the other day that his employer had said to him: "You look rather seedy, young fellow, so take a week's holiday, and here's the money for the week."

Do you think any employer ever lost by such thoughtful kindness? I don't. He would gain the esteem of his employees, and they would work with far more energy and goodwill, and repay him in many ways. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Some Christians stand sternly aloof from all social amusements, but the disciple must not dare to fancy himself more holy than his Master. Christ certainly did not condemn such innocent pleasures as frivolous and unworthy of a Christian. He was a willing Guest at many a feast, and says of Himself: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking." He has held up a little child as an example for all ages, and a healthy child is brimming over with gaiety and mirth. It is said of those who serve and obey God, "They shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure."

But we should be careful never to indulge in any amusement in which we dare not lift up our eyes from time to time to our Master's face, in glad remembrance of His presence. The knowledge that He is with us should increase and deepen our joy, until it may be truly said of us:

"The men who met him rounded on their heels  
And wondered after him, because his face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest of old  
Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kindled by fire from heaven, so glad was he."

HOPE.

## Recipes.

## BLACKBERRY SPONGE.

Fill an earthen bowl closely with small cubes of bread, pouring over the bread as it is fitted into place hot blackberry juice (blackberries cooked until soft, with sugar to taste, and passed through a sieve). Use all the juice the bread will absorb. Set the sponge aside in a cool place for some hours, then turn from the bowl. Serve with sugar and cream and blackberries, if liked.

## PRESERVES.

**Wild Plum.**—Gather the plums before they are fully ripe. Parboil them in water until they begin to burst. Pour off the water (using seven pints of water to five pints of plums); cook until very tender; strain, allow a pint of sugar to a pint of juice, and boil rapidly to jelly.

**Gooseberry.**—Take common wild gooseberries underripe, cover with water and cook soft. Strain and observe the above directions, using "pound for pound" of sugar.

**Red and Black Raspberries.**—Take equal quantities of each, put a few in the bottom of kettle with a tablespoonful of water, heat, and crush, add a few more, crush, and so on until all have been used. Weigh, and allow three-quarters of a pound of sugar to each pound of fruit. If a small quantity, cook twenty-five minutes, add the sugar, and cook fifteen minutes, or until a little dropped on a plate glistens and no moisture is seen round the edge. Jam requires constant watching during the process, as it burns quickly if left without stirring.

**Currant and Raspberry.**—This is made like currant and gooseberry, but with no vinegar or spice, using one part currants and two parts berries.

**Plums and Apples.**—Plums make too rich a jam if used alone. Cook in a little water; add a like quantity of stewed sour apples; rub through a sieve; allow three-quarters of a pound of sugar to one pound of mixed fruit. Cook three-quarters of an hour over a moderate fire.

**Blackberry Jam** is preferred by many if half the quantity of stewed apple is added. Use two quarts of sugar to two quarts of blackberries and one quart of apple.

## ELDERBERRY.

Pick the berries from the stems, bruise and beat them, and press out the juice. To every three pints add one pint of half-ripe grape juice. Boil ten minutes, add four pounds of granulated sugar, and boil briskly ten minutes. All jelly should be skimmed well before the sugar is added.

## SPICED GRAPE JELLY.

Crush and strain the juice from grapes that have turned but are not ripe. Use equal quantities by measure of juice and sugar. To each quart add half a teaspoonful of ground cloves and one tablespoonful of cinnamon. Boil rapidly twenty minutes, take from fire and fill glasses.