

* * The Story Page. * *

Another Point of View.

BY MARY JOANNA PORTER.

If there was one thing that Mrs. Stillman loved better than another, it was the study of history. The daughter of parents whose world was largely made by books, she had inherited from both a decided fondness for reading. From her father, especially, she had learned to delight in the records of the past.

Prompted by him she had in early girlhood travelled the dusky length of Rollins' Ancient History growing familiar with names that have been repeated for thousands of years. Later on she was entranced as she poured over the pages of Motley and Macaulay and Bancroft.

Even when she had grown old enough to take up the work of teaching, and while she labored assiduously for her pupils, and in some way found time to peruse Froide's History of England, and even acquaint herself with a considerable portion of Gibbon's elaborate and stately narrative.

Years afterward when she had become the mistress of a home, though conscientious in the performance of her duties as wife and mother, she contrived to continue the pursuit of her favorite study.

Mr. Stillman looked upon her as a marvel of learning and perseverance.

"I don't see how you do it, my dear," he would sometimes say. "You never omit anything for the comfort of either the children or myself, and yet you manage to get through those heavy volumes in some way or another. For my part, if I read the magazines and daily papers and go through a chapter of the Bible at night, it is all the reading I can do."

"Well," his better half would reply with a touch of pride in her manner, you know I resolved when we were married to spend a half hour in reading something solid every day; and when one does that it's astonishing how it counts up. I've had pretty good health you know." This she would add in a rather apologetic tone.

"Yes, but at the same time you've had a good deal to do. I call you a very busy woman."

Thus stimulated by her husband's admiration, Mrs. Stillman would turn to her book with fresh energy and continue her reading. It is true that she could not remember all the stories of the nations which had passed under her survey. Details and dates had, no doubt, in many instances passed from her memory. Yet a general picture of the whole remained and life was accordingly deepened and broadened by the wide outlook over the past.

One afternoon in the spring when our friend was in the midst of her historical half hour there was a ring at her door bell.

The maid-of-all-work was having her afternoon out, so Mrs. Stillman answered the summons herself. The caller was Mrs. Anthony, a member of the church with which the Stillmans were connected. She received a warm greeting, for with all her love of books Mrs. Stillman was by no means unsocialable.

After a little time spent in general conversation Mrs. Anthony approached the subject of the Woman's Missionary Society of the church. "It is in very good condition," she said, "but still we should be very glad to have an increased number of members and helpers. Couldn't you come to the meeting at Mrs. Brown's next week? We won't ask you to do anything the first time you come, but your presence would be an encouragement."

Mrs. Stillman searched about among the convolutions of her brain to find an answer. All the numerous demands upon her time crowded to her rescue and she presented them as a reason for refusing the invitation. Perhaps she might quite as truthfully have replied, "I am not very much interested in this matter, and therefore I do not care to attend the meeting." Yet politeness scarcely allowed of this response.

Mrs. Anthony on her part made a courteous rejoinder to what had been said, and soon after took her leave.

Yet Mrs. Stillman could not afterward enjoy her book quite as before. Most annoyingly there came to her mind a precept which had been taught her while she was a child in Sunday School. "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the ways you can, and just as long as you can."

How provoking it was to see those words dancing about between the lines on her page! They quite interrupted her reading.

In the evening, after the three children had gone to dreamland, and when quiet reigned throughout the household, Mrs. Stillman told her husband about the call she had received from Mrs. Anthony, adding: "I'm really sorry that I declined to go to meeting; she looked so disappointed; and besides, my presence might have been a little encouragement, as she said."

"My dear," replied Mr. Stillman, in his most impressive manner, "it is said to be the privilege of every wise woman to change her mind, and in this case you might

easily change yours. I advise you to attend the meeting. We ought to help where we can, you know."

The result was that Mrs. Stillman acted upon this advice and quite surprised Mrs. Anthony by her appearance in the missionary circle. She explained on entering that she had managed to make time, after all.

"So glad to see you," responded Mrs. Anthony. As the meeting proceeded, Mrs. Stillman found herself interested beyond all expectation.

One lady read an account by a missionary whose work was among the miners of the Rockies. He described his journey toward one particular camp when he passed through towns "where fortunes were made in a day and lost at a single sitting at the gaming table; where murders were common, and men still walked the street whose lives bore the stains of human blood." He told how, on his arrival, he saw two men fighting, cheered on by a crowd of onlookers; how he glanced through open saloon doors and witnessed most discouraging sights; how he saw one who had once been called a lady now lying intoxicated in the gutter, with one other making wild gestures, emphasized with oaths, at those who came near.

The narrator told how a few days later he was called to attend the sad funeral of a miner who had died in a drunken debauch, and how the opportunity was improved to preach the truth to his companions. The story followed of a successful effort to build a church in this desolate place, and of an encouraging prospect for future missionary work.

After this reading, a lady who had been attending a home missionary convention repeated some incidents which had been given by one of the speakers, relating to work among the children of the far West. She told of one and another family of little ones who were interested in what they heard through the Sunday School missionary, and became the means of enlisting their parents in the army of Christ's followers.

After this report there was the reading of a letter from the wife of a home missionary, in which she told how, amid many difficulties and privations, her husband and herself were trying to instruct the ignorant and to give help to the friendless. She also told how their hearts had been cheered by the reception of a box containing many needed comforts, and giving evidence that they were not forgotten by their friends in the East.

At the close of the meeting Mrs. Stillman said, truthfully, to Mrs. Anthony, "I have been very much interested indeed. I shall hope to come again."

In the evening, sitting down for another cosy talk with Mr. Stillman, she expressed herself in this wise:

"I went because I thought I ought to help a little, if possible, but I feel that I have received more than I gave. I have at least acquired a new interest in people who live in other parts of our own land. It seems to me that I need to get into the habit of taking a more Christian view of the present situation."

"So you think that there are other matters quite as deserving of attention as historical study?" Mr. Stillman asked this with a twinkle in his eye, for he and his wife had often discussed the question whether it is better, to read concerning the affairs of the present, or concerning the experience of the past.

It is understood that Mr. Stillman gave the preference to periodical literature rather than to that which is of more permanence. Favoring this opinion, he was quite willing to subscribe, at his wife's suggestion, for two more periodicals—one relating to foreign missions, and the other devoted to missionary work in our own country. They both became most interested readers of these, and as they frequently talked at the table of what they had been reading the children became interested too. Thus the whole family came to be more alive to affairs in the religious world, and as they did this the pulse of their spiritual life was quickened.

Mrs. Stillman gradually took up some of the work of the missionary society, and strangely enough she found that it did not interfere with her other duties. Neither did she altogether cease to read history in consequence of having obtained a clearer view of the present. As for Mrs. Anthony, she never regretted her call.—Christian Intelligencer.

Be Content.

Long, long ago a robin and a butterfly talked over their troubles one day.

"How much nicer it would be to live in a house, as men do!" said the robin.

"There's a black cloud in the sky, and I'm sure it's going to rain. I'll have to cuddle up under the leaves, and my feathers will be damp. I fear I'll take cold and lose my voice."

"I'll have to hide away, too, when it rains," said the butterfly. "Twould be a great pity if the water washed off my lovely powder, and a big shower might drown me."

Miss Butterfly was quick-witted. "Why not go to live in that house now? The window's open." And she flew in at once. The robin was more cautious. He lighted on the window-sill, and peeked around. "I don't see any place for a nest."

"Pshaw! You don't need a nest in a house," said his gay little friend. So Master Robin flew in, and perched on the first thing he found, which was a book; but he looked homesick. Miss Butterfly fluttered to a quill pen, and made believe it was a flower.

Pretty soon there were sounds, and Robin listened as hard as he could.

"O papa!" a child's voice said. "Look there! Sh-sh! Keep still. You'll scare them! What a beautiful butterfly for your collection! And, papa, mayn't I have the bird in the cage? I'd like a robin with my canary."

A man's voice answered low, "Run around outside then deary and close the window softly, so they can't get out."

Master Robin's brains were wide-awake now. He spoke quickly: "That mau's an en-ento—well, I can't say it: but he's crazy on insects, and he'll stick a pin through you, my lady. And that girl thinks she'll put me in a cage! I guess not! Let's fly!"

Out they flew, just as the little maid's hand touched the sash. They heard her cry of disappointment, as they dashed by her.

"O papa! they just went out like a flash; and they're both gone!"

But Master Robin and Miss Butterfly laughed happily to be out again in the free air. The black cloud was gone, and the warm spring sun was shining on the garden beds of crocus and hyacinth. How beautiful it was out of doors! Living in a house was not to be compared to it.

"Better be content where our Maker meant us to live," said Miss Butterfly. A wise afterthought of the highly-tightly little creature!—Sunbeam.

Teddy's Lesson.

"Come, Teddy," said Mrs. West, "it's time for the cows to come home." But Teddy was reading a story about a shipwreck, and did not want to be disturbed just then.

"O mother, wait a little while," he said. A little later Hester came to the door.

"Teddy! You ought to get the cows," she said.

"Bother the cows!" replied Teddy, crossly, and his sister went away.

Soon a man's face appeared at the window.

"Edward, the cows!" said Mr. West, and when his father spoke to him like that Teddy lost no time in obeying.

Sulkily he laid down his book, and walked through the kitchen, where his mother and sister were cooking the supper, and his father was piling up the kindling wood for morning's fire.

"I hate cows," Teddy grumbled, as he walked across the pine floor. "They're a bother, and I wish we didn't have any. I wish nobody had any. Cows are no good, anyway; just in the way. I hate cows!"

An hour later the cows were safe in the barn for the night, and Teddy was in a better humor. He was hungry, too, after the walk to the meadow and back, in the fresh, bracing air.

A fine round of beef was smoking on the table, but there was none on Teddy's plate.

"This is beef," said Mr. West. "I did not give you any because you hate cows, Teddy."

Teddy opened his mouth and then closed it again without saying a word.

"I won't give you any butter, Teddy," said Mrs. West, "because we get our butter from the cows, and you hate them so."

Hester poured out the milk for the other children, but to Teddy she gave a glass of water.

"Cows are such a bother," she said soberly. "I know you don't want any milk."

Teddy looked wistfully at the plate of creamy cheese, but it was passed to every one but him. But, worst of all, when the custards were brought in, sweet and brown in their little white cups, Teddy was passed by.

"Of course, you wouldn't eat custards, for they are made mostly of milk, and cows are no good," said Aunt Hetty.

Teddy looked as if he would cry.

"I—I haven't had anything to eat," blurted Teddy. "Just bread, without butter, and potatoes and water. I wish I hadn't said anything about those cows."

Everybody smiled then, and no one objected when Hester slyly passed to him a cup of custard.—Ellis Randall Pearce, in Youth's Companion.

Willie: "Pa, what do they make talking machines of?" His father: "The first one was made out of a rib, my son."—Life.