

The Quiet Hour

NURSING A GRIEVANCE.

As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire: so is a contentious man to kindle strife.—Prov. xxvi., 21.

"He is always looking for trouble,
No matter how bright the day;
He is always looking for something,
Or someone to get in his way.
He never can be contented
To live as a mortal should,
And let the clouds of the future
Make way for the bad or the good;
But always snarling and snapping,
At the wrongs he thinks he bears,
He makes life for all his dear ones
One long round of worry and cares.
Such a man should live on an island,
Far down in the torrid zone,
Where he could go with his trouble,
And howl by himself alone.
Let us pick out the spots of sunshine,
And let life's troubles go by,
And try to point out to others
Bright paths which before them lie."

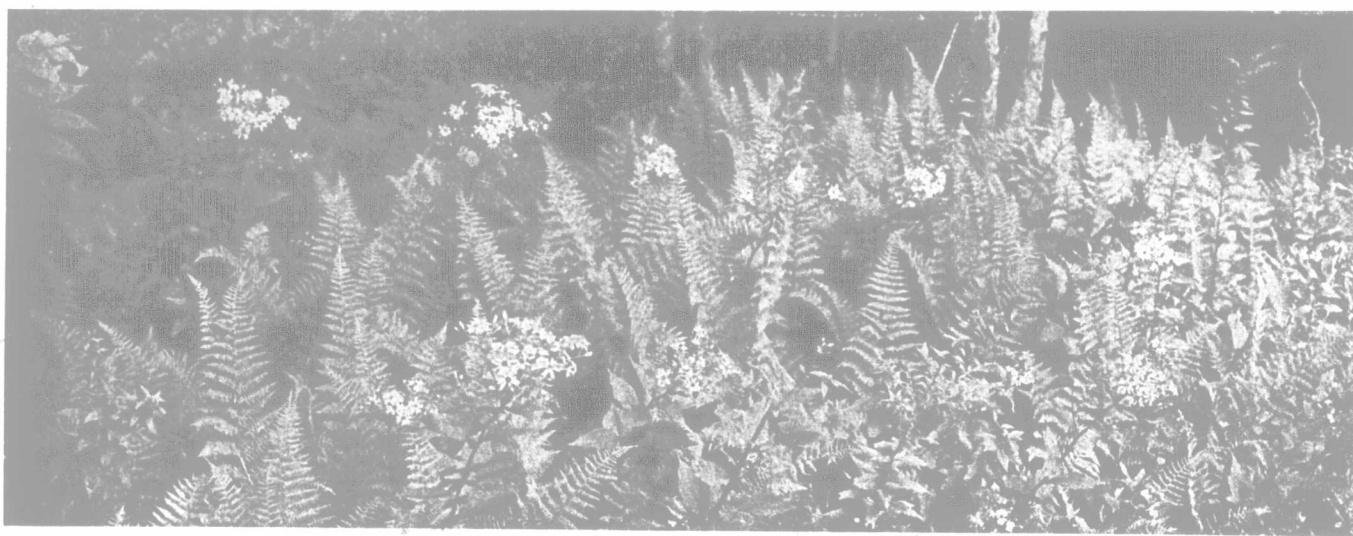
We should be very indignant if anyone accused us of being a "trouble hunter," or said we were "touchy." It is strange how we object to be called "touchy," and yet we may possibly own to being "sensitive." We are all willing to own that we are "miserable sinners," but, generally, quick to justify ourselves when accused of any particular sin, or even a fault. Of course we are not touchy, we never nurse a grievance or hunt for imaginary troubles! Why should we, when we have plenty of real ones? Still, we all know people who are splendid trouble hunters, don't we? They can see a grievance when it is quite invisible to the ordinary sight, and they never let it go until a fresh grievance or "slight" drives out the first. A few people in every community have to be carefully considered, because they are always taking offence when none is meant. They must not be carelessly passed over, or they will think themselves intentionally slighted, and will be offended. They are nearly always "cool" to somebody, although that same "somebody" may have been in high favor only yesterday. Perhaps a party has been given and no invitation came to them; perhaps they think they have been neglected in a time of sickness; perhaps they have not received as many friendly letters as they expected. Sometimes the grievance is entirely imaginary; they have accidentally been passed on the street without recognition, or see two people talking together in low tones, and feel certain they are saying something unpleasant about them. Trouble hunters take a delight in self-torture. They carefully gather up all the thorns within reach and stick them into themselves.

You may not be one of these unhappy beings who make "trouble-stalking" the business of their lives; but do you never deliberately nurse a grievance, making it grow bigger and blacker by brooding over it, and talking about it to your "dearest friend?"

I am afraid we are all ready to "fire up" at the smallest shadow of an insulting word or look—and what a lot of trouble we take to pass things on and make them worse. As our text says, our fiery temper seeks to rouse a like passion in others. When we are angry we seldom try to be peace-makers, seldom keep quiet long enough to let our anger die a natural death. No, we talk the grievance over with one neighbor after another, piling fresh fuel on the fire, and too often making

enemies out of old friends. The story of our wrong flies from mouth to mouth, growing more interesting as it is exaggerated; and it seldom fails to reach the first offender so changed in appearance that he denies it altogether, and considers that lies have been told about him. It is so easy to make a sword-thrust with the tongue that may never heal on this side of death. If we could only form the habit of carrying every grievance to the one friend who can help us to cure it. If we talked over our wrongs—real or fancied—on our knees, praying, as we are bidden, to God for the one who has injured us, good instead of harm would result. Perhaps we should cut the story short, in shame of our petty complaints about a trifle; perhaps, when we thought how patiently our Master endured shameful insults and cruel blows which were wholly undeserved, we could learn from Him to repay slights with kindly acts and words. It is very certain that real prayers for those who have been unkind to us will bring down swift blessing on ourselves as well as on them. It is certainly true that "blessings come home to roost."

We are not required to be stoical, far from it. It is not a virtue to harden one's self so as not to care about the unkindness of others. Surely our dear Lord Himself cared a great deal for



A WILDWOOD BORDER

human sympathy. Did He not look for it in Gethsemane, and look in vain? and worse than the cruel blows of the scourge must have been the denial of his friend and the treachery of a companion. The insults heaped upon Him must have cut terribly into His sensitive human soul. Yet He did not brood over His wrongs or make them worse by being bitterly resentful. No, He turned away from Himself altogether, cheering the sorrowful women, encouraging the penitent thief, praying for the hardened soldiers, planning for His desolate mother and friend, putting Himself and all His troubles confidently into His Father's hands. Oh, if we could only gain something of His wonderful unselfishness! The reason we are vexed is because self has been set up as our idol, and all our world is not willing to bow down and admire it. If we could only forget ourselves for a little while!

You may be nursing a grievance at this moment. Someone may have treated you badly, and you, in return, may be turning yourself into an iceberg whenever he comes near you—which plan will never make him repent, or make either of you particularly happy. We might as well cultivate the habit—it is a habit—of forgetting small grievances. None of us are quite angelic; the little peculiarities and failings in which we indulge are probably irritating to our friends. Still, they overlook a great deal in us, and are reasonably ready to make allowances. Surely we, in our turn, might sometimes be willing to pass over a little rudeness or unkindness, instead of reacting so hotly. It is not our business to set

everybody right or make a fuss about everything that is not to our mind. Charity may cover some sins by leaving them in the background and forgetting all about them. The truth is that we have but a small stock of that charity which is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil. We are by no means ready to bear all things, hope all things, and endure all things. It is just because we are "seeking our own" all the time, and are offended because other people don't see our importance in the same light, that we find so many thorns in our daily path. We are very "easily provoked," and are not willing to "bear" or "endure" anything, much less "all things," in the shape of insult, discourtesy, or even indifference. As for the command, "Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," it is almost entirely disregarded by most of us. Even when we take pains to be outwardly kind to one who has offended us, the action is apt to be artificial and is resented because it does not really express kindness of heart. It may be a deliberate attempt to "heap coals of fire" on an enemy's head, in the charitable hope that he may feel very uncomfortable under the treatment. Such unkindly kindness may make him vexed, but it is very unlikely to make him sorry for having wronged us. Men are always quick to detect the false ring in an action that does not spring from the heart—"His words were smoother than oil, and yet he was very sly." Let us cultivate a true and honest friendliness, in thought as well as in deed—

what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same." Surely we who profess to be servants of the Prince of Peace, aim much higher than this. If we wish to show ourselves to be "children of the Highest" we must learn to love even our enemies, must do good whenever we get the chance, like the Good Samaritan, hoping for nothing again.

HOPE.

UNTRAINED NURSES.

Obeys the physician unquestioningly. Don't talk about the patient's condition in her hearing.

Never give medicines without the advice of the doctor.

Do not talk to the patient, nor to any one else, of what she talks about when in a delirium.

Move about the room in a light, gentle way, letting your very step bespeak the cheer of your heart.

Show your confidence in the swift recovery of your patient.

Act as if it were a pleasure to do the task before you.

If you have not naturally a low, firm, pleasant voice, cultivate one. It can be done. Recoveries have been retarded by a hoarse, rasping voice or a shrill, high one that grated on the nerves of the patient.

Don't fuss and fidget about the room. Calmness, an air of knowing what you are about to do, will inspire confidence and respect in the patient.

If you are inclined to be fidgety, provide yourself with sewing or embroidery and sit quietly.

Don't talk to the patient unless her recovery is so far progressed that you are expected to entertain her.

Don't seem to be in a hurry at anything. Nothing so composes the patient as a composed nurse.

Never trust to your eye in giving medicine. Always measure accurately with a dropper or marked glass.

Never give anything inwardly or outwardly without carefully reading the label twice. Fatal mistakes have been made by nurses who

"thought" they knew.

Don't arrange your hair, work over your nails, or fuss over any part of your toilet in the presence of the patient.

Don't wear squeaky shoes, or clothing that rustles in a sick-room. Rubber heels are necessary in a sick-room. A pair of white canvas shoes, such as are worn in the summer, are nice for this purpose.

Never sit down on the bed, nor lean upon it. An inexperienced nurse will do this without dreaming of the extent to which it irritates the patient. Have a chair handy, or stoop over.

Do not touch with your hands anything the patient is to put in her mouth. In offering her a pill, place it first upon a teaspoon.

Don't taste the food as you offer it to her. Don't bring more than she can eat. And never let it stand around in the hope that she may eat it later. Every vestige of the meal must be removed as soon as the patient has finished.

Whispering must not be permitted in the sick-room. Have all talking done in low, distinct tones. And do not permit the members of the family to come in and murmur together in such a manner that the patient is made curious yet cannot hear what they say.

Husband your strength. Make every step count. When it comes time for your exercise, outing or rest—for all of these you must have—make the most of every moment, so that you can go back to the sick-room refreshed and cheerful.—Philadelphia "Bulletin."