

HOUSEHOLD.

A Mother's Soldier Boy.

(Martha L. Bardon, in the 'Union Signal.')

'I am sure that most women do not appreciate the influence they have over the children in their home.'

It was a returned volunteer (from Luzon) who spoke to me, and as I looked into the earnest young face and noticed the flash of the clear brown eyes, I felt that this boy knew whereof he spoke.

'Tell me about it,' I urged. 'I know you have something to relate that is worth hearing.'

He was silent for a few minutes, and then he began:

'Mothers can never realize how far-reaching their teachings are. Little do they know the power of some song or word of advice that flashes across the mind in after years.'

'One night, in Manila, several of us boys had planned for a "jolly lark." Of course it was against regulations, and had to be on the sly. As I was stealing to our place of meeting I passed a house and heard a woman singing, as she put her child to sleep. The song was one that my mother had often sung to us children at home, and it seemed as if mother had come to warn me. I staggered against the wall and felt myself grow weak all over. The past shone before me. Again I was a boy at home, with my two brothers. When we had gone to bed mother used to come and tuck the cover over us and kiss us good night. Then, in her chair by the table, as she knit or sewed, she would talk to us about the day's work or our studies, and give us advice, which was always followed by some good old song. Most of the time we were asleep long before the song was finished, but mother was never discouraged, and she never failed us. Dear old mother! Your words of advice were golden to us. The tangled skein of the day was all straightened out; the hard experiences were softened, and there was nothing harsh or unkind in our minds, as we wandered into dreamland. There was nothing to mar or distract us, for mother was there, and with her great love and gentle way she left only tender thoughts and happy hearts.'

He ceased speaking, and we were quiet for some time. Then I ventured, 'What about your "jolly lark?" Did you go?'

'Go!' he exclaimed. 'Go? Do you suppose I could go into something I knew to be wrong when mother seemed to be right by me? Why, I could almost hear her singing.'

'Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.'

'I have heard my mother sing those words scores of times, especially since my father died, and she had the care of us three boys.'

'What did you do?' I tearfully asked.

'I went back to my tent and got the little testament mother had slipped into my outfit, and read some of the places she had marked. See, this is one of them: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Then I sat there and thought of home and mother until all evil desires were driven away. Oh, how thankful I am for such a mother! I suppose she is plain and old-fashioned, but to me she is the queen of women.'

Tears filled his bright eyes and his face glowed with manly pride.

I asked, 'Have you written this to her?'

'No, I could not write it and make her understand how I feel.'

'But you will tell her,' I urged.

'Yes; the first night after I get home I will ask her to come and sit in my room, as she used to do, and sing, "Lead Kindly Light." Then I will tell her all about it and thank her for saving my soul. I will tell her that I will try to be a better man and prove my gratitude for all the years of toil and sacrifice she gave me, and above all for the clean, pure life, she

lived before me. Thank God, all her labor was not in vain. She planted better than she knew. God bless my mother.'

A few moments after my friend said: 'Now, good-bye, and home to mother,' and then he was gone.

While I sat there alone I thought of the many mothers who spend their evenings at the club or the theatre, leaving their children to the care of nurses or to amuse themselves as best they can. The little ones go to sleep with unkind thoughts rankling in their minds, and little hearts ache for a helping hand or a loving word to smooth out the rough places of the day. Mothers forget their duty until the little minds have become soiled by evil associates, and the life which should have been as pure and fresh as a flower is filled with knowledge that none but mothers should impart,—knowledge that comes in the form of evil suggestions and pollution, converting sacred truths into powers of darkness.

O mothers, be sympathetic, loving, true companions of your boys and girls, for the richest portion you can give them is your pure, inspiring influence.

Selected Recipes.

Ginger Snaps.—One cup molasses, one cup of sugar, one tablespoonful of ginger, one-half cup butter, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and flour enough to make stiff to roll. They can be cut in any desired shape.

Apple Fritters.—Beat yolks of two eggs, add a half pint of milk and one coffee-cupful of flour, with one teaspoonful yeast powder, mix well and grate in two large juicy apples, lastly adding the stiff whites. Serve with sugar and cinnamon.

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