

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

WORDS.

A little tender word, Wrapped in a little rhyme, Sent out upon the passing air, As seeds are scattered every-where In the sweet summer-time.

A little idle word, Breathed in an idle hour, Between two laughs that word was said, Forgotten as soon as uttered, And yet the word had power.

Away they sped, the words; Lit on a soul which gave it room, And straight began to bud and bloom In lovely word and deed.

The other careless word, Borne on an evil air, Found a rich soil and ripened fast, Its rank and poisonous growth, and cast Fresh seeds to work elsewhere.

The speakers of the words Passed by and marked, one day, The fragrant blossoms, dewy wet, The beautiful flowers thickly set In clustering array.

And neither knew his word; One smiled, and one did sigh, "How strange and sad," one said, "It is People should do such things as this; I'm glad it was not I."

And, "What a wondrous word To reach so far, so high!" The other said, "What joy 'twould be To send out words so helpfully; I wish that it were I!"

—Susan Coolidge in Congregationalist.

MRS. BROWN.

"Mrs. Brown!" I said to Jane; "I don't know any lady of that name." "I think she is the person who keeps the boarding house," replied Jane; "and she said she would only detain you a few minutes." "Very well, you may ask her to come in here," I said; but my tone was not sufficiently cordial to have been reassuring to Mrs. Brown, if she had heard me; for Jane had announced my visitor at the same time that she brought in my lunch, and the novel I was reading was interesting enough to have made me regret any visitor, particularly one in whom I felt no interest.

Mrs. Brown followed Jane into the room, and shook hands with me in such a deprecating way that I at once forgot my lunch and my book in an attempt to make her feel at ease. She was a little shabbily dressed woman, with a faded, dragged out look, but her face brightened pleasantly as she spoke.

"I must apologize for troubling you, Mrs. Harlow," she said, "but I have been appointed a collector of the ladies' missionary society, and I came to see if you would be a subscriber."

"I am sure you need make no apology," I said, "any one who undertakes the office of collecting ought to be thanked, and I am glad you came to remind me of a neglected duty. I have been here so short a time that I did not even know there was such a society."

"We do not meet in the Summer, but we like to make our collections now, so that we may have the money when we commence work again. How much shall I put you down for?"

"How much ought I to give?" "That is not for me to say," she answered; "the usual yearly subscription is a dollar."

"You are very moderate; you may put me down for ten."

Her face shone as if a ray of sunshine had touched it.

"Oh, Mrs. Harlow, you don't know how much good that will do!"

"It is a very lazy way of doing good," I answered; "I would rather give twice that than go around as you are doing."

"We can only give what we have," said she simply; "I have very little money to spare, but plenty of time."

"And yet you have that large boarding house. I should not think you would have much leisure."

"I have to plan for it, of course," she said, "but I have the afternoon now till five o'clock, and later in the week I can get a little more time."

"You make me ashamed of myself," I said; "here am I, with nothing in the world to do, spending my days in embroidery and reading. My lazy life has really troubled me since we came here, but it did not seem as if there were any work for me. The people all appear to be hard working and industrious, and I couldn't think of anything to do for them."

"It is a prosperous place," Mrs. Brown said; "I don't know of a really destitute family anywhere around here; but, Mrs. Harlow, do you think the very poor people are the only ones we can help?"

"I don't know," I answered vaguely; but as I said this, a thought struck me. Couldn't I do something to bring a look of

pleasure into this woman's tired face? I spoke with the sudden impulse.

"Mrs. Brown, won't you take lunch with me? It is all ready, you see, and you will not lose any time, for I will send you in my carriage to the other places where you are going this afternoon."

Her face expressed so much pleasure that I was ashamed of having thought regretfully even for a moment of my book. Jane brought in the necessary additions, and the tray was placed on the table between us.

"I don't know why you should be so kind," said Mrs. Brown, as she took her seat; "and you can't tell what a treat it is for me. It is the first time I have taken a meal away from my own table for five years."

She did not say this at all in a complaining way, but I could scarcely keep the tears back; her simple statement of the fact told so much, and yet I suppose I could scarcely comprehend what this woman's life had been—a struggle for the bare necessities of life through long years, uncheered by love or sympathy. What right had I to my life of luxury and ease? It was no more worthy than she, and yet I had never known what it was not to be surrounded by loving friends.

As I saw her almost childish enjoyment of everything, I began to feel how terribly selfish I had been. I had never before realized that the very sight of my home, of this room, for instance, with its dainty furnishings, might be a treat to some woman with beauty loving eyes, famished for the sight of that which was lacking in her own house.

"It is so delightful," said Mrs. Brown, "to sit down to a meal in which I don't feel any responsibility. At home I am always expecting some one to find fault with something, and I am very seldom disappointed."

"What disagreeable people they must be!"

"Why, no; it is the same with almost all boarders. The minute the people go into a boarding house they begin to expect all sorts of things that they never would think of having at home. They want to pay the lowest possible price, and then they want the best of everything—cream on their oatmeal for instance, and vegetables and fruit as soon as they come in market; but I suppose it is human nature."

"I suppose it is," I said, "but it must be very hard for you."

"It is a monotonous life, but what could I do! My husband died when we had been married only a year. I had been a teacher before I was married but I could not teach or do anything else that would take me away. My husband was a widower when I married him, with one child, a poor little crippled girl, and, of course, on her account, I had to find something to do at home; so I opened a boarding house, that last resort for poor, forlorn women."

She said all this as cheerfully as I would have talked of going to the seaside; but it sounded so utterly pathetic that I could find no words to answer her. She went on:

"The greatest trial I have is that I can do so little good; and yet I don't envy you your opportunities, for your responsibilities are so much greater than mine."

"You make me feel humiliated," I said sadly; "I never realized that I had any special opportunities, and I don't think in all my life I have ever done anything for anybody that cost me any self-sacrifice."

"Then I am very sorry for you," she said, "and I wouldn't change places for all your wealth."

No one had ever spoken so to me before. I had been puffed and flattered; I had been called liberal because I gave freely of my money, which had cost me no trouble to gain; but I had never had any one to show me the pleasure and joy of a self-sacrificing life.

"Won't you have some more chocolate?" I said, feeling as if I ministering to this plain woman I was ministering to one of God's chosen ones; and then I asked, humbly, "What can I do? I call myself a Christian, and have always fancied I lived as a Christian should, but you have made me feel as if all my life had been wasted."

"I should think in a life as full and rich as yours there would be so much that you could make most of your days thank offerings to the Lord. Why, before you get to the sacrifices there are so many things that would be nothing for

you to do, and yet would give so much pleasure to other people. There are your horses and carriages, and your fruit, and your flowers, and your dainty dishes, that most people have neither time nor skill to prepare. My dear Mrs. Harlow, I can not tell what your duties are; I can only see what is on the surface. The real work that the love of Christ ought to impel you to do, that, you must find for yourself.

"Can you give me the name of some one in the village to whom I could begin to minister?" I said. "You know I am such a stranger here, and one can not send even flowers promiscuously."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Brown; "I can give you the names of a dozen."

So I took pencil and paper and wrote them down as she told them to me, and as soon as she had started on her errand of charity again, I commenced my new labors.

They did not prove to be so easy by any means. It was no trouble to send flowers to old Mrs. Bush, who was a helper; an invalid; but when the servant who had taken them finally brought back a request that I would go and see her—that was hard; and good Mrs. Brown, in her utter unselfishness, never dreamed what a cross it was to go to some of the places where she took me—to homes where sickness and death had brought their shadow. One thing led to many others so that I had no more idle mornings to spend in embroidery and reading novels; there was always some one who needed something. There was a sick child whom I could take out riding, or an older person to whom I could go and read; there were baskets of dainties needed somewhere, or there were bouquets to be made, or there was some one to whom it would be a treat to come and spend a week in my home.

There were so many things to be done that the days seemed only too short for the doing of them. It must be confessed that I longed sometimes for the flesh-pots of Egypt. I thought regretfully of the old weeks and months that I had spent in idle content; but every day made these longings less, for I grew to feel more and more what I had not previously comprehended: the real joy that there is in a life lived not for self; and this joy grows fuller every year, as it must as one grows in the knowledge that life is valuable only as it is lived for the sake of Christ; that one's time and talents and wealth and opportunities are to be used always for him until the earthly life is ended and the heavenly entered upon in the presence of the King.

LUTHER RELICS.

The "Castle Church," which is called "the Cradle of the Reformation" was erected in 1499, but the original building exists no more. In 1760 during the Seven Years' War, Wittenberg was besieged by the Austrians, and during the bombardment the church and a large part of the city were destroyed by fire. In 1770 the present building was erected on the old walls by order of Frederick the Great. The old wooden doors, destroyed in 1760, on which Luther had nailed the theses, were replaced in 1857 by Frederick William IV. by double bronze doors, ten feet high, bearing in Gothic characters the original Latin text of the ninety-five theses. In the interior of the church the most interesting object is naturally the bronze slab marking the Reformer's grave.

The old Augustine monastery in which Luther passed so many years of his life, even after renouncing his monkdom, stands in the Collegienstrasse, and was erected over 500 years ago. The Luther-house, which forms part of the ancient building, is reached by crossing the court. It was presented to the Reformer in 1526 by the Elector John, and has been restored lately. Its front is decorated with Luther's portrait, and the inscription, "Hier lebte und wirkte Dr. Martin Luther, 1508, bis 46." The sandstone doorway, which was a present from his wife Catherine in 1540, bears on the right Luther's escutcheon and on the left his bust with the inscription, "Eratie sue 57. In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra." The chief point of interest in the house, which now forms a Luther museum, is the Reformer's study and day-room.

In a small antechamber some interesting relics are preserved in glass cases. Luther's best goblet of boxwood, hand embroideries by Frau Catherine, and the fragments

of a drinking-glass, thrown down and broken by Peter the Great during his visit to Wittenberg on being refused its possession. The great Czar also commemorated his presence by writing his name with chalk on the door, and this imperial autograph has been preserved for two centuries by being covered with glass. Luther's study remains unchanged in its original condition; the huge stove of covered tiles, built after Luther's own design, the great sliding table, the window benches, the carved ceiling, all remain as if the proprietor had just stepped out. Other rooms in the house contain a great number of Luther's relics; his betrothal and wedding rings; his excellent portrait by the elder Kranach, the first specimens of Luther's Bible in German, printed by Luft, at Wittenberg, medals and pamphlets of the Reformation, etc. Unfortunately, this interesting collection remains without a descriptive catalogue.

"WHY CAST DOWN?"

What is it ails thee, heart? why dost thou weep? All my sweet hopes are withered and strewn, Sweetest communion we ofttime did keep, Now they have left me, and I am alone.

Barren the earth appears, gazing around, Barren the heavens seem, gazing above, Dead is the music that joyed me with sound, Silent forever the whispers of love.

Hast thou forgotten, heart? God is not dead! Glorious and dark though the present appear, But from the present thou soon shalt be led Into a daylight unspcakably clear.

Over thee, under thee, close at thy side, Never a moment He leaves or forsakes; Trust Him, abide in Him, leave Him to guide, Follow the way that in wisdom He takes.

Waker, or dreamer, or what am I now? Oceans of loveliness—oceans of light! Heaven itself to my vision doth bow, Glory on glory unfolds to my sight.

Why so disquieted? why so cast down? Hope thou in Him whom thou shortly shalt praise, Soon shall the cross be forgot in the crown, Darkness be lost in Eternity's days.

—Wade Robinson.

WHAT A LITTLE BOOK DID.

Mr. S. A. Blackwood relates an instance in which a word made efficacious to the saving of a soul.

He was travelling on the top of a coach from London to Croydon, and after discussing the topics of the day with one who sat beside him, he turned the conversation to the things of heaven, to the disgust of another passenger sitting near, who talked of "sitting hypocrites," etc., and when the coach stopped left his seat. In descending the pocket of his coat opened, and Mr. Blackwood dropped in the little book entitled "Eternal Life." When the gentleman reached home and emptied his pockets he found, amongst other things, a small book that he knew nothing of, and reading its title, he at once guessed who put it there, and in his rage he tore it to pieces, and threw it inside the fender; when he returned from town the next day his ire was increased by finding the pieces on his toilet table. He immediately rang the bell, and asked the servant, "Why they had not been destroyed?" And when she replied that in gathering them up she had seen the word "eternity" and did not like to burn them, she in anger was ordered from his presence. When the servant had gone he began to look for the word that had so arrested her attention, and then he sought to connect sentences by strips of paper that one buys around stamps, and managed in this way to fasten the book together, and became converted by reading it.

One day when Mr. Blackwood was walking in Cheap-side he was startled by the exclamation, "You are the man!" and a ragged book was held up to his astonished gaze. He disclaimed all knowledge of that particular book, and was then informed of the circumstances related above and of the spiritual change in the heart of the gentleman that had taken place by means of it.—Brit. Evangelist.

AN EXCELLENT THING IN WOMAN.

"I remember," said a well-known writer "the first 'queen of society' that I met. She was a Scotch woman who married an American while he was in Europe. Rumors came before her to his home of her brilliant success in London society and in the Austrian Court, where her brother held a diplomatic position; and when she arrived with her husband the society of the little city where he lived was soon at her feet.

"I was a child of twelve, visiting in a country house near the town.

"One morning some one said, 'There comes Madame L.' I ran to the window to see coming through the trees a stout, freckled, red-haired woman without a single agreeable feature in her face.

"I was amazed and disgusted. But when she came in and talked to me I sat breathless under a charm never felt in my life before. I was her slave from that moment. Her fascination was wholly in her voice. It was low, clear, musical. The woman's nature was expressed in it—unpretentious, keenly sympathetic, but, above all, genuine. It was her one power, but it was irresistible."

The charm of a sincere, sweet voice never fails to influence us, though we are often unconscious as to what it is that has touched us. Madame de Maintenon is said to have maintained her power over Louis XIV. when she was old and ugly by her strong sense and exquisite voice.

It is strange that while young people are so careful to improve every advantage which nature has given them to make themselves attractive, they neglect this, probably the most powerful of all. Voices, it is true, differ naturally in sweetness and range of tone, but they may be trained as thoroughly in speaking as in singing. The first aim should be to rid the voice of all affectation. It may be hopelessly harsh and unmusical; but it can always be made clear and natural; your own, not a lisping imitation of that of some other person.

Be careful, too, to speak from the throat and not through the nose. A high nasal tone betrays an uneducated American all over the world. A throat-voice is easily controlled and subdued to the quiet, distinct tones used by well-bred people.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

GOOD COMPANY.

"'I'll try' is a soldier, 'I will' is a king; Be sure they are used When the school bells ring.

When school-days are over, And boys are men, 'I'll try' and 'I will' Are good friends then.

A NEW KIND OF HAPPINESS.

Many boys have tender consciences and a great reverence for religion, but shrink from becoming Christians lest the change may make them sober and sedate like men, and take away their boyish cheerfulness and love of sports. They forget that if a great joy fills the heart from peace with God and the forgiveness of sins, this joy will make all life pleasanter to them in study and work and play. Dr. Nehemiah Adams, long settled as pastor in Boston, gives an account of a boy who became a Christian without quite knowing what the change meant, or why he felt so happy. Dr. Adams says: "A lad was on his way from school, with other lads in playful conversation. When he entered his home, he laid down his books in the entry, went to his chamber, locked the door, kneeled down, and heedless whether anyone was in the room adjoining, prayed in childlike language nearly as follows: 'O God, my heavenly father, I have come to pray to thee. I don't want anything in particular; but I love thee. I have come just to say that I do not know what has made me feel as I have felt this forenoon, but I haven't been able to think of much beside God. I never loved anything so. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. Yes, there is one thing I do desire, and that is, that all scholars may feel so toward thee.' After a few words more, he joined his brothers and sisters in their play."

This boy was happier than ever before in his life. He didn't know the reason, but it was because he had come to love God, and that made him love parents and brothers and sisters and schoolmates better, and all beautiful things in nature better. He was much happier than his schoolmates who did not love God, and this new joy entered into his talk and play, and attracted their notice. Religion helps children to better study and more faithful work. A little girl of twelve was telling, in a simple way, the evidence that she was a Christian: "I did not like to study, but to play. I was idle at school, and often missed my lessons. Now I try to learn every lesson well to please God. I was mischievous at school when the teachers were

not looking at me; making fun for the scholars to laugh at. Now I wish to please God by behaving well and keeping the school laws. I was selfish at home; didn't like to run errands, and was sulky when mother called me from play to help her in work. Now it is a real joy for me to help mother in any way, and to show that I love her." Such a religion is essential to the best interests and moral growth of youth, and will make life sunny and cheerful.—Youth's Companion.

A GREAT NATURALIST.

A good story is told of Agassiz, the great naturalist. His father destined him for a commercial life, and was impatient at his devotion to frogs, snakes and fishes. His vacations he spent in making journeys on foot through Europe, examining the different species of fresh-water fishes. He came to London with letters of introduction to Sir Roderick Murchison. "You have been studying nature," said the great man bluntly. "What have you learned?" The lad was timid, not sure at that moment that he had learned anything. "I think," he said at last, "I know a little about fishes."

"Very well. There will be a meeting of the Royal Society to-night. I will take you with me there." All of the great scientific savants of England belonged to this Society. That evening, toward its close, Sir Roderick rose and said: "I have a young friend here from Switzerland, who thinks he knows something about fishes; how much I have a fancy to try. There is under this cloth a perfect skeleton of a fish which existed long before man." He then gave the precise locality in which it had been found, with one or two other facts concerning it. The species to which the specimen belonged was of course extinct. "Can you sketch for me on that blackboard your idea of this fish?" said Sir Roderick. Agassiz took up the chalk, hesitated a moment, and then sketched rapidly a skeleton fish. Sir Roderick held up the specimen. The portrait was correct in every bone and line. The grave old doctors burst into loud applause. "Sir," Agassiz said, on telling the story, "that was the proudest moment of my life—no, the happiest; for I knew now my father would consent that I should give my life to science."

THE SECRET.

A kind Christian lady, in one of her visits, found a poor, destitute little orphan girl, and brought her to her own home. The little stranger at first would take no comfort, but sat down weeping in the lobby. The children of the house endeavored to make friends with her and draw her into the parlor, but they could not; and so they said to their mother, "She will not come and play with us. She will not leave the lobby."

"There is a secret," said the lady, "by which you can bring her where you like. It is a secret in four letters. Try if you can find it out."

The eldest girl, taking the lead, searched eagerly amongst all her prettiest playthings. "I know what it is," she cried; "it is D-o-l-l." So she brought her best doll, and offered to give it to the child if she would come into the parlor. No, it was a failure.

The next in age said to herself, "Muff is spelt with four letters," and brought her a fine muff—a Christmas present; but she would not touch the muff, or even look at it.

Grace, the youngest, could think of nothing worth offering after this, but stood looking on in sorrow; until at length, following an instinct of her own, she sat down beside the little stranger and cried too. Then presently she took her by the hand, and putting her little arm around her neck, she drew the weeping one softly nearer and nearer, and gave her a kiss upon her cheek. This decided the matter. There was nothing said; but Grace soon led the way into the parlor, holding her captive by the hand.

"Well, girls," said the mother, "Gracie has found out the secret, and the four letters are L-O-V-E. Love is the strongest rope in the world."

Ah, yes, love is a great power. It draws all things to itself. It brought the Son of God down to earth to die, so that He might go back to heaven to intercede for us. It draws him down again to dwell with us in our hearts. And by it he draws us from sin to God.