

HOUSEHOLD.

The True Luxuries of Life.

(By Andrew Carnegie.)

Did you ever sum up these prizes, and think how very little the millionaire has beyond the peasant, and how very often his additions tend not to happiness but to misery? What constitutes the choice food of the world? Plain beef, common vegetables, and bread, and—the best of all fruits—the apple—the only nectar bubbles from the brook, without money and without price. All that our race eats or drinks beyond this range must be inferior, if not positively injurious. Dress—what man, or rather what woman, wears—is less and less comfortable in proportion to its frills and its cost, and no jewel is so refined as the simple flower in the hair, which the village maid has for the plucking. All that women overload themselves with beyond this range is a source of unhappiness. To be the most simply attired is to be the most elegantly dressed. So much for true health and happiness in all that we eat and drink, and wear.

If we extend the inquiry to the luxuries and adornments of life, is there any music—which, of course, comes first—comparable in grandeur to that of the wave, stirring the soul with its mighty organ tones as it breaks upon the beach, or any so exquisitely fine as that of the murmuring brook which sings its song for ever to every listener upon its banks, while, above, birds warble and the zephyr plays its divine accompaniment among the trees?

We spend fortunes for picture galleries; but what are the tiny painted copies compared to the great originals—the mountains, the glens, the streams and waterfalls, the fertile fields, the breezy downs, the silver sea? These are the gems of the universal gallery, the common heritage of man, the property of the humblest who has eyes to see, and as free as the air we breathe.

We have our conservatories and spend our thousands upon orchids; but which of Nature's smiles ranks with the rose and the mignonette, the daisy and the bluebell, and the sweet forget-me-not blooming for all earth's children, and which grow upon the window-sill of the artisan, and which the laborer blesses at his cottage door?

If we go higher still in the scale, we find that the companionship of the gods is not denied to the steady, wage-receiving man, for Shakespeare, and our Burns, and our Scott can be had for sixpence per volume. In this blessed age in which we are privileged to live, even the immortals are cheap, and visit

the toiler. We see the rich rolling over the land in their carriages; but blessed beyond these is the man who strolls along the hedgerows. The connoisseur in his gallery misses the health-giving breeze which brings happiness to the devotee who seeks the original afield. The rich are not to be envied, for truly 'there is no purchase in money' of any real happiness. When used for our own gratification, it injures us; when used ostentatiously, it brings care; when hoarded, it narrows the soul. There is only one source of true blessedness in wealth, and that comes from giving it away for ends that tend to elevate our brothers, and enable them to share it with us. The secret of happiness is renunciation.

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