

The Home Circle.

IN THE VALLEY.

Not for me the precious flowers,
They but bring me thoughts of gloom,
Sorrowful rebukes are whispered,
Tenderly, in their perfume.

All their pure and lovely colors,
Only fill my eyes with tears,
Mocking the sad soul so darkened
By the gathering sins of years.

Let the little children take them—
Gentle, joyous, free from stain—
I may wear the blessed lilies
When I am a child again.

Not for me the solemn music
Soaring with the holy psalm,
Soaring till it reaches heaven
Bringing back the heavenly calm.

How may I, remorseful, listen,
To the voices sweet and grand,
While they have no loving echoes
From my spirit's cheerless land?

For, unscen by human vision,
I am wandering alone,
In a dark and desert valley
Stumbling over weed and stone.

Never trill of summer songster
Ripples on the gloomy air,
Never tiny, smiling blossom
Bids me lay aside my care.

Not a rose in all the desert
Swings its censur full and sweet,
Never cool and plashing fountain
Laves the sore and tired feet.

Only little stars are shining,
Drifting parted clouds amid,
Telling me that God's great mercy
Never can be wholly hid.

And, if ever joyful, ransomed,
Out from all the barren scene,
Walks my spirit blest, deserving,
Into meadows fair and green.

Then may all these earth born blossoms
Look at me in glad surprise,
With no sad reproach or warning
In their clear and happy eyes.

THE FIGHT AT THE WOOD-PILE.

One night at a late hour Dr. Bently, well known among the clergy of olden times, was disturbed at his studies by a rattling sound among some wood which, sawed and split for his study fire, had been left by the teamsters the afternoon previous, too late to be properly housed. He rose, went cautiously to the window, and saw a woman filling her apron with wood, which she hastily carried away. He resumed his seat and recommenced his study. Shortly after the same noise occurred, and on looking out the second time he saw a similar operation, the woman filling her apron to its utmost capacity. When she had gone he returned to his book with a tender pity in his heart for a destitution which sought relief in this lonely, dreary, not to say sinful manner. By and by he was startled by a crash of falling wood, and hurrying to the window, beheld the poor woman casting the very dust of the wood from her apron. He remained motionless, his gentle heart filled with commiseration.

She swiftly departed and soon returned heavily laden with wood, which she threw on the pile as if it were indeed "the accursed thing." The doctor's compassion and curiosity were now intensely excited. He followed her retreating figure till he discovered her residence, and thus ascertained who she was. What she was, was no mystery to him. The last hour had plainly shown him her virtue's lofty height.

He called early the next morning on Mr. B., the wood-dealer, and directed him to send a half cord of his best wood, sawed and split, to Mrs. —, but by no means to let her know from whom it came, which was readily promised. Mr. B.'s teamster, who happened to be within ear-shot, though out of sight, was not so bound, and when he tipped the wood into the poor widow's yard, replied to her eager inquiry who sent it, by relating the conversation he had overheard.

The conscience-stricken woman, feeling that her sin and her repentance in the lonely darkness of the midnight hour were known and understood by another heart besides her own, hastened without delay to the house of the benevolent man to express her gratitude and her sorrow, and with deep humility and bitterness told him the temptation to which her extreme poverty had reduced her of breaking the eighth commandment.

"Sir," she said "though my house was dark and cold, though my heart was wrung with anguish at the sight of my poor shivering little one, I could not keep it! I could not keep it! My conscience would not let me!"

"Say no more, my dear madam," said the good man. "I saw it all—I saw you conquer the devil in two fair fights."

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HOMEKEEPING VS. HOUSEKEEPING.

The trust homes are often in houses not especially well kept, where the comfort and happiness of the inmates, rather than the preservation of the furniture, is first consulted. The object of home is to be the center, the point of tenderest interest, the pivot on which family life turns. The first requisite is to make it attractive, so attractive that none of its inmates shall care to linger long outside of its limits. All legitimate means should be employed to this end, and no effort spared that can contribute to the purpose. Many houses called homes, kept with waxy neatness by painstaking, anxious women, are so oppressive in their nicety as to exclude all home-feeling from their spotless precincts. The very name of home is synonymous with personal freedom and relaxation from care. But neither of these can be felt where such a mania for external cleanliness pervades the household as to render everything else subservient thereto. Many housewives, if they see a speck on floor or wall, or even a scrap of thread or bit of paper on the floor, rush at it as if it were the seed of pestilence which must be removed on the instant. Their temper depends upon their maintenance of perfect purity and order. If there be any failure on their part, or any combination of circumstances against them, they fall into a pathetic despair, and can hardly be lifted out. They do not see that cheerfulness is more needful to home than all the spotlessness that ever shone. Their disposition to wage war upon maculateness of any sort increases until they become slaves of the broom and dust-pan. Neatness is one thing, and a state of perpetual house-cleaning quite another.

Out of this grows by degrees the feeling that certain things and apartments are too good for daily use. Hence, chairs and sofas are covered, and rooms shut up, save for special occasions, when they are permitted to reveal their violated sacredness in a manner that mars every pretence of hospitality. Nothing should be bought which is considered too fine for the fullest domestic appropriation. Far better is the plainest furniture, on which the children can climb, than satin and damask, which must be viewed with reverence. Where anything is reserved or secluded, to disguise the fact is extremely difficult. A chilly air wraps it round, and the repulsion of strangeness is experienced by the most insensible.

There are few persons who have not visited houses where they have been introduced to what is known as the company parlor. They must remember how uncomfortable they were while sitting in it; how they found it almost impossible to be at ease, and mainly for the reason that their host and hostess were not themselves at ease. The children were watched with lynx eyes, lest they should displace or soil something; so that the entertainment of friends became very much like a social discipline. They must recall, too, how sweet the fresh air seemed out-of-doors, and how they inwardly vowed, in leaving that temple of form and fidgetiness, that something more than politeness would be required to incite them to return.

Home is not a man, nor a form, nor a routine. It is a spirit, a presence, a principle. Material and method will not, and cannot make it. It must get its light and sweetness from those who inhabit it, from the sympathetic natures which, in their exercise of sympathy, can lay aside the tyranny of the broom and the awful duty of endless scrubbing.—Scribner's.

LIGHT CARES.

What a pity 'tis that young married folk will not emulate the example of Japanese housekeepers! They are troubled very little by household cares. A few mats, a chest of drawers for clothing, two or three quilts for a bed on the floor, some simple kitchen-utensils, and their houses are furnished. They have never known the use of a bedstead, a chair, or a table, as we understand these articles; and yet these people have all the virtues of civilization, and perhaps not quite all its vices. They are polite, generous, hospitable, perform their religious duties with exemplary piety, and, if cleanliness be next to godliness, they are much more godly than we are, for they are the cleanest-people on the earth; according to the general testimony of travelers. We have certainly much to learn before our houses can be as immaculately neat as theirs are. Their habit of doffing street-boots and assuming slippers before entering a room does much towards keeping houses cleaner than our own. A poor Japanese housewife really enjoys more ease, after her simple duties are done, than many of our wealthiest dames who are weighed down with the cares of an extravagant-establishment. And as for young people just entering life—compare their lot with that of the people under discussion, and, and if an ease-loving person, you will soon render a verdict in favor of Japanese housekeepers.

A MISTAKE IN LIFE.

There is no more prolific cause of repining and discontent in life than that found in looking back upon by gone mistakes. We are fond of persuading ourselves and others that could other crises have been decided differently, our whole course in life would have been one of unmingled success, instead of the partial failure that it so often appears. None

can tell how weighty may be the results of even trifling actions, nor how much of the future is bound up in every-day decisions.

The great error men make in this revision is in attributing their failures to circumstances, instead of to character. They see the mistakes which lie on the surface, but fail to trace them back to the sources from which they spring. The truth is, that crises are the occasions for bringing out predominating traits of character. They are tests of the nature and qualities of the man, rather than the causes of future success or failure. Chances are lost and opportunities wasted; advisers ill-chosen, and disastrous speculations undertaken; unhappy marriages contracted; but there is nothing properly accidental in these steps. They are to be regarded as the results of unbalanced character as much as the causes of future misery. The disposition of mind that led to these errors would certainly, under other circumstances, have led to different, but not less lamentable results.

We see clearly in judging of others. We attribute their mischances without compunction to the faults that we see in them, and sometimes even make cruel mistakes in the investigation; but in reviewing our own course, self draws a veil over our imperfections, and we persuade ourselves that unavoidable mistakes or unfortunate circumstances are the entire cause of all our misfortunes. It is true that no circumstances are always favorable; no training perfectly judicious; no friends wholly wise, yet he who is ever shifting the blame of his mischances upon these external causes, is the very man who has the most reason to trace them to his own inherent weaknesses or demerits.

It is questionable whether the habit of looking much at mistakes, even of our own, is a very profitable one. Certainly the practice of moaning over and bewailing them, and charging upon them all the evils that afflict us, is the most injurious to our future course, and the greatest hindrance to any real improvement of character. Acting from impulse and not from reason, is one of the chief causes of these mistakes, and he who would avoid them in the future will submit all his sudden impulses to the searching and penetrating ordeal of his best reason before acting upon them. Above all, the steady formation of virtuous habits, the subjection of all action to principle rather than to policy; the stern and unflinching adherence to right, as far and as fast as it is discovered, are the best safeguards against mistakes in life.

WHEN YOU ARE IN TROUBLE.

Don't try to quench your sorrow in rum or narcotics. If you begin this you will have to keep right on with it till it leads you to ruin; or, if you try to pause, you must add physical pain and the consciousness of degradation to the sorrow you seek to escape. Of all wretched men, his condition is the most pitiful who, having sought to drown his grief in drink, awakes from his debauch with shattered nerves, aching head, and depressed mind, to face the same trouble again. That which was at first painful to contemplate will, after drink, seem unbearable. Ten to one the fatal drink will be again and again sought, till its victim sinks a hopeless, pitiful wretch.

Work is your true remedy. If misfortune hits you hard, hit you something else hard; pitch into something with a will. There's nothing like good, solid, absorbing, exhausting work to cure trouble. If you have met with losses, you don't want to lie awake thinking about them. You want sleep, calm, sound sleep, and to eat your dinner with appetite. But you can't unless you work. If you say you don't feel like work, and go a loafing all day to tell Dick and Harry the story of your woes, you'll lie awake and keep your wife awake by your tossings, spoil her temper and your own breakfast the next morning, and begin to-morrow feeling ten times worse than you do to-day.

There are some great troubles that only time can heal, and perhaps some that can never be healed at all; but all can be helped by the great panacea, work. Try it, you who are afflicted. It is not a patent medicine. It has proved its efficacy since first Adam and Eve left behind them with weeping their beautiful Eden. It is an official remedy. All good physicians in regular standing prescribe it in cases of mental and moral disease. It operates kindly and well, leaving no disagreeable sequelae, and we assure you that we have taken a large quantity of it with the most beneficial effects. It will cure more complaints than any nostrum in the materia medica, and comes nearer to being a "cure all" than any drug or compound of drugs in the market. And it will not sicken you if you do not take it sugar coated.

A BEAUTIFUL COMPLIMENT.

One of the most delicate witticisms uttered by Rossini on his death-bed is the following. It is characteristic of the affectionate relations prevailing between him and his wife: "What is the difference between you and a clock?" said the sick maestro to his faithful wife and nurse, when she had just told him what time it was; and as Madame Rossini said she was unable to solve the riddle, her husband told her the solution: "The clock indicates the hours to me, and you cause me to forget them." Certainly a mot of which every tender bride-groom might be very proud!

FERN-PRESSING.

The girls should not forget that this is the time to gather and press green ferns. They are pretty and refreshing to have in the house in cold weather, so easily obtained, and so little trouble to prepare, that it is a pity any body should be without a few bunches when the flower-season has passed. There are many modes of preserving them, but the one that seems most successful is to pick the ferns when they are young and tender; lay them between newspapers, or in large, flat books, and place them under very heavy weights, until the sap has entirely dried. Persons who gather them in August often leave them in press till Thanksgiving or Christmas; asserting that this long subjection to the weights keeps the color better than any other method. The safest way to secure perfect ferns is to take a book to the woods, and lay each one between the leaves as soon as broken from the stem. Even in a few minutes, ferns will curl at their tips, and after an hour or two, it is almost impossible to lay them flat. This process is very good for bright leaves, and makes them look less artificial than when they are withered. Bunches of Autumn leaves are very beautiful evening decorations, if a lighted candle be set behind them. This brings out their brilliant tints, and gives them the appearance of having been freshly gathered.—Home and Society, Scribner's for September.

MR. CAUDLE'S BREAKFAST TALK.

It is rather extraordinary, Mrs. Caudle, that we have now been married four weeks—I don't see what you have to sigh about—and yet you can't make me a proper cup of tea. However, I don't know how I should expect it. There never was but one woman who could make tea to my taste, and she is now in heaven. Now, Mrs. Caudle, let me hear no crying. I'm not one of the people to be melted by the tears of a woman; for you can all cry—all of you—at a minute's notice. The water's always laid on, and down it comes if a man only lays down his finger.

You didn't think I could be so brutal? That's it. Let a man only speak, and he's brutal. It's a woman's first duty to make a decent cup of tea. What do you think I married you for! It's all very well with your tambour-work and such trumpery. You can make butterflies on kettle-holders, but can you make a pudding ma'am? I'll be bound not.

Of course, as usual; you've given me the corner-roll, because you know I hate a corner-roll. I did think you must have seen that. I did hope I should not be obliged to speak on so paltry a subject—but it's no use to hope to be mild with you. I see that's hopeless.

And what a herring! And you call it a bloater, I suppose. Ha! there was a woman who had an eye for a bloater, but—sainted creature! she's here no longer. You wish she was? Oh, I understand that.

I'm sure anybody would wish her back, it's—but she was too good for me. "When I'm gone, Caudle," she used to say, "then you'll know the wife I was to you." And I do know it.

Here's the eggs boiled to a stone again! Do you think, Mrs. Caudle, I'm a canary bird, to be fed upon hard eggs? Don't tell me about the servant. A wife is answerable to her husband for her servants. It's her business to hire proper people; if she doesn't, she's not fit to be a wife. I find the money, Mrs. Caudle, and I expect you to find the cookery.

There you are with your pocket handkerchief again; the old flag of truce; but it doesn't trick me. A pretty honeymoon? Honeymoon! Nonsense! People can't have two honeymoons in their lives. There are feelings—I find it now—that we can't have twice in our existence. There's no making honey a second time.

No; I think I have put up with your neglect long enough; and there's nothing like beginning as we intend to go on. Therefore, Mrs. Caudle, if my tea isn't made a little more to my liking to-morrow—and if you insult me with a herring like that—and boil my eggs that you might fire 'em out of guns—why, perhaps Mrs. Caudle, you may see a man in a passion. It takes a good deal to move me, but when I'm up—I say, when I am up—that's all.

Where did I put my gloves? You don't know? Of course not, you know nothing.

The Staffordshire potteries were recently without a supply of water for nearly a week. On August 28th the company's main burst near the engine-house, about ten miles off, and when the repairs were finished, after three days, the newly-connected pipes separated at the joints, and the district again became destitute of water. A hundred thousand people were thus for five days dependent for water upon the rain and such as could be got from stagnant pools.

Try and be patient while putting up your stoves. Throwing stovepipe down and jumping on it because it won't match is not the way to practice economy, although it does a fellow much good sometimes.

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BEAU HICKMAN.

A correspondent of the Chicago Tribune tells this story about the late Beau Hickman, which has never before appeared in print:

On one occasion, Beau being on a train without a ticket, he took a seat in the cars, and after the train had been in motion some time, stepped into the next car and called out loudly, "Tickets!" when every one, thinking him the conductor, held out their tickets. Beau only took up one, however, selecting that of a poor, honest old German farmer, and, passing into the next car, took a seat, sticking his ticket in the hand of his hat.

In a few minutes there was the usual call again of "Tickets!" and the real conductor made his appearance. When he came to the old German farmer, he attempted to explain; but the conductor cut him short saying, "Show your ticket, pay your money, or get off the train." A good many passengers who had witnessed the transaction between Hickman and the farmer, and wondered at the time why their tickets had not been called for, now came to the relief of the German, and remonstrated protesting that the man had paid, and the conductor who had just passed through, had already taken up his ticket. The conductor, thinking, for a moment, said, "I'll bet Beau Hickman is on this train;" and sure enough, on entering the next car, there sat Beau, as large as life, looking quite innocent, and his ticket exposed in full view.

"Where did you get this ticket?" asked the conductor, pulling it out of Hickman's hat-band.

"It was given me by a gentleman in the next car," frankly replied Beau.

"You ought to be ashamed to rob a poor old German farmer in that way."

"Politest and cleverest people in the world, on your road," said Beau, with his inimitable smile and low bow. "Why, would you believe me sir? I only need one, but every man in the car when they knew who I was, tendered me his ticket; and the ladies—God bless them!—at least a dozen offered me theirs." The conductor passed him.

One of the most ingenious and daring thefts on record was perpetrated a short time since at the village of Brierly Hill England. A lad entered the store of a grocer of the place and bought a roll of bread, which he asked the man to stuff down the back of his jacket as his companion outside would take it away from him if he saw it. The grocer complied with the apparently innocent request, and having had his loaf placed in its original hiding-place the boy left. Hardly had he quitted the store when another lad rushing in exclaimed: "Do you know what that chap has done? he has prigged your watch!" The grocer looked in horror, and saw his watch chain dangling, and his watch gone. "There he goes!" said his informant pointing to the figure seen going down the street; and the shop-keeper immediately rushed out in pursuit, leaving the store unguarded. When he had reached the corner the supposed thief had vanished, and returning to the store he found that during his absence the informer had emptied the till and gone off with the money. The two thieves have so far escaped capture.

Noah was "monarch of all he surveyed" by the flood, and he had a long and successful rain.

A fop, just returned from a Continental tour was asked how he liked the ruins of Pompeii. "Not very well," was the reply; "they are so dreadfully out of repair."

A Judge at Montgomery, Ala., recently interrupted a very flowery young orator with—"Hold on, hold on, my dear sir! Don't go any higher! You are already out of the jurisdiction of this Court!"

It is said that the Nebraska Indians are allowed to ride free on all trains they can jump on while the latter are in motion. The tribe is being reduced very rapidly. This is by all odds the most effective and economical system of dead-heading on record.

Here is a Canaanian newspaper with a vengeance. The Birmingham (Ala.) News says: "This is a white man's paper, edited by a white man, printed by a white man, paid for by white men, supported by white men, and it will support no man for office who refuses to stand squarely upon the platform that this is a white man's country and a heritage to him and his children forever." How such a moral albinos in this can have nothing to do with printer's ink passes our comprehension. He should content himself with supplying his customers with white sheets of paper.

The "personal mention" with which the Omaha editors take pleasure in honoring their friends is illustrated by the following choice morsel of recent date: "W. M. Madden, commonly known as 'Fatty,' the great American traveller, arrived in this city recently, and sampled forty kegs of beer, besides attending the circus, and eating eight straight meals at the Wyoming."

EXCLUSIVENESS.—Host—"Nice party, ain't it major LeSpurger? 'Jgh and low, rich and poor—most people are welcome to this 'ouse. This is 'Liberty 'All,' this is! No false pride or 'umbag about me! I'm a self-made man, I am!" The Major—"Very nice party, indeed, Mr. Shoddy. How proud your father and mother must feel! are they hero?" Host—"Well no! 'Ang it all, you know, one must draw the line somewhere!"