

Few mourners are more sincere than those who mourn the death of a true friend. The most beautiful elegy in human language was over a friend—David's lament over *Jonathan*. As we advance in life, one and another drops away, and if not careful we shall be left like the heath in the desert, when the waters are dried up.

2nd. We lose them by separation.

For a time we are near them, and see them often, and converse with them, or we write them often. But new cares and duties, labors and anxieties crowd in upon us, new relations are formed, and new scenes open upon us. We determine to retain our friends, but our time is occupied, and gradually and almost inevitably our friends fade from our memories—not wholly but certainly. A few years makes the beautiful writing which they placed on our hearts very faint. We regret it, and are ashamed of it, and mourn over it, but if the prospect is that we shall never live near them again, we despair of recovering what we have lost. How different we feel about retaining the friendship of one who has gone to Europe for a few months, from what we feel if we know he never expects to return!

3rd. We lose our friends by forming new ties.

This is especially true of woman when she comes into the married relation. The young wife takes her pen to write to her "dear Lavinia," but she at once feels that they have now very little in common. She feels that it would be almost sacrilege to allow any one to live between her and her husband. But this is not precisely what I mean. I mean that the new ties, husband and wife, bring so many new duties and responsibilities, and so many delightful hopes and promises, that the heart naturally gathers around these, and shuts out all others. And the young husband and wife will permit me to drop an important remark, and that is that as the marriage relation so commonly and so necessarily cuts away all other ties and confidences, and gives the heart and the soul no counsellor but the life companion, how important that they be fitted for each other—that the wife should be qualified by disposition, education, and training, to take the place of all other friends, and be qualified to be a sympathiser, an adviser, and an assistant, so that by her judgment she can counsel, by her courage sustain, by her gentleness soften, and, by her unselfish affection be able to cheer and comfort. It is the man who is to meet the storms of life, and manage and do all the rough labors of earth, and who will be thwarted and troubled by the strong swimmers whom he will encounter, and he needs a friend. If he finds it in his wife, he may never tell of his obligations to her, but he will be successful. If he find it not, he will go through life shut up in his own icy heart—an ice land, without its grandeur.

4. We lose our friends by our own ingratitude.

Reader, can you not recall the man who has greatly befriended you in days that are gone past, who assisted you to what you needed and when you needed? But a sense of obligation is painful. The hardest thing for the human heart to do is to be grateful, and the next hardest thing, perhaps, is to be willing to acknowledge obligation and manifest gratitude. Hence, many friends have been dropped in order to escape a sense of obligation. On the other hand, the heart is sometimes so chilled by this want of gratitude, so grieved to see it a burden, that it drops what it called a friend. The fact that we do meet with ingratitude where we had hoped to find love and confidence, is unquestionable. We are disappointed and chilled, and think we shall hardly try again to manifest kindness. The story of the cuckoo exactly illustrates what we have too often witnessed in our own observation:

"The spring was come and the nest was made,
And the little bird all her eggs had laid,
When a cuckoo came to the door to beg
She would kindly adopt another egg;
For I have not leisure, upon my word,
To attend to such things, said the roving bird.
There was hardly room for them all in the nest,
But the egg was admitted along with the rest;