

## THE HOUSEHOLD.

## APOLOGIES.

"Never apologize." It had stared at me from the printed page all my life; but it remained for the example of two women to make it vital to me. I had the opportunity once to observe closely the intimate home life of one of my friends. Her husband's income was modest, her house plain, and she economized in dress. During the year I lived in her house I was never conscious of the slightest jar or friction of the domestic machinery, yet I know my friend was not exempt from the usual housekeeping trials.

The secret was—she never apologized. She gave daily superintendence to house and kitchen. If accidents happened, nobody was ever made miserable with the details. If a dish failed, it must have been her rule to set it aside; if one appeared on the table not exactly up to the highest standard, she had the good sense to see that this fact was not apparent to all, and that an apology would only intensify the consciousness of the few who did perceive it. And it is wonderful what mistakes, partial failures, will pass unnoticed, if only the too-exacting housewife refrain from apologies!

Sometimes a formal caller appeared unexpectedly, finding her in a wrapper; or she was called to the door to speak for a moment to a neighbor. No distressed expression, no nervous pulling at the cheap and simple gown, betrayed her sense of its unfitness. She ignored it, and received them with a quiet grace, a dignity that added a new charm to her loveliness.

I looked and pondered; I saw that an apology would have had its root in vanity. It was borne in upon me that apologies are vulgar and futile—above all, futile.

Now for the other woman. She is my next-door neighbor, but our relations are almost entirely formal. She imagines me gifted with the eyes of Argus, though I am so short-sighted that I can scarcely see beyond my own nose. She apologizes for facts of which I could never possibly have had any knowledge, but for the admissions—her servants' shortcomings, the noise her children make, the state of her kitchen and back yard. I stand confused, annoyed, bored, under this shower-bath of apologies. I meet her running through the lane to her mother's. How sweet and cool she looks, is my inward comment, if I make any. She stops to apologize—for her dress. I say truly that I see nothing amiss. She is then at great pains to show me an infinitesimal hole, or a grass-stain on the hem, or tells me it is an old thing, patched up out of two; and then she wonders what I must "think of Robert, working in the garden in his shirt-sleeves." When I finally stem the torrent and get away, I wonder if she thinks I have no duties, no interests, to say nothing of moral restraints, which render it impossible for me to stand always with a spy-glass levelled on her windows.

Some women apologize with the best intention, imagining that not to do so shows disrespect and disregard of a guest's opinion. Others, as in the last instance, hope to gain credit for possessing a very high standard by apologizing for every lapse therefrom. They only betray egotism, an uneasy conscience, and the fact that they are trying to seem to be to the world what they really are not.

If my neighbor should read this, and be converted, "I shall be" (as an author says in his preface), "amply repaid."—*Housekeeper's Weekly*.

## MOTHERS' SYMPATHY.

All over the world there are mothers with hands so full they can scarcely take time to draw one good, long breath, or sit quietly down and rest for five minutes.

They are good, conscientious women, wearing their lives out for their families in the daily round of patient, self-denying work, trying to make a small income feed, clothe and educate all the children, planning the spending of every dollar, to make it go as far as possible, and bravely doing without many an article needed for their own personal comfort, for the sake of the children.

I have seen mothers, who would not neglect anything that might add to the physical wants of their children, neglect

that which is of infinitely more importance than to have them well fed and neatly clad.

When the womanly little fifteen-year-old daughter comes home with sparkling eyes, eager to tell mamma all about her essay, which was the best in the class, instead of listening with a pleased face and telling her how happy she has made her, the short-sighted mother says indifferently, "Well, Jennie, I haven't time to listen now. Do hurry and change your dress, and finish this darning, while I patch Harry's jacket." And Jennie goes away with a sober face, thinking, "If mamma had only said she was glad I did so well."

And, after a while, when Harry comes, his face full of happiness, to coax mamma to come and see his pansies, they are "so pretty," she sends the little fellow away with an impatient, "No, I can't; and you'd much better be weeding out the radish bed."

She may have been busy mending that same Harry-boy's jacket, but it would have paid her better to have dropped it and gone out with the little fellow for a few moments, and admired his flowers and praised him for the care he had given them.

And after tea, when the twins want to climb into "muzzer's" lap, and have a happy "loving time," instead of resting her overtaxed nerves by laying aside the sewing, and cuddling them close in her arms, and telling them how she loved them and wanted them to grow up good men like papa, and listening while the two yellow heads bow at her knee and pray, "God bless mamma," and then tucking them in bed with loving good-night kisses, she says, in short, crisp tones, "Go right out in the kitchen with your blocks, and don't bother me again to-night."

And the two sturdy little boys go with a feeling in their hearts that "mamma didn't love them one speck," and they "didn't care."

O mothers, it is only a few years when the children will drift away from you, and no longer come to confide their joys and sorrows, but look upon their home as "a place to eat and sleep in," and upon you as the one who keeps the house and their clothes in order.

In that day you no longer will have occasion to tell them not to hinder you, for they will go to others for the sympathy which you denied them.

Then look back to the years when you were "too busy" to take any interest in what pleased them, and ask yourself whose fault it is if they are not interested in you now.

While they are young and clinging about you, make them think that whatever interests them is of interest to you, and that mother loves them more than any one else in the world, and is their best friend.

Do not send them away in anxiety to "keep up" with your work, and make them feel that mother thinks more of everything else than she does of them, until they cease to have any desire to tell you of their plans. Make your girls feel that it is a pleasure to have them tell you of their happy times, and your boys feel that you are interested in their new skates, and delighted that their side won in base ball.

Then, when your tired feet grow weary and your busy hands are idle, they will feel it their privilege and happiness to give mother tender, loving care through her declining years, and never for a moment think she is a burden.—*Grace Pettis, in the Household*.

## THE TEMPERATURE OF THE HOUSE IN WINTER.

We have lately read a very interesting article in one of the daily newspapers in regard to "Our indoor climate." The author is very critical of Americans for having so much artificial heating in our houses, but we think he has over-rated the dangers from that source. The chief danger in New York City, from Christmas until April, is not from too warm houses, but from too cold ones, and those in which the temperature varies very much. We can get on out-of-doors with exercise and overcoats and sealskins, but inside the temperature ought to be kept up to 70° F. for most people, and for some old people in hospitals, 73° F. to 75° F. is not out of the way. The English are the great apostles for being uncomfortable inside

their houses. The result there is seen in the great prevalence of rheumatism and also of aural diseases. It is very difficult to get warm in London or Paris in the winter. And we do not believe it ever does anybody any good to be just the other side of being warm. A man is as uncomfortable at 40° F. as he is at 20° F. It is possible that New Yorkers are a little careless in varying the heat in their houses, but not in keeping them too warm, we think. To keep warm is very often to keep well.—*The Post-Graduate*.

## THE SOCIAL TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

It is in the small courtesies that we are most apt to fail, and it is just these which make the charm of perfect manners. Children may be taught to render the little attentions which will be too often forgotten in maturer years if the habit has not been formed in early life. A short note of thanks for any kindness received should be sent promptly, and a letter, always, after enjoying the hospitality of a friend, expressing the pleasure found in the visit. It would seem unnecessary to emphasize these things if so many "children of a larger growth" were not neglectful of them.

A family of charming little girls, whom the writer has the good fortune to know, are sent by their mother to make a call on any of her special friends who may be leaving home, and also to welcome them on their return. It is one way of accustoming them to meet older persons easily and naturally, and helps to form the habit of discharging social obligations.

The whole home atmosphere should be favorable to the consideration of the little courtesies which are as oil to the wheels of daily life. The pleasant morning greeting, a word of apology for a tardy appearance, and the habit of rising when an older person enters the room, with innumerable other little attentions which a mother should demand from her children, will do much to make them agreeable members of society.

Children may outgrow their parents intellectually and spiritually, but the manners formed in childhood are not easily changed. The surface may become more polished, but in moments of excitement or self-forgetfulness the old tricks of manner or speech will show themselves.—*The Christian Union*.

## CUTTING THE CORNERS.

Mrs. Jones, who does her own work, was asked by one of her neighbors how she contrived to get so much done. "Contrive is the word," said she. "I cut all the corners, and I don't try in the least to do as Mrs. Any-body-else does. I know it's the orthodox way to get all your morning's work done up and then sit down to sew. But when I have a difficult piece of sewing on hand, if I do my housework first, I'm too tired to do my sewing justice, so I let some of the housework go, all that can be let go, and do my sewing first. Then it is a relief, when that is done, to fly around and finish up my housework. I know it's nice to iron all one's plain clothes, but I don't iron mine. Towels, sheets, and many other articles I fold neatly when they are dry and put them away without ironing. I am very particular to have the clothes washed clean and rinsed always in two waters, so they are sweet to the ol-factory, but they are not smooth to the touch.

"When I get breakfast I plan my dinner and generally make the dessert, sometimes prepare the vegetables, and then it is an easy matter to get the dinner. Many a time I've rubbed out my clothes at night and scalded them, and then left them in the tubs till morning. This enables me to get them hung up early, and then by dividing the work I do not get so tired as if I did it all at once. I see to it that the wood and coal and kindling-box are kept full, so I can have a fire at short notice and without running round.

"I make a point of lying down in the middle of the day and getting perfectly still, perhaps I drop off to sleep a few minutes. This gives me two mornings every day, so to speak, and keeps me fresh for the evening, and I find that going to bed early enables me to rise early and push my work with vigor."—*Christian Advocate*.

## FOR NOTHING.

Self-sacrifice comes natural to women. Much of it is born in them, and what is not is ground into them from their childhood by education. For the sake of her home duties a girl gives up amusements and privileges which her brother would never be expected to forego for the like reason. As she grows older, this spirit grows, encouraged by all tradition and outside influence. Often its power masters her altogether, and her life becomes one long devotion to endless labor and acceptance of unpleasant things, that the pleasant part of living may be kept sacred for the rest of the family.

The purely useless side of this entire self-abnegation must sometimes strike the beholder. Such effacing of individuality is not uncommon. And it gives as little real benefit to the family as it does to the individual.

Putting aside the moral effect on the younger members of a family brought up to regard their mother as a machine run for the family service, does the woman who so gives herself for the well-being of her family really accomplish all she desires? If she work without pause or slackening day in and day out, does she always feel satisfied, with admiring on-lookers, that it is the noblest way to so spend her health and energies? If she renounces all recreation and higher life for herself, and gives up all communion of mind and spirit with her husband and children, is the reward adequate that is paid to them in a better kept-house, a more bountifully supplied larder, or handsomer clothes?

If over-fatigue causes her to become petulant or complaining, is not the atmosphere of home more greatly injured than the added cleaning and cooking can repair? If she is too worn out to give sympathy and help to the children's joys and sorrows, what do the finer clothes and furniture obtained avail? And if, as sometimes happens, outraged nature gives way, and others may step into the breach, do their own work and the played-out woman's as well, and take care of her into the bargain, what has she gained by her extreme efforts that she has not lost by the breakdown?

A life laid down in a worthy cause is not lost, but gained; but is this cause worthy?—*Harper's Bazar*.

## PUZZLES NO. 23.

## BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Where do we read of a "refuge of lies"? What will become of such a hiding-place?
2. What prophet, when his courage failed, as he thought he was left alone, was cheered by hearing that God had many faithful hidden ones?
3. "The world knoweth us not." Where do you find these words? and what reason is added?
4. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Where are these words found? Give a similar statement from the Old Testament.

## BIOGRAPHICAL ANAGRAM.

The unique and immortal work, *Quod Tonexi*, was published in Paris, in the year 1605. It soon gained great applause, which was echoed from all parts of Europe. It is read to-day in Carmania with great delight and enjoyment. Yet its author Carl Vereande Sna vagee Smidt, spent the greater part of his life in poverty and obscurity. He was born October 9, 1547.

## CHARADE.

My first is the son of his father;  
My next at the weaver's you'll see;  
My whole, much esteemed as a relic,  
Is found on each family tree.

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES No. 22.

## BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Ps. lxxxiii. 3. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones.
  2. Ps. xxxii. 7. Thou art my hiding-place; cxix. 114. Thou art my hiding-place, and my shield.
  3. Is. xxxii. 2. A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind.
  4. (1, 2) Ps. xxvii. 5. In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. (3) Ps. xxxi. 20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man. (4) Ps. xci. 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High. (5) Ps. lxi. 4. I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Ps. xci. 4. Under his wings shalt thou trust.
  5. Ps. xvii. 8. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings cxliii. 9. I flee unto thee to hide me. lxiv. 2. Hide me from the secret council of the wicked.
  6. Jer. xxxvi. 26. Of Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, when Jehoiakim sent to take them.
  7. Is. xxvi. 20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Zeph. ii. 3. It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.
- PROVERB PUZZLE.—Toil, gas, morn, sonnet, grass, hole. "A rolling stone gathers no moss."