

The Coming Home.

A CHAPTER ALL HUSBANDS OUGHT TO READ.

(From Hearth and Home.)

Lately, dear householders, we considered the home-welcome in its various aspects; now let us give a thought to the home-coming. I hold that while it is the duty of every woman to render home attractive and beautiful, it is the duty of every man to so conduct his home-coming that it will be the bright spot in the day of the waiting household. Too few men bring with them their proportion of light and sunshine. Some do, we know, but what is to be said of the cloudy man—the man who is fretful or stingy, or fault-finding, or glum, or careless? Does he brighten his home at the threshold?

The cross man is never pleased. His wife either speaks too loudly or not loudly enough; his slippers, not assorting themselves with due regard to right and left, are scolded as if they were animated beings; and the chair in his way is treated as if, with its own four-legs, it had voluntarily and with malice aforethought placed itself in his path, and could actually feel the spiteful kick with which he sends it out of his way.

The stingy man's quick eye immediately detects an extra light, which he extinguishes; and closes the stove dampers, to prevent the too rapid consumption of fuel. The bright ribbon bow which his wife has put on to enliven her poor, faded dress, is, perhaps, noticed only to ask its cost; and if all have eaten as well as they could with the consciousness that almost every mouthful was counted, there happens to be any food left upon the table, the extravagance of the cooking is coldly commented upon. How can such a man expect to find light, warmth, beauty and comfort at his fire-side?

The fault-finder rarely has anything as he wants it, and the words "never" and "always" are so pat to his tongue as to be to the painstaking housekeeper the most trying in the whole dictionary. If once in six months his umbrella is misplaced, it is never where it should be. If once during the same time the steak is overdone, it is always cooked to death. If, in consequence of numerous duties, the careful wife for the first time in a year makes her appearance untidily dressed, the "always" and "never" man says he wishes she would not "forever go looking like a fright."

A lady, accounted by the world as being the happy wife of a model husband, once confessed to me that she knew if she had dinner promptly on time three hundred and sixty-four days out of the year, and on the three hundred and sixty-fifth day should be ten minutes late, this model husband would unblushingly affirm that "dinner never was ready on time."

Few women are so angelic as never to lose their temper in consequence of this too often repeated "always" and "never."

The "glum" man enters his home, hangs up coat and hat, walks into the room, and, sitting down, stares straight into the fire. You would not guess from his bearing that there was another being in the house beside himself. Should a little child happen near, it is only noticed to be reproved for "troubling;" and the question of wife and mother are answered with so few words that a real good brisk quarrel would be somewhat a relief.

The housekeeper here feels that were all her energies spent in rendering home attractive, the individual for whose benefit the brightness was intended would not reward her by noticing, either favorably or otherwise, anything in the pleasant arrangement of his home.

Then there is the careless man, who walks into the room with unclean boots, throws overcoat and hat on the floor or a chair, leaves all the doors open (which fact is immediately announced from a sneeze from the baby), runs against and upsets various things in the room, litters the floor with papers, and in about two minutes from the time of his entrance turns the tidy room into a domain of disorder.

This peculiarity is certainly annoying, but when accompanied with good nature, as it often is, can not be so direful in its effects as either of the before-mentioned faults.

There are many men who never come home at all. Their bodies come regularly to be fed and refreshed, but the man himself is still down-town, scheming and planning to circumvent and make the most out of his fellow beings.

His handsome house is purchased and elegantly furnished with entire reference to the effect it will

have upon his business, and his wife is a convenient machine for adding to his list of friends, and entertaining those who, when the proper time comes, can be utilized by the sharp man.

I have not yet mentioned the cruellest blight of all, when the home-coming man is for the time not a man at all, but a hideous caricature of himself. It may safely be inferred that no man who shall read this is a confirmed drunkard. Yet it is sadly true that hundreds drink at least temporary degradation from the so-called "social glass." Wife at home may beam like a bright star, everything may twinkle and murmur "welcome," but if that wife listen in dread lest the coming step be the uncertain one of a reeling form, and the eye that should meet hers in fond truthfulness be bleared and silly, or cruel with the deep disgrace of a self-clouded mind, there will be weary and anxious lines in her face that she can not help, and that will darken the cheeriest room.

On the other hand, the so-called sober man is not always temperate or kind, nor does he invariably try to keep himself at his best estate for his family's sake as well as his own. Such a man shall be known at a glance, if only by the manner of his home-coming.

There is much in the way the house is entered. Let the man come in with a smile that will match his wife's in brightness; bring little wished-for trifles to the waiting ones; put hat and coat in their proper place, and just as much kissing as the law allows. Then let him be ready to romp with the children, pay pleasant little attentions to the grown women, and be willing to take an extra step to carry a burden to relieve overtaxed hands. Let him notice and speak of the little things that are done for his pleasure, and, above everything else, let him be sympathetic. Many a weary head would ache less if its pain were noticed and regretted by a loving husband, father or son, and many a joy would be multiplied by being shared.

Not always is the effort of speech or action necessary. Some men can brighten with a mere glance the room they enter. There is a joy-shedding grace in the way in which some husbands and fathers give themselves to the solace of an arm chair by the fireside after a day of weariness. At any rate, I am sure, if the man enters his home with the will to make its inmates happy, he will find the brightest halo of joy about himself.

In short, the home is like the world—millennium will be reached when each one works for the happiness of others.



THANKSGIVING DAY—(See December No., page 275.)



HALLOWE'EN FRT—(See December No.)

Medical Use of Eggs.

For burns or scalds, nothing is more soothing than the white of an egg, which may be poured over the wound. It is softer, as a varnish for a burn, than collodion, and being always at hand can be applied immediately. It is also more cooling than the "sweet oil and cotton" which was formerly supposed to be the surest application to allay the smarting pain. It is the contact with the air which gives the extreme discomfort experienced from ordinary accidents of this kind; and anything which excludes air and prevents inflammation is the thing to be at once applied. The egg is also considered one of the best remedies for dysentery. Beaten up slightly with or without sugar and swallowed, it tends by its emollient qualities to lessen the inflammation of the stomach and intestines, and by forming a transient coating on these organs to enable nature to resume her healthful sway over the diseased body. Two or at most three eggs per day would be all that is required in ordinary cases; and since the egg is not merely medicine, but food as well, the lighter the diet otherwise and the quieter the patient is kept, the more certain and rapid is the recovery.

CHILDREN AND MUSIC.—Let no child be taught music who has not a natural aptitude for it. Decided musical talent generally shows itself early. Many children sing before they can speak. I have written down, with the date affixed, so that there could be no mistake, more than one actual tune invented and sung by a small person of 3 years old. But the negative to these positive instances is less easily ascertained. The musical, like many another faculty, develops more or less rapidly according to the atmosphere it grows in. And there is always a certain period of "grind" so very distasteful that many a child will declare it "hates music," and wishes to give it up, when a little perseverance would make of it an excellent musician. I am no cultivated musician myself—I wish, with all my heart, the hard work of life allowed me to be!—but I feel grateful now for having been compelled, three times over, amid many tears, to "learn my notes," which was nearly all the instruction destiny ever vouchsafed me. Nevertheless, I believe I did a good deed the other day. A mother said to me: "My child is 13, and has been working at music ever since she was 7. She has no ear and no taste. If she plays a false note she never knows it. Yet she practices very conscientiously two hours a day. What must I do?" My answer was brief: "Shut the piano, and never let her open it more." The advice was taken, and the girl who now spends that unhappy two hours upon other things, especially drawing, in which she is very diligent and very clever, would doubtless bless me in her heart if she knew all. But the love of music, which she had not, often exists without great talent for it. Still, in such cases cultivation can do much. Many vocalists, professional and otherwise, have begun by being *voc et preterea nihil*, that is, possessing a fine organ, but no skill in using it. While on the other hand, many delightful singers—I recall especially Thomas Moore and Sheridan Knowles—have had scarcely any voice at all. The expression, the taste, the reading of a song are as essential and delightful as the voice to sing it with; and these last long after nature's slow but inevitable decay has taken away what to a singer is always a sore thing to part with, so sore that many are very long—far too long—in recognizing this. Sadder to themselves even than to their listeners is the discovery, that now, when they really know how to sing a song, they have not the physical power of singing.

THE OLEANDER.—This beautiful plant, when under proper culture, is truly a gem among flowers. This is a good time for making cuttings of it. The best way to root them is in a bottle of rain water set in the window. The cuttings should be not deeper in the water than half way up to the second joint, and when the rootlets get to be half an inch long, carefully pot in rich, sandy loam. After the plant blooms, cut back to within a foot or fifteen inches of the ground, when three branches will come out; let them grow until it again blossoms, after which cut them all back about six inches from the main stock, and every time it blooms repeat cutting back, and in a few years a very beautiful plant will be the result; in fact with proper care, it will grow more beautiful with age.