

"What shall I leave my children when they become of age?" but it is "What will my children give me and my wife in our old age?" That is it. "He feared God with all his house." If there is one prayer that consumes my whole heart it is, Oh, God, leave me my wife, so that by precept and example she may teach my children to know God." Thank God to-day for the grace and religion of Jesus Christ, that saved me from sin before God gave me children to live with.

Oh, gracious Father, help us to encompass our children about and carry them to glory with us. It is a privilege to do such a thing. "He feared God with all his house, and he gave much alms to the people." Religion and inspiration, with the touch of divine pencil, are bringing out character that will outlive the stars, and is grander in all its phases than the character of an angel.

VAIN CONJECTURES.

BY FLAVEL S. MINES.

If at times I should speak and tell
The thoughts that in me surge and swell,
The strange deep feeling of unrest
That ebbs and flows within my breast;
If I could clothe in words that seem
A perfect fitting to my dream,
In all its wondrous beauty bright,
I wonder if its truth aright
The skeptic world would really feel.
Not that I would something reveal
They could not grasp, unearthly, strange;
Not that I'd take a higher range
Than they could reach, but to my heart
These fair thoughts seem of it a part,
That if by the unfeeling world
From their height should be downward hurl'd
'Twould be a fall to me so great,
All I now love I would then hate,
Fearing them false, untrue and bare,
Because the world could not them share,
Could not their mighty force believe,
As I do, and their truth receive.

But then, 'tis better as it is—
Man thinks one way, but God works His.

THE FONT.

The following excerpt is a caution that our young and old people will do well to remember:—

"A word may be said here of the treatment of the Font at Christmas-tide and Easter; it must be borne in mind that its manifest intent is for the holding of the holy water of baptism and for no other purpose: to fill the font, therefore, with flowers, whether loose or in pots, is as irreverent and out of place as if the Chalice on the altar were used as a flower vase. The Font may be twined and crowned with Christmas greens or Easter flowers, but care should be taken that its use may not be interfered with."

WASTE NOT.

I remember walking, with a successful merchant, over the grounds of an estate which he had shortly before deeded to a public charity, and in our walk there lay a single brick, which by some means had been left there, probably by some careless workman. To my surprise, my friend stopped and picked it up, carrying it in his hand the rest of the way till we reached the house, when he gave it to the steward, with the remark "Bricks cost money," and then explained to me that one of the secrets of success with him had been never to allow waste about his premises, even in the smallest things, adding, "It is the cents that make the dollars." And this gentleman was as famous for his hospitalities and charities as he was for his business successes.

HUMILITY THE TEST.

I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation of speaking his own opinions, but a right understanding of the relation between what we can do and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know

their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence. Albert Durer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work: "It cannot be better done." Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow-men therefore to fall down and worship them. They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness—feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet.—*John Ruskin.*

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS.

People who have warm friends are healthier, happier than those who have none. A single friend is a treasure worth more than gold and precious stones. Money can buy many things, good and evil. All the wealth of the world could not buy a friend, or pay you for the loss of one. "I have only wanted one thing to make me happy," Hazlitt writes, "but wanting that, have wanted everything." And again, "My heart shut up in a prison house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to." We are the weakest of spendthrifts if we let a friend drop off through inattention, or let one push away another; or if we hold aloof because of one petty jealousy or heedless slight, or roughness. Would you throw away a diamond because it pricked you? One good friend is not to be weighed against the jewels of the earth.

MOTHER'S BED.

What a charm there is about mother's bed. The little wailing baby hushes its complainings when it finds itself nestled cosily in mother's bed. The tired little one when wearied with its first steps in life, rests soonest in that loved spot. And as life advances, the boy or the girl when the headache comes in from over study, or over play, wants most of all to lie down on mother's bed.

Nor does its soothing power cease with childhood. The young maiden who finds the world not just what she expected, seeks relief for her disappointment by curling herself up on mother's bed and so going back, as it were, to happy childhood. And the boy when manhood's first cares come home to him, when he begins to realise that life is a warfare, longs when evening comes and the day's duties are over, to throw himself across mother's bed and step back in thought to the time when the cares and responsibilities which now press upon him were not known.

God pity the little ones, and the older ones too, who have no mother's bed.

WORK AND PLAY.

Ours is a time when the young, at least, think too much of recreation, and devote too much of the real energies of their life to the strategy of amusement. To some extent, the disinterested beneficence of the day which has contrived so many palliatives for the misery of the toilworn classes, has lent countenance to the prevalent notion that those who do not enjoy their lives are defrauded of their absolute rights, and has encouraged the young people of a class which has more than its share of the pleasures of life, to regard those pleasures as their just inheritance. Yet nothing can be more certain than that the lives which are pervaded by the belief that the pursuit of happiness is the natural and legitimate aim of men, are not the noblest or the happiest. The lesson of renunciation (Goethe's *Entsagen*), or the lesson of self-denial—what Matthew Arnold calls "the secret or Jesus"—is, indeed at the root of true cheerfulness, though not, in this world, of absolute happiness; and however

good Sir John Lubbock's teaching may be as to the wisdom of embodying recreation in the scheme of life, the justification of it lies not in the fact that pleasure is one of the chief ends of man, but in the fact that for the most part those who play well, work better than they play, and could not work so well as they do if they did not play also. It is not that the pleasurable occupation is the right one, because it is pleasurable, but that the pleasurable occupation gives zest to the more arduous occupation, and lends to the enthusiasm of labor something of the delightful glow of conscious enjoyment.

There cannot be said to be any duty of happiness. It is a duty to make others happy so far as we can do so lawfully; it is a duty not to make them unhappy by whining over our troubles; it is a duty to put a cheerful face on life; it is a duty to enjoy the blessings we have, and to show that we are grateful for them, but it is not a duty to be happy, for if it were, we should be quite right in fleeing from unhappiness as from absolute evil, and in drowning in amusement all those anxieties and discontents with ourselves, which it is of the highest importance to confront. The only case in which it may be truly said that it is a duty to seek happiness, is where we are fully convinced that a certain measure of happiness will make us stronger for our duties, just as a certain measure of recreation makes us stronger for our professional tasks. The strong man can do with less happiness than the weaker man; but in either case alike, the happiness which it is a duty to aim at is only so much as is subservient to the higher work of life; and when all is said, the duty of happiness can never really compare, in its significance to human life, with the happiness of duty.

—Many join the preacher instead of the Church. If the preacher pleases them they will support the Church, and be regular in their attendance on the means of grace; but if they do not like the preacher, their places in the House of God are vacant, their contributions are withheld, and what influence they have is practically thrown against the Church. Such persons are as unstable as water, no reliance can be placed upon them, and the more numerous they are, the worse it is for the cause. The Church is greater than the preacher. If the preacher is not what we could desire, for the sake of the Church we should be the more faithful, and endeavour, so far as we can, to make up for his lack. Preachers may come and go, but the Church remains, and for her our tears should fall and our prayers continually ascend. Whether you like the preacher or not, stand by the Church.

—Indiscriminate praise, no doubt, does much harm. But a word of encouragement is often of untold value. There is not a mother who would not be cheered by having her children come and express their gratitude for her loving care. There are many fathers who would go forth to life's duties with braver hearts if they only knew that their hard labors are remembered and appreciated. What happiness would just one tender and loving word from the husband bring to many a wife's heart. Such words often stimulate the pastor to do more faithful work and enable the afflicted to bear the heavy cross more patiently.

—There is a story of a young and uneducated boy, who, when converted, astonished his old companions by the fluency and fervor of his petitions in the prayer meetings. At length one of them solved the mystery, and said to his puzzled cronies, "I know how it is, he practices in private."

Children

THE

In London shows have the poor an interest in gatherings, them in a sunny light much to the inhabitants show that relates.

Down a of houses the broken with rags, little tidier dren playing of oyster from an ex along the the house, up-stairs a younger t puny little same time bread in fr hindered l n her lap.

"Here my needle had just o let me go to-night." "I dor baby cries and moth nurse her.

"Well, won't do Annie, su

"Is this that you s "I wish and then

"Well, kinder to and she v

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