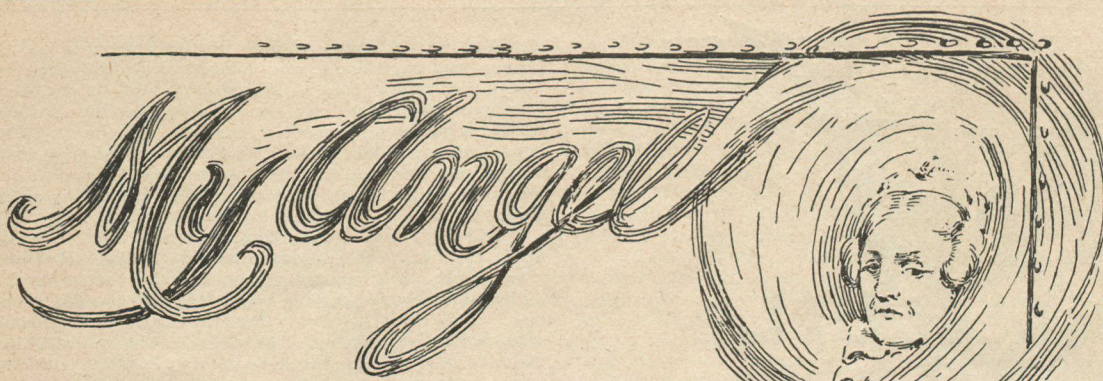




*If I were to take my pencil
As I sit in the dim firelight,
And draw for you here the picture
That I see in the flames to-night,
'Twould not be a stately angel,
With form that is full of grace,
But a bent and toilworn woman
With a grave and tender face.*

*No rosy wings should enfold her,
Nor golden her locks and fair;
But the face of my Angel of Pity
Is framed in snowy hair.*

*Her hands are not white and slender,
But withered by work and woe;
By carrying others burdens,
And soothing the tears that flow.*

*No halo of light surrounds her,
No wondrous power she hath;
Yet many and many a blessing
Is spoken about her path.
And you may portray your angels
With faces and forms of grace,
But my gentle Angel of Pity
Has my mother's careworn face.*

NORA HOLLAND.

JUST YOU AND I.

OUR chat concerning the fun of the Fair began it, and as we recalled one amusing incident after another, we regretted that some record could not be kept of the many quaint speeches and droll situations which the yearly assemblage of so large a concourse of people evolves. A volume entitled "Wit and Humor of the Fair" might well find place among the archives of the Industrial Exhibition. It would certainly prove an attractive folio, and one of constantly increasing bulk. It really seems a pity, in so grave a world, that so much real fun should be lost.

I wish also that some way could be found of recording the wit and humor that is wasting its medicinal properties upon the desert air of our hours and days. A bit of fun, a witty speech, a humorous situation—these are too valuable to be enjoyed by one or two individuals only. They should be held as common property; therefore there should be some method of recording them.

A merry heart doth good, like medicine. Humanity needs this medicine; therefore the merry heart is a necessity; therefore again, that

which induces a merry heart must not be wasted, but stored up for the public good.

Take the fun of the recent Fair, for instance. Suppose Manager Hill were to institute a record of the same, what a bulky volume, and what a popular one, would take its place among the archives of the Industrial Exhibition. It would be invaluable as a rainy-day antidote to the directors, while the press men would find it inexhaustable. If every visitor at the Fair would undertake to report the funniest incident or remark that came under his observation during his stay, the Exhibition staff would have employment all the year round duly classifying and recording the same, while the directors would assume Falstaffian proportions by reason of their laughter.

It was a remembrance of certain funny things at the Fair, personally noted, which started the thought of how much fun is afloat in the world, if we but had eyes trained to see and ears to hear.

Lang Tamm advocates an asylum for geniuses. I wonder whether a school for humorists—that is, for the training of them—would not be equally desirable.

We are taught all the gravities of life, the ologies and isms; we are instructed how to approach stupendous problems with becoming solemnity; we are versed in pessimisms and steeped in complexities,—but we are not trained either to make fun or appreciate it.

And why should we not be given some knowledge of the art? The natural Mark Tapleys of the world do not require it; but they are rare, and for most of us Tapleyism must be more or less an acquired habit.

How would it do to place a professor in every college whose subject should be the Appreciation of Humor, and his especial work that of training students, not merely to make fun, but to see the bright side, and discover the humor of life under its dullest aspects.

Mrs. McFayden, of poet-tasting fame, held that "A man without humor sudna' be allowed intae a poopit. A' hear that they have nae examination in humor at the college; its an awfu' want, for it would keep oot many a dreich body."

The position would be no sinecure, especially in a divinity school; but the students would be better preachers, pastors, doctors, business men. And there would be fewer suicides when the time of burden-bearing arrived, because of that faculty trained to humor.

* * *

As for women, surely they need this training in humor more than men. Women have been accused of lacking the sense of the ridiculous; but this is not so. The wittiest and most richly humored people I have met are women. But in the average of the sex, past limitations of outlook, together with the exaltation of sentiment peculiar to woman's office, have overshadowed the sense, which has become dull through lack of cultivation.

Education and the wider range of thought and work will remedy this, and in the years to come our brightest humorists will be women.

In the meantime a work awaits us,—the deliberate cultivation of the measure of humor that is within each of us. The gift is not evenly distributed more than any other good thing, but the cultivation thereof lies with each one.

* * *

How to cultivate it is not quite clear to me, unless indeed we be wise enough to insist upon the establishment of that professional chair and begin with the students. Yet, perhaps, to deliberately search for the fun is as good a way to begin as any. In order to do this, our own spirits must be in tune; we must be bright, joyous,—listening for songs, not groans; searching for color, not gloom; expecting benisons, not maledictions. A smile is the whisper of a laugh, and both are outcomes of that bright mental and spiritual atmosphere wherein abides the angel of gladness, whose children are mirth and humor.

* * *

It is such a blessed gift,—this whimsical insight, if we may so term it,—that it is worth while striving to attain it, even if we have to do a little idol-breaking upon our way.

"Some people always sigh in thanking God," says Mrs. Browning pithily, and it is this conventional sigh that is the epitaph of humor. And to sigh seems easier than to smile to most of us. But that is because we have not read God aright, nor remembered that the command is not 'sigh and give thanks,' but 'rejoice and give thanks.'

Let us start afresh, we who have sighed too much, and seek to see the fun and humor in daily life, which, being pure and reasonable, doth attune to the acceptable heart gladness.

FAITH FENTON.