

## Family Reading.

### Love's Mastery: Or the Gower Family.

"O Lora dear, how delightful! If only you will get well fast, as you say, everything seems happy. And you have read your letters, dear?" Stella added in a lower voice.

"O yes," Lora answered, again trying to smile, although the remembrance of every expression of love and endearment which those letters contained came as very torture to her heart.

"And when is he coming?" Stella asked.

"He speaks of about a fortnight, or rather more. Good-night, darling: they will be waiting for you; and here comes Clarice, with her unfailing supplies. If one could only get well without this incessant feeding!"

"That is what Somerset says: only then he does so thoroughly enjoy his food that it does one good to see it," Stella said, laughing; and then the little sister went away, feeling very happy, and comforting herself that Captain Flammank's letters had indeed taken the desired effect; her sister to all appearance being so very much more cheerful than she had known her during the whole of her convalescence.

Dr. Argyle never, perhaps, in his life more enjoyed a little supper than on this night, so memorable to Stella. Unacquainted with all the mysterious working of the scenes behind the curtain, he knew enough, and guessed what else was needed to make his kind heart very happy and content. His sweet little favourite had, through a season of long and patiently-borne trial and sorrow, come forth triumphant; and Dr. Argyle was not himself a stranger to the wondrous love and all-conquering influence which had led her safely and surely on. And the lesson to his own spirit, beyond that of gratitude for Stella, was one of hope and encouragement to labour on in the path of duty, patient and yet expectant, knowing that in the right way and at the right hour the answer of peace shall be given.

When he was gone, and Stella was taking leave of her brother for the night, she told him of Lora's request to see him on the following afternoon.

Lady Trevannion was expected on Saturday. Strangely enough, and sadly to her own vexation, she had been suffering in the house of the friends in the north—where she had purposed only a short stay—from an attack of acute inflammation in the eye, to which she had been subject in her younger days. For some time she had been forced to keep in a darkened room; and, when at length the inflammation subsided, it left her so extremely weak that neither the doctors nor her friends would consent to her removal, especially to a house where such serious indisposition still lingered. It had been a great trial to the anxious and kind-hearted woman not to be on the spot, especially when she knew how Stella was exerting herself. Still, the worst had been carefully kept from her; and it was no wonder that Lora was a little dreading the expected return.

Stella repeated what Lora had said to her brother, introducing some terms of endearment in speaking of her sister, which she forgot, as coming from her, must sound rather new to Somerset. His sister was not often absent from his thoughts; but he had never spoken to Stella about her before. A look of surprised enquiry passed over his face, and reminded Stella that the sweet reconciliation was unknown to him. There was silence for a moment; and then with drooping downcast eyes, and that bright flush of colour, the little sister murmured, "You know, Somerset, Lora has forgiven me long ago for all my waywardness; and we love one another; and I am so happy."

Somerset said nothing in reply; but he felt as a cipher before that young frail child, noble and grand as she seemed to him in her humility and loveliness.

"But, O Somerset," she continued, looking up into his face, "she has been so ill, and is, O so dreadfully altered! I would not tell you, only that, now you are going to see her, I am afraid you will be very shocked."

Something like a groan escaped her brother's lips. "But it will come all right, surely, Stella, as she gets better?"

"I don't know. I am afraid. She could not control herself like you, when it was at the worst; and O, it was terrible. And Stella shuddered at the remembrance.

"Perhaps, if someone had not controlled me, and spent all her time in bathing my scorching face and hands, I should have fared worse," Somerset said, turning the little face, which was looking down again, towards his own, with one of the thin hands, anything but scorching now.

"You were always so beautifully good and patient," Stella said, speaking what she had so often longed to tell him during his silent suffering. "And all that we could do seemed like nothing to help you: that was what made it so terrible."

"It did help—if that is any comfort to you now," her brother answered. "But, Stella, I feel as though I would give all I had, yes, and go through that illness again, horrible though it was, if only I could bear the marks of the suffering instead of Lora. 'Tis nothing for a man: but for a beautiful girl, and one like Lora! Just now, too!"

"O but, Somerset, everybody will love her just the same," Stella interrupted.

"We all shall, of course; and a great deal better, if such a thing is possible. But we is not everybody."

Stella took it for granted that the future brother-in-law was included in the "we," and, with the love of all dear ones continued, not to say increased, the loss of outward beauty, though certainly a trial, was not such a thoroughly-overwhelming one, in her esteem.

"I am very glad our good aunt is coming home so soon," Somerset continued, after a little silence.

"You and she together must do what you can to keep up Lora's spirits; and perhaps, after all, things will not turn out so badly as you fear. Good-night, little Stella."

He kissed her forehead, as he used to kiss Lora's, when she said good-night; and Stella went away, feeling like a new child.

The following Sunday was the first in May, and as warm and bright and lovely as a spring Sunday can well be pictured.

"Stella dear," Lora said, when she went into her room to wish her good-morning, "you are to have a day of pleasure and of rest to-day. It is a great many weeks since you have been to church, is it not?"

"O yes, a great many," Stella answered, looking back, however, without a sigh.

"Well, you go this morning, dear; and if Miss Lyon is not afraid to have you, and you like to stay, spend the day with them, and you shall be fetched early in the evening, time enough for Somerset's second tea, as you call it."

"I know they will not be afraid to have me; but about leaving you all so long alone I am afraid I shall be wanted."

"No, darling, not at all; we have arranged it quite nicely. Auntie and Somerset will want a long gossip; and she will take care of us very well till you come back. I shall rest this one day longer, so as to be able to try the sitting-room to-morrow. You must not stay now, dear, or you will be late. I have given orders about your going."

(To be continued.)

### Education.

Education has many good results, but none that are more sure than the sense of power and self-reliance with which it invests its possessor. We may not know the exact use a man will make of it, but we may rest assured that, whatever may be the circumstances into which he is thrown, he will be capable of far more, and enjoy far more, if he has had its advantages. And, although education is a large subject and one worthy of all the wisdom of a nation to deal with, yet every thoughtful man or woman can do something to promote it. Whenever we share what we know with others, whenever we arouse curiosity in a child or answer his questions intelligently, whenever we dispel a prejudice, or clear up a doubt, or set a single mind to thinking for itself, we, to that extent, remove the obstacle of ignorance and aid in the grand cause of education.

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### Emulate Your Dog.

A source of great evil among all workers in America, where few people know the real meaning of leisure, is the wide-spread habit of eating a hearty meal hurriedly when the body is in a state of exhaustion; too often, alas, the evil is enhanced by the fact that the food is innutritious, badly cooked, and clogging in itself. This is one species of slow suicide, causing a long train of evils which are usually attributed to overwork. Now it were better to go without food than to take it under these conditions. Your dog knows better than to eat when he is tired, and, if you watch him, you will notice that he is always reluctant to be enticed into play after eating; left to himself he will take a nap, or, at least, drop care for a while and rest. Humanity might raise its standard of health by following the example set by the instincts of the brute creatures.—From "Sanitarian," *Demorest's Magazine* for July.

### The Undergraduate and the Dean.

An excellent story comes from Oxford about the last undergraduate outbreak. Some eighteen young gentlemen were haled before the Dean of Christ church and charged with permitting disorderly conduct in the persons of their guests. "The rules of the College," said the Dean, "hold you responsible for the good behaviour of your guests. I accept your denial of any personal participation in the disorder, but for your guests' misbehaviour I must send you down." A certain young and noble Scot, heir to great possessions, however, was equal to the occasion. "I am therefore to understand, sir, that if you ask any of us to dinner, and we break your windows, you, sir, are directly and culpably responsible?" The cogency of the reply is said to have utterly floored the Dean. But the young gentlemen are still rusticated, this gallant defence notwithstanding.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

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### No Excuse.

How often do we hear the severe criticism made on an erring person, "There is no excuse for him, he knew well what he ought to have done, yet he did it not," showing that the expectation that performance will follow knowledge is still held, though continually disappointed! It is true that there are some persons so far exalted in the moral scale that their conduct seems to be thus governed. As soon as they discover an obligation they spring to fulfil it; as soon as ever they know what is right they hasten to do it. But in them the conscience is so active, the desire to do right is so strong, the impulse to obey the call of duty is so swift and fervent that their intermediate action between the knowledge and the deed is not discernible. In most of us this is, alas, not the case! Other motives predominate, conscience is feeble, the love of virtue does not keep pace with the knowledge, and the called-for action lingers and often never appears.