

THE CHURCH IN THY HOUSE

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved . . . and to the church in thy house.—Philem, 12.

St. Paul often speaks in his Epistles of "the church that is in the house" of various converts. In the Epistle to the Romans he greets "the church that is in the house" of Priscilla and Aquila, and in the first letter to the Corinthians greetings are sent from "the church that is in the house" of these same loyal friends. Evidently, wherever Aquila and Priscilla establish a home, there it becomes a "church." The Apostle also sends salutations to "the church which is in the house" of Nymphas (Col. iv.: 15) and—as noted above—to the church in the house of Philemon.

It is a very true saying: "Every home should be a church, and every church should be a home." The church is the House of our Father, and there the rich and poor, the cultured and the ignorant, meet as equals. There they gather round their Father's table, eating of the same loaf and drinking of the same cup. The church should be a place where we feel "at home" with rich and poor, and we also feel at home with the Father, who receives us as His dear children. It should be—though often it is not—a place of warmest fellowship. But let us look to-day at the other half of the saying: "Every home should be a church."

"There's no place like home"—countless hearts echo the familiar words. When people are far away from home, it usually seems the most sacred spot on earth, but is it always quite so perfect when we are in it? Is the home a church in miniature—a place where God is felt to be very near, a place where evil is crowded out by good? Sometimes it seems more like a place where the inhabitants feel quite at liberty to say rude things to one another, putting on their second-best manners with their second-best clothes.

If you are making your home as holy and peaceful as a church should be, then you are doing missionary work of splendid value. The real home of a Christian family in a heathen country is a wonder to all around, and is so attractive and inspiring that copies of the beautiful home-like are quick to appear. It is much the same everywhere, for we are all given to copy anything we admire.

"Go make thy garden as fair as thou canst;
Thou workest never alone;
Perchance he whose plot is next to thine,
Will see it and mend his own."

Would you like to know how it happened (does anything ever "happen?") I wonder, that I chose this subject for our chat to-day? Well, it was just this very thing I am talking about. I "dropped in" to spend an hour with a neighbor, and was charmed with the dainty freshness of her room. The muslin curtains and the white quilt looked as though the spring cleaning was just over—and it is not March yet. My friend did not expect me to see her room, for I just "happened" upstairs to look at a new waist she had been making. I spent a good part of this morning in making my room look tidy and fresh—it gets shockingly littered with books and papers sometimes. That was result of a good example, you see. Now, I am trying to open your eyes to the fact that the inspiration of a lovely home does more good than the home-maker ever can know in this world. My friend is not likely to find out (unless I tell her) that her dainty room not only roused me to a sense of shame at my untidiness, but was an inspiration to thousands of women in Canada. You see, I know you won't wish to be left behind—and how many other people will be inspired by your homes, and so on, in ever-widening circles, through the centuries? Why,

Hope's Quiet Hour

it makes one quite dizzy to try to calculate the power for good of that one nicely-kept bedroom!

And, while we are on the subject of bedrooms, here is a beautiful message to write out and leave on the table of a guest who—as Rebecca says—"brings a nightgown."

"Sleep sweet within this quiet room,
O thou! whoe'er thou art,
And let no mournful yesterday
Disturb thy peace of heart.
Nor let to-morrow scare thy rest
With dreams of coming ill;
Thy Maker is thy changeless Friend,
His love surrounds thee still.
Forget thyself and all the world,
Put out each feverish light,—
The stars are watching overhead—
Sleep sweet! Good night! Good night!

If your home is to be a "church," then your guests, as well as your children, must be able to see clearly that Jesus is not only a Guest, but a Member of the family—that He has come to stay, and is given a royal welcome. Then family prayer will not be forgotten or neglected, and the conversation will not only be pleasant but will enrich all those who join in it.

Love will be the key-note of the home-melody. It has been said that "the old hunger for love more than bread," but that might be said for all of us. Little children, growing boys and girls, the wife and husband, the "old maid"—who is perhaps more heart-hungry than most people—the mother, who gives so much love, and is often treated with very little consideration in her own home, and everybody else. And it is not enough to love silently. If the home is to be the holy ground which God means it to be, we must have a hearty, responsive service there.

"'Tis a little thing to say, 'you are kind;
I love you, my dear!' each night;
But it sends a thrill through the heart, I find—
For love is tender, as love is blind—
As we climb life's rugged height.
We starve each other for Love's caress;
We take, but we do not give;
It seems so easy some soul to bless,
But we dole the Love grudgingly, less and less,
Till 'tis bitter and hard to live."

I am not trying to tell you anything new. You know all this as well as I do. The question for each of us is, "Are we living poor, pinched lives for lack of Love?" Then let us wake up and use the treasure which God has poured so freely into our hands. Love is the only thing which can make any home happy,

and, where Love is, the home can hardly fail to be sacred, too. Yesterday a lady was lamenting her sorrowful condition because a dearly-loved husband had been lifted up to higher service in Paradise. She stood with one arm round a bright boy, and the other round an equally sunshiny daughter. Her sweet-faced mother was also there—needing and receiving daily tenderness—and the husband only was out of sight. She still loves him, and he certainly loves her, at least as dearly as before. Her heart is full of love—love given and received—and congratulated her on her joy, instead of pitying her for her sorrow. When husband and wife see each other daily, and yet feel a wall of ice between them, then they are really separated. But death is far too weak to separate those who really love.

If you want your home to be a church, then keep things peaceful there. Don't indulge in such habits as nagging, fault-finding, snappishness, gloomy looks, and weary tones. Of course, these will creep in, if you don't do your level best to secure proper rest and recreation for yourself. No one wants you to make a martyr of your self unnecessarily, doing all the jobs which other people ought to do, and looking miserable and pale in consequence. Such self-sacrifice spoils the rest of the family, and ruins their happiness as well as their morals. "Bear ye one another's burdens," is carefully balanced by St. Paul's sensible addition, "for every man shall bear his own burden."—Gal. vi.: 2, 5. He did not wish over-indulgent wives and mothers to bear all the burdens they could find in their homes, or he would not have placed those maxims side by side in one letter.

A business man prided himself on never having taken a holiday for many years. One day he sat down and cried, instead of going to his office. Then he took a holiday, when it was too late to get the full good of it! Don't wait until you are overtired before you make your home a house of rest. Love, rest, cheerfulness, dainty freshness in dress, in rooms and table, friendliness to guests, and considerate courtesy to all, the underlying remembrance that Christ Himself is there—if you have all these, in ever-growing measure, then, not only an Apostle, but the Lord of the Apostles, salutes "the church in thy house."

—DORA FARNCOMB.

Editor "Hope's Quiet Hour":
I am an old Englishman; I was eighty years old last April. My wife died a year ago last June, and, since that, I stay with my children. I have enjoyed very much some pieces in Hope's Quiet Hour, and in the Ingle Nook, and I think it would be to

every farmer's interest to take it. My eyes are weak, and sometimes they go bloodshot so that I cannot read for an hour or more. I am doing this without glasses. It has been my practise for a number of years to read a chapter or more in the Bible every morning. I was sitting in this room some months ago and took the book and tried to read, and my eyes went bloodshot, so I shut my eyes, and my daughter came into the room and I told her what was the matter. She said, "I suppose you were asking the Lord to continue your sight." I said, "No, I did not put it that way, but I did say, 'Blessed Savior, if I am never to read these precious, these soul-saving and comforting words of Thine, give me patience to bear the loss.'" My daughter went on about her work and I kept my eyes closed a few minutes, and then opened them and read Paul's letter to the Colossians right through without any trouble. Then my soul was filled with grateful praise for the blessing that I enjoyed. Now, if you think that anything that I have said would be of any use or comfort to anyone, you may make any use you like of it. I cannot think that there is anything that Hope's Quiet Hour could use. Though I am so old, I have excellent health, very seldom an ache or pain.

EBENEZER TRACY.

Spring Bay P. O., Manitoulin.

Thank you very much for your splendid letter, Mr. Tracy. It does not need any praise from me. I should like to shake hands with you.
HOPE.

DEATH SONG

Lay me down beneath the willows in the grass,
Whah de branch'll go a-singing' as it pass.
An, w'en I's a-layin' low,
I kin hieah it as it go,
Singin', 'Sleep, my honey, tek yo' res' at las'.

Lay me nigh to whah hit meks a little pool,
An' de watah stan's so quiet lak and cool.

Whah de little birds in spring
Ust to come an' drink an' sing,
An' de chillen waded on dey way to school.

Let me settle we'en my shouldahs
draps de load
Nigh enough to hieah de noises in de road;
Fu' I t'ink de las' long res'
Gwine to soothe my sperrit bes',
Ef I's layin' 'mong de t'ings I's allus knowed.

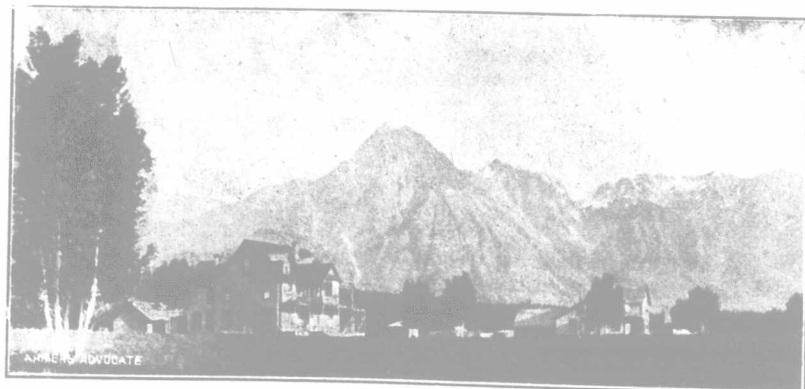
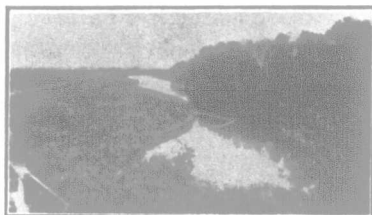
LIFE'S TRAGEDY

It may be misery not to sing at all
And to go silent through the brim-
ming day.
It may be sorrow never to be loved,
But deeper griefs than these beset
the way.

To have come near to sing the perfect song
And only by a half-tone lost the key,
There is the potent sorrow, there the grief,
The pale, sad staring of life's tragedy.

To have just missed the perfect love,
Not the hot passion of untempered youth,
But that which lays aside its vanity
And gives thee for thy trusting
worship, truth.

This, this it is to be accursed indeed;
For if we mortals love, or if we sing,
We count our joys not by the things we have,
But what kept us from the perfect thing.



THE HOSPITAL AT HAZELTON, B. C.