

HOUSEHOLD.

The One Who Looks Down.

(By Mrs. Helena H. Thomas, in the New York 'Observer'.)

The subject under discussion was 'Helpers in the Home,' and the ever-present difficulty of securing such as would not slight work unless closely watched, when one of our number, turning to me, said,—

'I occasionally employ as faithful a creature as you could find if you were to hunt the world over; but she is no longer young, and consequently cannot do two days' work in one, as so many seem to expect transient help to do.'

'Just such a person as I have been looking for,' said I, 'one who will do her best when she is not watched. So I will secure her address before I leave, as some left-over fall cleaning remains to be done.'

This I did, and soon found by experience that helpers who are not 'eye-servants' are not extinct. But this woman, who was past middle life, seemed so entirely lost to all but doing faithfully what she was told to do, that after noting what to me seemed unnecessary painstaking, I resolved to tell her that some kinds of work would bear slighting. This opportunity presented itself when I put her to cleaning a rarely used room, and later on saw her mounted on the top of the step ladder so that she could look down upon the door-casing, which she was as diligently cleaning as the visible part of the room. And so I said:

'I like my work well done, but I think some things will bear a little slighting. For instance, no one ever sees the top of that door, and so it hardly seems worth while to give it such a scouring, especially as you seem so liable to fall.'

'Perhaps you are right, ma'am,' said she from her lofty height, 'but I couldn't rest if I did any different.'

I made some laughing reply, as I left her to her own way, but I puzzled over her words until the speaker was about to leave me for the night, and then I asked her what she meant by the remark.

'Well, ma'am,' replied she 'I don't mind telling you, but some ladies would laugh at me if I told 'em why I said that. But I just couldn't rest if I didn't leave the out-of-sight places as clean, every bit, as the rest, for when I'm washing 'em, like you saw me the top of the door, I think always of the One who looks down, not the folks that look up. You understand what I want to say.'

Yes, I did understand, and I felt rebuked by the humble serving-woman, whose thoughts of him evidently made menial work other than drudgery—for, in spite of poverty and a crippled husband, she always seemed light of heart, but I could not rest without knowing more, and so put the query:

'Was it natural for you to be so painstaking?'

'Oh, no, no,' she made haste to say, 'but I'll tell you how it came about, if you care to hear.'

And then she took the proffered seat, and began her story:

'My folks were poor, and mother knew that I would have to go out to service as soon as I was strong enough, and so she tried to bring me up to do everything just as she did, but I was that heedless that I slighted my work whenever I thought that she wouldn't find it out. But one day just before I went out to service, to try me, like, I knew after, mother set me to cleaning a room, and says she:

'Now, Sarah, I'm not going to watch you or tell you, as I always have, for I want you to make believe you are working for your new mistress.'

'So mother left me alone, and I did just as she had always told me, except that I slighted over the doors and windows. But she knew that her unfaithful girl would bear watching, and so, after she had glanced about, she stepped into a chair, we didn't have step-ladders then, didn't need 'em, either, in a little low house like ours—and then—she saw the dirt I had left. Poor, dear mother, how sorry and discouraged she did look when she sat down in the chair. It seems just as if I can see her now when she said:

'Oh, Sarah, Sarah, you'll make a no ac-

count servant if you don't mend your ways.'

'And then I tried to excuse it off by saying that there wasn't any use of being so particular about cleaning what folks couldn't see if they looked up, even. Then mother talked to me, Oh, so good.'

Here the girl grown old covered her face with her hands and wept silently for a few moments, before she said:

'It happened 'most forty years ago, but it breaks my heart yet to think how bad I made my good mother feel, and it 'most seems like I can hear her now when she said:

'"Oh, my child, if you would learn always to think that the eye of the One who looks down is upon you, you wouldn't ever slight your work."

'You see, I never forgot those words, for the next day I came to the city to work, and the next time I saw mother she was beyond speaking. So you can't wonder that I always tried to do like she wanted me to, nor that, when I work, I don't think so much about what you and other ladies think of my work, but that God sees me. So you see, ma'am, that I just can't slight what I do.'

'I appreciate your feelings,' said I, taking the toil-worn hand of this sister in Christ, 'and I thank you for telling me this. Your mother's words will help me, too, to be more faithful in homely duties.'

'But I must tell you, too,' added the poor woman, as she was about to go to her humble home and crippled husband, 'that now I don't think of Father's eye being upon me, because of what mother said, only, but because it rests me, and makes everything go sort of easy like.'

Thinking of the faithfulness of this daughter of the King, and the cause of it, the thought suggested itself that the injunction which fell from that mother's lips in the long ago, might be helpful to both old and young, rich and poor, if passed along.

'Always think that the eye of the One who looks down is upon you.'

Read With System.

To suppose that by mere intuition alone we can perform wisely and well all the manifold duties devolving upon us requires an amount of self-conceit of which few mothers, let us hope, are possessed. It should not, therefore, be a hardship but rather a privilege, to inform and prepare ourselves for the work which we have in hand. We should seek eagerly and accept gratefully the help which is extended to us; and any mother who intelligently devotes a half-hour's time daily to reading literature especially adapted to her requirements will, I am sure, gladly testify that the assistance which she has gained thereby has more than made up to her in other ways for the time she has thus expended.

Women too often go to extremes as to the time they give to reading. Either they read more than they can assimilate, thus producing a sort of mental dyspepsia, or they get discouraged by the extent of the varied bill of fare afforded them and give up reading altogether. And it cannot be denied that most women read in a very desultory, hit-or-miss fashion. The first thing they happen to get hold of or take a fancy to, usually claims their attention, whether it be a fashion magazine, a cook-book, a novel, a Sunday-school or other paper, a book of poems or the almanac. How frequently we finish something with the reflection: 'If I'd known what that was I wouldn't have read it.' Yet we keep right on adding to the list of such experiences, thus losing much time which might be given with greater profit and pleasure to better things.

Let us, as mothers, cease to be governed so largely by impulse in our reading. Let us decide upon a systematic course to follow, making a wise selection of books, papers and magazines. Let us carefully consider how much time we can give daily, at the least calculation, to this course of reading, and confine ourselves to it during that period of time, even if it be no more than five or ten minutes. Then, if we must have hash, let us reverse the usual method of procedure and take it for dessert, after having conscientiously disposed of our regular rations. It is not how much we read, but how much we appropriate, which counts in the long run. One good thought a day, well digested, will do more for our mental

development than a hundred lightly and rapidly passed over with no time for reflection between them.—Addie Davis Fries, in 'Union Signal.'

A sudden and wearing attack of coughing often needs immediate attention, especially in consumptives and those chronically ill. In an emergency, that ever-useful remedy, hot water, will often prove very effective. It is much better than the ordinary cough mixtures, which disorder the digestion, and spoil the appetite. Water, almost boiling, should be sipped when the paroxysms come on. A cough, resulting from irritation, is relieved by hot water through the promotion of secretion, which moistens the irritated surfaces. Hot water also promotes expectoration, and so relieves the dry cough.

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