

The Inglenook.

A Sister's Influence.

Some years ago, as I sat on the piazza of a summer hotel, I noticed among the crowd of young people two or three pretty girls, and as many bright young men, all "waiting for the mail."

"Oh, dear!" said the prettiest of the girls impatiently, "why don't they hurry? Are you expecting a letter, Mr. Allison," and she turned to a small youth standing near.

He smiled. "I'll get one, surely," he said. "It's my day. Just this particular letter always comes. Nell is awfully good; she's my sister, you know, and no fellow ever had a better one."

The pretty girl laughed, saying, as he received his letter, "Harry would think he was blessed if I wrote once a year."

Gradually the other drifted away, but Frank Allison kept his place, scanning eagerly the closely-written sheets, now and then laughing quietly. Finally, he slipped the letter into his pocket and, rising, saw me.

"Good morning, Miss Williams," he said, cordially, for he always had a pleasant word for us older people as well as for the young. "Good news?" I questioned, smiling.

"My sister's letters always bring good news," he answered. "She writes such jolly letters."

And, unfolding this one, he read me scraps of it—bright nothings, with here and there a little sentence full of sisterly love and earnestness. There was a steady light in his eyes, as, half-apologizing for "boring" me, he looked up and said quietly, "Miss Williams, if I ever make anything of a man, it will be sister Nell's doing."

And as I looked at him, I felt strongly what a mighty power "Sister Nell" held in her hands—just a woman's hands, like yours dear girls, and perhaps no stronger or better; but it made me wonder how many girls stop to consider how they are using their influence over these boys, growing so fast toward manhood, unworthy or noble, as the sisters choose.

There is but one way, dear girls; begin at once while they are still the little boys of the home-circle, ready to come to sister with anything. Let them feel that you love them. These great, honest boy hearts are both tender and loyal, and if you stand by these lads now, while they are neither boys nor men, while they are awkward and heedless, they will remember it when they become the courteous, polished gentlemen you desire to see them. Do not snub them. Nothing hurts a loving boy's soul more than a snub, and nothing more effectually closes the boy-heart than thoughtless ridicule.

Have patience, girls—that gentle patience whose perfect work will surely win the smile of the Master, who grants to all who do the Father's will that we should be his "sisters;" and for the sake of the great Elder Brother, who dignified with his divine touch these earthly relationships, shall we not be more tender, more patient, more loving with these sensitive, great-hearted lads who call us "sister," and remember the wise man who said, "Shall the woman who guards not a brother be lightly trusted with husband or son?"—Selected.

Caught.

A worthy old gentleman who lived in the mountains had one weakness—a habit of absenting himself from church on a very slight pretext.

One Sunday, which was a little cloudy, but by no means inclement, he was not found in his place. The next morning at an early hour, as the pastor was standing on his doorstep, who should come along but this old man, perched on a load of wood, his hat and overcoat, his hair and beard all white with the thickly falling and fiercely blowing snow! Seeing the pastor, he halted to pay his respects and exchange a friendly word.

"Good morning," said the old man. "All well?"

"All well, thank you."

"Sorry I could not be at church yesterday."

"Yes, I missed you."

"Well, the fact is, it was such a bad day, and the weather threatened so much, that I thought it was too bad to venture out, and the—"

"Yes, it is fine pleasant weather to-day," said the pastor. "If we should have as fine a day as this next Sunday. I shall look for you at church."

The old man blushed, and manifested a desire to break off the conversation—all of which seemed as if he were inwardly saying, "Caught this time!"—Selected.

The Christian's Marching Orders.

The pagan ports are open
Where commerce shows her fleet,
And bars on all sides broken,
Invite the pilgrims feet.

And, hark! remotest borders
Send out their cry to-day:
Obey your marching orders,
And hither haste away.

"Make plain the great salvation,
With all its cheering light,
Discipling every nation
That gropes in error's night.

"The China walls must tumble,
Without a pang of truth,
All Asia's gods must crumble
Beneath the rays of truth.

"E'en Africa belated,
Her plea you must not scorn;
Her heart is richly freighted
With sighings for the morn.

"Where'er the sun is shining
On pagan shrines to-day,
And blind ones are repining
To know the heavenward way,

"Then let the old, old story,
The opening ear delight,
And soon will blaze with glory,
The darkest heathen height."

It Hurts.

I once heard a missionary say, "It hurts so to live in India." I have often thought of the expression. It is very true and suggestive. It does hurt very much to live there. We see and hear and know so many things here which hurt us. On a cold morning last November I saw two naked children fighting for possession of a coarse cotton garment. I did not see the end of the struggle, for I was riding rapidly past the

village; but the larger of the two seemed to be stripping the garments from the back of the younger one. Indian childhood so often hungry, cold, burdened with heavy work, mercilessly beaten, neglected, taught only evil, is one of the things that hurt us. The helplessness of the weak and ignorant, the degradation of women, the fierce struggle for existence, the hopeless poverty of so many millions, all these things hurt us, though we do not personally share such calamities. Willingly or unwillingly we suffer much for India. Christ suffered for men because he loved them; we believe he loves men all the more because he suffered so much for them. Few indeed of those who have come from other lands to India have not suffered much for India, willingly or unwillingly. What a catalogue could be made of things in India that hurt us, which give us pain. Like her own jungle of Karaunda or Gangehi the Indian life has many sharp thorns, and we cannot pass through it without torn garments and bleeding hands and feet. And whether we desire it or no, this suffering gives the land a large place in our minds: so large indeed that when separated from it we are conscious of a great loss, which fills our hearts with indefinable yet undeniable regret. Indian Witness.

How Baby Was Provided For.

It was one of the big department stores. Two women stood near each other before a counter where the belongings of very little children are sold. Both looked with wistful yet widely different expressions at the tiny garments displayed.

The one woman asked to be shown knitted undersuits for a baby. The saleswoman drew out a box and took from it some absurdly small garments—soft, creamy, fleecy, the most delightful combinations of silk and wool. The woman—a young woman she was, almost a girl—took them in her hands with evident delight.

"How much are they?" she asked.

The saleswoman named the price.

"A piece?" asked the would-be-customer, in a timid tone.

"Yes," answered the saleswoman.

The customer put down the little garments. She looked tired and weak, and bitterly disappointed. It's heart-breaking not to be able to buy what you want for your baby.

"Please show me something—something cheaper," she said, swallowing a lump in her throat.

The other woman, who had been looking into the showcase, had seen it all. She spoke to the saleswoman brusquely.

"I can't wait any longer," she said, "Tell me the price of that bonnet over there."

The saleswoman hurried to obey. One doesn't keep a chinchilla collar and an imperious manner waiting if one knows one's business. There was a moment's whispering, and the saleswoman returned to her waiting customer. From another box she produced some garments similar to the expensive ones.

"Here's some shirts," said she, "that we can let you have cheaper. We have only a few left. They're only—." And the "only" was exactly half the price she named before.

It wasn't cleverly done, but it deceived the tired woman. She went away with the wistful look gone from her face. The chinchilla collar went down in the same elevator with her, and the face above the collar wore a look almost of envy added to its wistfulness. I fancied—though it's folly, of course, to imagine that women with chinchilla collars