

# The Ingle Nook.

Do you ever think about the people you know, all the different types and classes so far as you can classify them, which have come under your observation. The process, possibly, is not highly edifying, but it is at least interesting. As has been well said, the most interesting study of mankind is man.

I was reading this morning a little poem, which I will quote for you presently, and from that, got thinking about contentment in the abstract, about contented people and the various avenues by which they try to reach the much-to-be-desired goal. Among all the heterogeneous mass, two classes resolved themselves very distinctly: (1) those who find their contentment in strenuous work of one kind or another; (2) those who are contented in a phlegmatic, bovine sort of way, people who are satisfied with themselves and with just jogging along through life without much perceptible effort—and with very little accomplishment.

To the first class belong the great thinkers of the world, the men and women who achieve great things—nay, even those who achieve in the smaller things of life—the housekeeper who decides that her housekeeping, her home-making will be carried out a little better this year than last; the farmer, or workman, or professional man who resolves that his work will be done in a more skilful or more conscientious way than ever before. . . . To the second belong chiefly people of easy circumstances who are not goaded into exertion by compulsion of circumstances, and who have not ambition enough to better themselves on their own account.

The man of the first type often finds his contentment in the very thick of a supreme effort, which is, at times, so strenuous as to leave him exhausted utterly in body and mind; yet inaction would distress him a hundred times more. He knows well what Tolstoi means when he says: "A thinker or an artist will never sit on the heights of Olympus as we are apt to imagine; he must suffer in company with men in order to find satisfaction or consolation. He will suffer, because he is constantly in anxiety and agitation; he might have found out and told what would give happiness to men, might have saved them from suffering; and he has neither found it out nor said it,—and to-morrow, it may be too late—he may die. And, therefore, suffering and self-sacrifice will always be the lot of the thinker and the artist." . . . The man of the bovine temperament, on the contrary, knows no such stress. If he does little for the world, even for his own little world, the world troubles him little. Yet, if reverses come, he is, unless in possession of latent forces, which develop with exceptional rapidity, in a bad plight, for he has not cultivated those qualities on which he may rely in such crises—capability, courage, adaptability.

Between these two classes there are a myriad of others tending to the one side or to the other. Each of us knows, or may know, where he stands, or where he would stand. Ostensibly, it is not wise to fasten one's self too decidedly to the bovine group. Such contentment, "easy-goingness," is the destroyer of progress, the dead hand laid upon a possible usefulness. We were not put here, surely, to live as happy cattle, but to take part, to the best of our ability, in the issues of life, whether our best be doing great things for the public, or just helping in the immediate circle of our relatives and neighbors. . . . On the other hand, there should be a care lest, in leaning too far the other way, one may develop a nervousness, irritability, one-sidedness, that are not conducive to the best character development. The great genius, it is true, must go on; he is driven, often at high tension, by reason of the message which he feels he must deliver. The danger is for lesser geniuses, whose ambition may carry them beyond their strength to a goal that may prove but an ignis fatuus.

Perhaps, after all, the best way for the great majority of us, people, as we are likely to be, of some capability, but of no extraordinary genius, is just to go on doing little by little, our best. We may be very sure that, having done the duty nearest us, the next, as Carlyle has re-

marked, will stand revealed. So may we escape the dangers of bovinism, and advance, steadily, healthfully, happily, filling the niche in the world which we were intended to occupy.

And, now, the little poem—here it is:

### Which was Wiser?

Two men toiled side by side from sun to sun.

And both were poor;

Both sat with children when the day was done,

About their door.

One saw the beautiful in crimson cloud

And shining moon;

The other, with his head in sadness bowed,

Made night of noon.

One loved each tree and flower and singing bird

On mount or plain;

No music in the soul of one was stirred

By leaf or rain.

in such a love, which the sordid soul can never know. It is glorious to find the good everywhere, "in every fellow-man." Yet something more is needed—conscious effort toward higher ideals. For, without effort, there can be no advancement. If we would develop mentally, we must try—must read, learn, think. If we would be unselfish, we must practice unselfishness. If we would attain in art, or in farming, or house-keeping, we must strive to improve. And so on.

I hope you will pardon me for keeping on and on upon this subject. I am afraid there is a bit of the old school-teacher in me yet. Pestalozzi said, you know, that repetition is a great factor in education, and while using his tactics upon you, I have had the satisfaction that I have also been using them upon myself. There is nothing like having a palpable truth thoroughly impressed upon one.

It isn't wise, I fear, to end a "solemn" sermon lightly, but that

be off-putting, but when I read last week's Quiet Hour I made up my mind I would write and try to arouse a little more interest among the "Nookers" in regard to the Fresh-Air Mission, and, as it pertains to farmers and their wives, I think the Nook is the very place to have it talked up. Last year there were over seventy homes offered through reading "The Farmer's Advocate," and, no doubt, many more who did not mention where they saw or heard of the Mission. If farmers could only know what it means to tired-out, half-starved mothers, their children, and worn-out shop girls, the homes offered would be doubled; yes, ten times over. I believe it is because farmers do not know, or do not realize the good they might do, that so few homes are offered. How many readers ever visited a poverty-stricken home in the city? I can safely say not one out of fifty. When we go to the city, we go to see the sights. We visit the schools, hospitals, Parliament buildings, the zoo gardens, go to the islands, and, perhaps, to the Falls; but the poor, narrow, ill-smelling streets we never think of, and we come home well pleased with our trip, and thinking the city would not be such a bad place to live in. But let the same ones go to some of the Mission workers, and go with them to some of the so-called homes, and see how some human beings live; they would be shocked. I have known people who lived in the city for years, who, by chance, went to visit, with a friend, some of these homes, and they were unutterably shocked; they had no idea there was so much misery so near their door. They couldn't get it out of their minds for a week, and never want to see such misery again. But can we, as Christian people, turn our backs on the poor and needy, many of whom are hard-working, good-living, Christian people?

Some, no doubt, will say, "Work is plentiful, why don't they go and work on a farm?" Now, I ask you, would you take them to work and give them wages enough to keep them? What use would a great many of them be on a farm, or how many farmers could provide a house and keep a man with a wife and a number of children? Then, too, a great number are widows with families of young children; perhaps death, or something worse, has deprived the mother and children of their breadwinner, and the poor mother, with all the instincts of a true mother, almost works her life out over the wash tub to provide a bare living for herself and children. I have known women to go to bed supperless after washing all day, for the very reason that if they didn't get it where they were working, they couldn't afford it after paying their rent and getting their children something to eat. Of course, there are a great many good, benevolent people in the city, too, who would gladly aid such worthy poor if they knew; but how very sensitive some of this class are! I sometimes think these mothers seem to have lost almost everything in this world but their pride. Last winter, one woman I knew, on being asked by one of the workers if she needed anything, said: "No, thank you, I am getting along very well," when at the same time there wasn't a bite in the house, and she ironed most of the night to get some clothes done, so as to be able to get the children their breakfast. In telling a friend afterwards, she said, "I have come pretty low, but not low enough to beg. I wasn't brought up myself on charity, and I cannot let my children be. All I ask is a chance to work and earn an honest living. It is this class particularly that is benefited by the Fresh-Air Mission. Of course, there are sometimes deceptions in this as in everything else, but doesn't it seem a pity for the worthy poor to have to suffer for a very few unworthy ones? Then, too, a great many people think the children sent out are all little street waifs, and that, property, or even life, would scarcely be safe while they were around. Now, the truth of the matter is, only the very best, behaved children are sent out, unless a special request is made for the other extreme. Last summer, I think it was, there were thirty of the worst children to be found sent out (upon request, of course), and, with one exception, they were all invited back to the same places for this year. I have heard people say, repeatedly, that if they only knew what



Summer Drinks.

One saw the good in every fellow-man,  
And hoped the best;  
The other marvelled at his Master's plan  
And doubt confessed.

One, having heaven above and heaven below  
Was satisfied;  
The other, discontented, lived in woe,  
And hopeless died.

—Sarah K. Bolton.

Don't you think that if the whole story had been told about this wiser man, one more bit of description must have been added, the theme of which would have been "He did his best"? It seems to me that in the last analysis this is one condition of having "heaven above and heaven below." It is glorious to see the beautiful things about us, and to love them; there is a keenness of joy

observation in regard to Pestalozzi has reminded me of an amusing story which some of the Normal girls used to tell, and which I must tell you also. At one of the boarding-houses, there was a certain student who used to drive the rest to distraction by studying aloud. One night, however, they almost forgave her in the hilarity occasioned by hearing her repeat, over and over, in unvarying monotone, "Pestalozzi says that the secret of all true education is repetition—Pestalozzi says that the secret of all true education is repetition"—and so on, and so on, for a good five or ten minutes.

Now, I must stop, or I will be crowding someone else out. D. D.

Dear Hope, Dame Durden and all Chatterers,—I have intended writing for some time, but I think my besetting sin must