

# HOUSEHOLD.

## Business Rules.

Mr. T. W. Higginson says in 'Harper's Bazar,' that a great deal is constantly done to keep whole classes of the community not merely in utter ignorance of business, but in a want of common-sense, by those who should supply training. This applies especially to women; but it also applies, in a degree, to other classes not directly in business, to clergymen, to literary men, and, in a less degree, to all professional men. They are not encouraged to learn business matters for themselves, but are advised to depend on others who have learnt them professionally, just as people were formerly advised not to concern themselves about their own lungs or heart-valves, but simply to call the doctor. It is not considered quite lady-like for a young girl to inquire about stocks, or to have her own cheque-book at a bank; even where she is wealthy it is prettier for her to ask papa for a cheque, and then ask her brother to cash it. One of the richest heiresses in New England told the writer a few years since that she knew absolutely nothing about any business matter, beyond the mere drawing of a cheque; that her father first, then her brother, then her husband, had attended to everything else. Another woman of independent property, whose brothers were eminent business men, told me that she never even attempted to balance her cheque-book; that she generally knew her account to be overdrawn at the month's end, and simply turned it over to her brother to adjust the matter by new deposits, as she supposed. If as much were done to train the non-business classes with knowledge as is now done to keep them passively imbecile, the community would be more thriving than it is, because these classes would be less helpless.

To correct this, the beginning must consist, as has been said, in 'a few plain instincts and a few plain rules.' The first instinct to be trusted is that which bids us, whether rich or poor, not to put absolute confidence in any one adviser, but exercise reasonable care for ourselves in both regards. No woman should ever sign a paper without knowing exactly what it means, let her husband or the neighboring squire say what he pleases. No man should agree to the transfer of his little all from one form of investment to another without thorough statement of reasons and the careful study of all the circumstances of the case.

There are, moreover, a few simple rules which any father can easily teach to his daughter, any brother in business to any brother who is out of business. One of these is that, as a rule, nothing can be had for nothing, and consequently that there is something wrong, or at least suspicious, in every particularly high rate of interest or especially flattering profit. They can be taught also not to let any property go out of their hands without proper security, or something to show for it. Business is largely a matter of common sense. Let the most domestic woman only apply to her little investments, if she has any, the same caution she would show in dealing with her cooking-stove or her washer-woman, and she will be safer than now. Another simple rule which would obviate most financial calamities is the homely one, 'not to put all your eggs in one basket'; not to assume that because a given concern seems prosperous you may leave all else and risk everything on that—a thing which lies at the bottom, no doubt, of two-thirds of the destruction of small properties. But let us never forget that Stevenson was right in his fundamental maxim, and that the first duty, especially of the more defenceless classes, is to pay one's way. 'When that is done,' Stevenson adds, 'a man may plunge into what eccentricity he pleases, but emphatically not till then.'

## The Birth-Fire of Prayer.

At the birth of a child into a Christian home, a new force connected with his existence, his power, his future, should immediately be set at work, a force which until then was not in being. This new force in the world is his parents' prayers.

There is an Indian practice among the Pueblos, which may be the shadow of a great truth for Christian people. 'After the birth of a child among the Pueblos, the father for eight days must see that the sacred

birth-fire in the fogon, or adobe fireplace, goes not out day or night, and as it can be kindled only in the sacred way, so only can it be rekindled if it does go out. The father must smuggle a live coal, it may be in his own bare hand, under his blanket from the Cacique's own hearth, otherwise the fire of the child's life goes out within the year.'

The birth-fire which should begin to burn and glow when a child is born to Christian parents is the fire of prayer, kindled only at the great hearth-fire of God's love. Should it go out, the blazing coal must be brought again; it may be with pain and suffering, from the ever-burning source.

Prayer is a labor that cometh with a child, and can never be intermitted nor superseded till the life of either parent or child ends.

Are the parents of the present day addressing themselves to this work? Is there not something more than the shadow of a truth in the tradition of the Indian, if we apply it to the spiritual life of the child? If the birth-fire goes out the child's life goes out within the year. If the father's and mother's prayers cease, what becomes of the soul-life of the child? They may not see the spirit expiring as the Indian expected to see his little one die; but surely, if prayer is necessary to the well-being of the child, if in any degree it maintains and nourishes the vital force of the child's inner being, then its suspension or surcease must withdraw a certain amount of support which is needed for the best condition of the child.

Is there not something moving in the thought that the poor, untaught Indian keeps the birth-fire going day and night? There must be no vacation in the prayer-life of parents. In the morning, fresh fuel, and in the evening a re-fanning of the flames. At morning—light, strength, support, and instruction, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit: these things we crave for our children, God's blessing on their day. In the evening, like Job, we offer sacrifices and pray, lest our children may have sinned. We become not only priests to pray for grace for them, but intercessors to plead for the forgiveness and the washing away of their sins.—'The Christian.'

## A Searching Question.

(By Ella R. Towle.)

Not long ago I was impressed by reading the story of a Christian sea captain, who, returning from a long voyage, brought with him several converted South Sea Islanders. Upon arriving at San Francisco, so fearful was he lest the influence of that city would cause them to renounce their newly embraced religion, that he employed every device he could to prevent their landing. I cannot vouch for its truth, but whether true or false, the story suggests this query: In how many so-called Christian homes could a converted heathen be placed with perfect safety to his new religion?

I cannot forbear relating an experience of my early childhood. Although my home was not professedly Christian, I was taught to respect religion and its forms. When a little girl I was an occasional guest at the home of a young friend whose parents were prominent Christians and active workers in the church. This was long my ideal of what a home should be. I especially enjoyed the blessing before the meals, and the family altar. Once I happened there during the school year, and much to my disappointment and perplexity, the service I loved was omitted. As I saw the family separating without the usual morning worship, I timidly whispered to my little friend that family prayers had been forgotten, but received the indifferent reply: 'O, we never have prayers in the winter when we go to school. The days are too short, we don't have time for them.' A dull pain crept into my heart. My beautiful ideal home was forever destroyed, and my thoughts resolved themselves thus: If they have prayers only when they have time, for them they cannot be worth much, or they would always find time. For years this childish conclusion followed me like a shadow.

Broader knowledge and wider experience have proven that this home is no exception to the rule, and yet so much depends upon our Christian homes! How could a converted heathen harmonize the Fourth Commandment with the Sunday visitings and feastings found in so many of our Christian homes, with the Sunday pleasure seeking and travel indulged in without remonstrance or rebuke by too many of the young Christians, or how could he harmonize the Fifth

Commandment with its daily interpretation as made by the home language, manners, and actions? Surely no thoughtful follower of Jesus can call these idle questions. 'But,' some one may say, 'there are no converted heathen in our homes.' Are there not? Then there must be some unconverted ones. All the heathen are not in foreign lands. What about the occasional guest, or the seamstress, the wash woman, the hired man, or hired woman? What possible interpretation could they place upon your home and family life.—'Congregationalist.'

## Selected Recipes.

Potatoes and Onions.—Chop six large, cold, boiled potatoes in small pieces, and mince two small onions. Mix well, adding salt and a little pepper. Have good hot drippings ready in an iron spider, and pour in the vegetables. Cover, and when they begin to brown evenly, stir in a head of minced parsley. Cover again till the onions are cooked; uncover and let finish browning, but see that they do not burn.

Almond Cake.—One-half cupful of butter, creamed with two cupfuls of granulated sugar. Add one cupful of sweet milk. Then, alternately, the whites of eight eggs whipped to a froth, and two cupfuls of flour sifted five times, with three rounding teaspoonfuls of baking-powder. Flavor with almond extract. Bake it in five layers; and when cold spread between the layers the following: One quart of whipped cream, one cupful of powdered sugar, two cupfuls of blanched and finely chopped English walnuts. Flavor with rose extract. Cover the top and sides with an icing flavored with lemon extract, and before it has begun to harden place blanched almonds, in ornamental designs, on the top.

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