

Home Column.

A MOTHER'S SMILE.

Though a mother may seem void of beauty,
Her tongue have no art to beguile,
To her children there's nothing so lovely
As her face when bright with a smile.

When they wake from the slumbers of childhood,
And gaze on the world, half afraid,
If they see mother's face bending o'er them,
Their swift-starting fears are allayed.

To their fingers her cheek is the softest,
Though care may have hardened its lines,
And their bruises are healed by her kisses,
From lips on which age has its signs.

She's a comrade to share in their pastimes,
A refuge if dangers betide,
There is always a comfort in troubles,
A haven of peace at her side.

Oh, ye mothers, smile oft on your children,
For blest is the woman whose face,
Once impressed on these hearts in their childhood,
Nor distance nor time can efface.

And more happy the man or the woman,
Immersed in the world's snare and wile,
Who bears upon memory's tablets
The thought of a mother's fond smile.

GOOD SOCIETY—THE WELL-BRED WOMAN.

A writer, whose name I do not know, but whose words may well be committed to memory, says: "Gossip is a beast of prey that does not wait for the death of the victim it devours." Some woman who aspire to move in the best social circles wonder why they do not receive the encouragement they look for, among persons of taste and culture. They cannot get beyond the line of mere acquaintanceship with many whom they earnestly desire to include among their intimate friends.

I know not a more frequent cause of exclusion from the intimacy of well-bred women than the inveterate tendency to gossip, which is so painfully common among our sex. It needs not a very large endowment of intelligence to perceive that if my neighbor is made a target for ridicule or slander to-day, in my presence, it will be my turn to suffer similarly to-morrow, or whenever I am out of earshot. It is impossible to trust or respect the woman to whom the private affairs of her friends and acquaintances are only so much food for idle or malicious talk. That she injures herself more than the victims of her unbridled tongue, is a fact which seems to escape her attention, and she probably goes through life wondering why her sallies of wit at the expense of others are not more appreciated by those whom she fancies she should interest and amuse. To measure the whole baseness and vulgarity of gossip, one only has to imagine the feelings with which the purveyor of it would discover that her remarks were overheard by, or repeated verbatim, to the object of them. It is just as dishonorable and disgraceful to be caught stealing our neighbor's good reputation as to be found pocketing her silver spoons. Indeed the injury to her is greater in the former case, since it is much easier to replace spoons than to regain the esteem of friends, who have been led to believe ill of one. The gossip-monger, being perforce, deceitful and treacherous towards those with whom she associates, is under suspicion in the minds of all who have discovered her evil propensity. They treat her with increasing reserve, if not absolute coldness, and eventually she finds herself without a friend. Unfortunately, instead of mending her ways at this evil pass, she more often yields to a revengeful feeling, and deliberately holds up to ridicule every woman, young or old, whose name is mentioned in her presence. Her type is too well known in every community, and serves but one good purpose, name-

ly, to illustrate for the benefit of the younger generation, the hatefulness of a vice to which all are exposed, but which none need acquire if they resolutely set their minds against it. A commendable degree of pride and self-respect, to say nothing of charity, forbids the impertinent discussion of the affairs of others. The simple test to apply to a conversation to determine whether or not it is gossip, is to repeat it, word for word, to the one concerned. If it is instinctively felt that such repetition would wound or annoy her, then there is no justification for making the remark to others. The Golden Rule is also to be applied to conversations about our neighbor. If we do not like to be informed that our private affairs have been the subject of comment and conjecture, in our absence, then at least let us refrain from taking similar liberties with our friends. It is slightly presumptuous to demand a degree of consideration which we decline to yield to others. There are many more interesting and inspiring topics of conversation that the sayings and doings of our neighbors. If any one is forced to confess that she has not discovered them—the fact must certainly be a humiliating one to her—and she to whom all women look as their Guide and Patron looks from her seat beside Her Divine Son with anything but love on the miserable gossip.

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