

"Well! my fashionables took leave at last, and in the hall one of the ladies said to me,—"I am afraid we have been inconsiderate in keeping you all this time from your"—I caught the motion to say "friend" upon her lips, then she changed the form and said, "your visitor."

"I answered more loudly than I knew,—
"That is all right! My motto is; 'Pleasure before business.'"

Mary met me in the library door when they had gone. She had had commissions to do for me, in town, and she held my memorandum in one hand with some money. She was very pale and spoke fast, breathing short and irregularly.

"I got everything you ordered, Carry, and here is your change. Everything will be sent by express, except this," giving me a small box. "As you wanted that in time for your mother's birthday, day after tomorrow, I thought it better to bring it to you myself. No, I can't sit down. I wish you could have seen me when I came in. I have waited a long time. I ought to have been at home an hour ago. I came by purposely to give you the box." Then, with the strangest smile I had ever seen on her face, she said,—
"But, you see, with me business came before rest and bed."

"I felt the color flash to my forehead. It is always exasperating to have your own words flung into your teeth.

"I am sorry you put yourself to so much trouble," I said stiffly. "There was no necessity for it. I could have sent for the box in the morning just as well."

"Then something pushed me on to add—
"Of course, I am greatly obliged to you. But while we are speaking frankly, let me repeat a clever thing you said the other day:—"He who reminds me of a favor cancels it."

"She laughed as queerly as she had smiled.
"So be it! We will consider all favors done and received cancelled up to date—and forever! Good night!"

I was too angry to stop her as she went away at that. I stayed angry all night and the next day, and on the evening of the second day my father asked me at supper time if I knew that Mary Allen was dangerously ill. He had met her father on the street. She had had a chill on the train coming home, after getting soaked in a shower, had kept on her wet clothes for hours, and arrived at home after ten o'clock, delirious. Pneumonia of the gravest type had set in that night.

I rushed around to Mrs. Allen's like a mad creature. Mary was too ill to be seen by anybody. Mrs. Allen was very kind, but would not let me go upstairs.

"We have heard from a friend who was on the train with her on Tuesday evening that she had a chill on the way out. She made light of it, and said she would be all right next day. She reached the station at eight o'clock. Delirium must have come on at once, for she did not get home until ten."

The narrator's face worked convulsively, and I put a deprecating hand upon hers.

"Don't go on!" I pleaded. "But we thank you for the solemn lesson."

She rallied voice and composure.

"There is little else to tell. She died four days from the evening of her call upon me. She never recovered consciousness. That was thirty years ago."

Mrs. Sargeant's voice never breaks up a silence. It stole out of it presently into gentlest speech:

"I am literally afraid to part in anger from anybody. The risk is too great."

And Mrs. Blount—in something betwixt a sob and a laugh,

"I needn't be ashamed, then, to tell that I have, again and again, called my husband back from the front door—and even from the corner of the street—to ask forgiveness for a hasty word. I always say to myself, by the time his back is turned—"What if he should never come home alive?" As Mrs. Sargeant says, I can't take the risk."

"Is it coincidental—or providential—that I should have clipped this from the paper to-day, and put it into my pocket-book for future reference?" said Mrs. Sterling, in grave tenderness.

I wish I could convey to the reader's ears, with the lines, the cadences of the voice that rendered them for us:

I might have said a word of cheer—
Before I let him go;
His haggard visage haunts me yet,
But how could I foreknow
That slighted chance would be the last
To me in mercy given?
My utmost yearning cannot send
That word from earth to heaven.

I might have looked the love I felt;
My brother had sore need
Of that for which (too shy and proud)
He had no words to plead.
But self is near, and self is strong,
And I was blind that day;
He sought within my careless eyes,
And thirsting, turned away.

Ah, word and look and touch withheld!
Ah, brother heart, now stifled!
Dear life, forever out of reach,
I might have cheered and filled!
Talents misused, and chances lost,
O'er which I mourn in vain,—
A waste as barren as my tears,
As desert sands to rain!

Ah, friend! whose eyes to-day may look
Love into living eyes;
Whose word and look perchance may thrill
Sad hearts with sweet surprise,—
Be instant, like your Lord, in love,
And constant as His grace,
With light and dew and manna fall;—
The night comes on apace.

The Girl Who is Different.

(By Mabel Nelson Thurston.)

You have thought that it was your poverty that shut you out from making friends. Never! It is the pride that makes you hold the poverty so persistently between yourself and others. If you have anything to give—sturdy cheeriness, loyal affection, quick sympathy, gracious wit—be sure that friends will find their way to you. One of the happiest girls I ever knew was probably the poorest girl in her class. She might have made herself wretched over the shabby, awkward, "made-over" clothes that were undoubtedly conspicuous among the pretty dresses of her schoolmates; but she never seemed to give the matter a thought. It was real things that she was seeking—friends and knowledge and days to make happy memories—and she found them all. When she left school she was rich in friendships, both with teachers and pupils; the books she had studied had become part of her life; and among all the girls, none had more keenly enjoyed the clubs and papers and harmless happy nonsense of the school jokes and merry-makings than this girl. Yet she had neither money, beauty, nor fascination—she had only a brave, sunny, common-sense. She would not see any difference between herself and others, and so—there was no difference!
"But she was not shy," some girls says.

"It isn't that I don't want to or don't try to be like others; it's that I don't know how to talk to them. I've tried—you don't know how I've tried; I'd give anything in the world to, but I just can't!"

A girl was talking with a friend, one day. "I get along with any one, but I—once in a while, here and there, I find a stranger with whom I touch somehow, but with others I can never think of anything to say. I know they are always relieved when they can get away from me to some one else."

The other girl looked up, smiling slightly. "I had to," she answered, simply. "Mother was ill for so long, you know, and I had to try to take her place. At first it seemed as if I couldn't, for I was as shy as anybody well could be; but I wouldn't give up—I wouldn't give myself a chance to think of it. If I went into a roomful of people, I'd begin talking to the nearest one. Many and many a time I didn't know at first what I was talking about, it was all such a blur and confusion, but it didn't make any difference. I made myself say something. After a while, it began to grow easier, and now—why, now, I just enjoy it."

Have you ever tried it like that, you girls who are shy? Girls, dear girls; are you honestly trying at all to conquer this morbidness? For it is really that; not selfishness, perhaps, but selffulness, that keeps your thoughts fastened inward instead of reaching out into the wide world about you.

There is no subtler form of selfishness than that which makes us, even while we long to be popular, pride ourselves upon our 'sensitive plant' natures, as if it were the mark of a great soul not to be able to 'get along' with people! How much we miss by it—how much of joy and experience and glad comradeship which would have made us richer all our lives—how much of the deeper joy of helping others!—"Forward."

Not to be Balked.

A comparison made by an old carpenter twenty years ago, may be applied in a much wider sense than he had in mind. He was speaking of two boys, brothers, who had been sent to him to learn the trade. They were bright boys, and their father, in telling the carpenter of his pleasure at their progress in their work, said he could not see but one had done just as well as the other.

"Um-m!" said the carpenter. "I presume to say their work looks about of a piece, but I'll tell you the difference betwixt those two boys. You give Ed. just the right tools, and he'll do a real good job; but Cy, if he hasn't got what he needs, he'll make his own tools, and say nothing about it."

"If I were cast on a desert island and wanted a box opened, I should know there'd be no use asking Ed. to do it, without I could point him out a hammer."

"But Cy!" added the old carpenter, with a snap of his fingers. "The lack of a hammer wouldn't stump that boy! He'd have something rigged up and that box opened, if there was any open to it! I expect Cy's going to march ahead of Ed. all his life."

Twenty years have proved the truth of the words; for, while the boy who "made his own tools" is rich, his brother is still an ordinary workman.—"Youth's Companion."

I have not tasted beer, wine or spirituous liquor since 1861, and I know that total abstinence from alcoholic liquors has been the cause of perfect health with me up to the present day. I have cruised in all parts of the world; ate the fruits of the country without limit at all hours of the day and night; drank the water from shore at will; but have never experienced any evil results, due entirely, I think, to total abstinence. Rear-Admiral Phillip.