

The lesson to be drawn from this, girls, is that if you have ever anything very ill-natured to communicate, you had better speak it than write it, but before doing so just put on your thinking-cap, and consider whether it is at all necessary.

It is not always easy to tell what are and what are not sleeping dogs. We may not know other people's past history, and may not have got acquainted with their peculiarities and angularities. We may even through ignorance give offence by an innocent joke, for there are some folks by whom a joke is invariably ill-taken, people chiefly who have not been well-bred, and who have not got a great deal of common-sense.

Quick insight and the habit—greatly to be strengthened by cultivation—of sympathy with our fellows, will often enable us to make out when we have touched the border-line of a sore or anger-rousing subject, and to draw back before we have said too much. We can then change the subject like our Florrie, who when she has almost come out with something better left unsaid, takes refuge with rapidity in discoursing on the last shower of rain and the prospects of a fine day to-morrow.

With all our care, however, it is hardly to be expected that we will not occasionally rouse discord and ill-feeling—intending all the while to be good and yet playing the part of the grown-up *enfant terrible*. All that is left for us, then, to do is to frankly express regret for the fault we have inadvertently committed. If our apologies are not as well received as they ought to be we may then go on our way feeling that there is

nothing we can rightly be reproached with. But it is rare, even in this topsy-turvy world, that ready acknowledgment of error is met ill-naturedly by any people worth knowing.

Discreet silence—that is what we should all practise every day of our lives. "Hold your tongue," far from being an impertinence, as it often is, ought to be a friendly admonition given by ourselves to ourselves, or administered to us by those who have our interest most at heart.

To hold your tongue is not easy: no, it is not easy. Something, it may be, is just on the tip, and it seems as if the exertions of "all the king's horses and all the king's men" could hardly make you swallow it down again. In such circumstances think how a word spoken is an arrow let fly, and how it never can be recalled once you have allowed it to pass the fence of your front teeth.

You may, perhaps, have found a fine new knock-her-down argument for that controversy you had with you-know-whom-we-mean. You are in the right? Yes, very likely you are. But keep it to yourself. Or you may have got a phrase that will fit that half-cousin of yours like a glove and take down her pride, the stuck-up minx. Keep it to yourself. Or it may be a subject that will ruffle the feathers of your sister-in-law, who is not an angel before her time, any more than you are. Keep it to yourself.

Lydia has played the fool, has she? Keep it to yourself. Bertha's temper is the cause of all her unhappiness. Keep it to yourself. Eva, when she married, introduced dispeace

into her husband's family. Hush! keep it to yourself. Alice's great-grandfather— Well, you know about that unfortunate affair. Keep it to yourself.

In short, keep to yourself everything calculated to rouse ill-feeling even in the slightest degree. Not a yelp from a wakened cur ought ever to be uttered with you responsible for it.

Likely enough you may in consequence get the character of being a poor chicken-hearted daughter of Eve, afraid to say what you think and tell what you know, ready to do anything for a quiet life, and without the pluck needed for cutting a distinguished figure in the world. Never mind; you can in return think all who say so ill-natured, stupid, and worse.

But keep that to yourself.

What you can say aloud is that one of the signs of a wise girl is to move through the world without giving unnecessary offence to anybody. Life is full enough of trouble without our making more by indulging in reckless and provoking speeches, and it is quite noisy enough for most of us, without our rousing sleeping dogs as we go along. In our intercourse with others let us try to leave them richer by pleasant thoughts, and not glad to see our backs turned, and sorry ever after to hear the mention of our names.

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence" is one of the memorable sayings of Holy Writ, and if a girl only casts in her lot with that good company, and hand in hand with wisdom and prudence, makes her way through life, though she may pass many sleeping dogs, yet so far as she is concerned they will slumber on for ever.

THE GROOVES OF CHANGE.

By H. LOUISA BEDFORD, Author of "Prue, the Poetess," "Mrs. Merriman's Godchild," etc.

CHAPTER V.



THE first few weeks of Deborah's school life were so supremely miserable. Her solitary and desultory education had left her ignorant of the methods of modern teaching, and she found herself completely at sea in the ordinary class work

routine. In the languages she had learned from her mother she was ahead of her compeers, but of this she was not conscious, but worked on under the painful conviction that not only was she backward than most girls of her own age, but also intellectually their inferior. Her ignorance of the manners and customs of school life subjected her to much good-natured ridicule, increasing her natural reserve. Nor was the outside atmosphere more congenial. To the country-bred girl,

whose life had been spent under clear skies, amidst the companionship of birds and flowers, London, with its noise and dirt and fogs was stifling and depressing. Yet not even to her mother did Deborah make any complaint; the opportunity she had asked for of being set in the way of earning her own living had been granted to her, and she would make the best of it, but day by day the vision of "getting clever" receded further into the distance.

Mrs. Menzies had succeeded in obtaining a post as French mistress at a school not far from the high school that Deborah attended, and it was her custom to come and fetch Deborah home every afternoon.

It was one afternoon late in February when Deborah dragged along wearily at her mother's side through the busy street.

"What made you keep me waiting so long?" asked Mrs. Menzies, petulantly. "I shall have to complain to the head-mistress if you are kept in every day like this. You don't look half as well as when you came to town."

"I kept myself in," said Deborah, wearily. "I'm so stupid; I have to work twice as hard as other girls and then I don't do half as well."

"I don't believe it," replied Mrs. Menzies, sharply.

"It is true though," replied her daughter, simply.

Mother and daughter were alike glad when they turned out of the busy thoroughfare into the side street where

they lodged, and Deborah's fatigue and depression were forgotten, when, on entering the shabby little sitting-room she recognised Miss Laing seated in the only easy chair turning over a paper whilst she awaited their return.

Her beautiful presence seemed to illuminate the room to Deborah, who remained faithful to her childish ideal.

"I thought you were never coming again," she said, "and oh! I've wanted you to come so badly."

"Well, you can see me as often as you like and render me a service at the same time," said Miss Laing, smiling. "I want you to sit to me, Deborah. You could come on Saturday afternoons, could not you?"

"But you can't mean it! you can't really want to paint me when I'm not pretty," stammered Deborah, flushing with pleasure.

She did not appreciate the calm selfishness of the proposal. The joy of rendering Miss Laing a service and the delightful prospect of frequent visits to her studio made the suggestion charming.

"I don't want beauties for my portraits," replied Miss Laing calmly. "I prefer originality and I shall get that with you. Shall you mind?" (turning to Mrs. Menzies). "Will you lend Deborah to me? If you could bring her I will always see, or send her home."

Mrs. Menzies turned over the proposal rapidly in her mind. It was something to be set absolutely free every Saturday