

part of her domain but absolute perfection; and her reproofs are aimed with a true and steady point, and sent with a force that makes them felt by the most obdurate.

Hence, though she is rarely seen out of temper, and seldom or never scolds, yet she drives every one around her to despair by the use of the calmest and most elegant English. Her servants fear, but do not love her. Her husband, an impulsive, generous man, somewhat inconsiderate and careless in his habits, is at times perfectly desperate under the accumulated load of her disapprobation. Her children regard her as inhabiting some high, distant, unapproachable mountain-top of goodness, whence she is always looking down with reproving eyes on naughty boys and girls. They wonder how it is that so excellent a mamma should have children who, let them try to be good as hard as they can, are always sure to do something dreadful every day.

The trouble with Mrs. Standfast is, not that she has a high standard, and not that she pursues and means to bring every one up to it, but that she does not take the right way. She has set it down that to blame a wrong-doer is the only way to cure wrong. She has never learned that it is as much her duty to praise as to blame, and that people are drawn to do right by being praised when they do it, rather than driven by being blamed when they do not.

Right across the way from Mrs. Standfast is Mrs. Easy, a pretty little creature, with not a tithe of her moral worth,—a merry, pleasure-loving woman, of no particular force of principle, whose great object in life is to avoid its disagreeables and to secure its pleasures.

Little Mrs. Easy is adored by her husband, her children, her servants, merely because it is her nature to say pleasant things to every one. It is a mere tact of pleasing, which she uses without knowing it. While Mrs. Standfast, surveying her well-set dining-table, runs her keen eye over everything, and at last brings up with, "Jane, look at that black spot on the salt-spoon! I am astonished at your carelessness!"—Mrs. Easy would say, "Why, Jane, where *did* you learn to set a table so nicely? All looking beautifully, except—ah! let's see—just give a rub to this salt-spoon;—now all is quite perfect." Mrs. Standfast's servants and children hear only of their failures; these are always before them and her. Mrs. Easy's servants hear of their successes. She praises their good points; tells them they are doing well in this, that, and the

other particular; and finally exhorts them, on the strength of having done so many things well, to improve in what is yet lacking. Mrs. Easy's husband feels that he is always a hero in her eyes, and her children feel that they are dear good children, notwithstanding Mrs. Easy sometimes has her little tiffs of displeasure, and scolds roundly when something falls out as it should not.

The two families show how much more may be done by a very ordinary woman, through the mere instinct of praising and pleasing, than by the greatest worth, piety, and principle, seeking to lift human nature by a lever that never was meant to lift it by.

The faults and mistakes of us poor human beings are as often perpetuated by despair as by any other one thing. Have we not all been burdened by a consciousness of faults that we were slow to correct because we felt discouraged? Have we not been sensible of a real help sometimes from the presence of a friend who thought well of us, believed in us, set our virtues in the best light, and put our faults in the background?

Let us depend upon it, that the flesh and blood that are in us—the needs, the wants, the despondencies—are in each of our fellows, in every awkward servant and careless child.

Finally, let us all resolve,—

First, to attain to the grace of SILENCE.

Second, to deem all FAULT-FINDING that does no good a SIN; and to resolve, when we are happy ourselves, not to poison the atmosphere for our neighbors by calling on them to remark every painful and disagreeable feature of their daily life.

Third, to practise the grace and virtue of PRAISE. We have all been taught that it is our duty to praise God, but few of us have reflected on our duty to praise men; and yet for the same reason that we should praise the divine goodness it is our duty to praise human excellence.

We should praise our friends,—our near and dear ones; we should look on and think of their virtues till their faults fade away; and when we love most, and see most to love, then only is the wise time wisely to speak of what should still be altered.

Parents should look out for occasions to commend their children, as carefully as they seek to reprove their faults; and employers should praise the good their servants do as strictly as they blame the evil.

Whoever undertakes to use this weapon