



Labor, if we would but perceive it, is one of the greatest of earthly blessings. It rewards with health, contentment of mind, cheerfulness of spirit, and sound, refreshing sleep, few of which blessings of life are long enjoyed by those who do not daily, in one form or other, labor.

Love Lightens Labor

A good wife rose from her bed one morn,
And thought with a nervous dread
Of the piles of clothes to be washed,
And more and more—
Than a dozen mouths to be fed.
"There's the meals to get for the men
in the field,
And the children to fix away
To school, and the milk to be skim-
med and churned;
And all to be done this day."

It had rained in the night, and all the wood

Was wet as it could be;
There were puddings and pies to
bake, besides

A loaf of cake for tea.
And the day was hot, and her aching
head

Throbbled wearily as she said:
"If maidens but knew what good
wives know
They would be in no haste to wed."

"Jennie, what do you think I told Ben
Brown?"

Called the farmer from the well,
And a flush crept over his bronzed
brow,

And his eyes half-bashfully fell.
"It was this," said he, and coming
near,

He smiled, and stooping down,
Kissed her cheek; "Twas this; that
you were the best
And dearest wife in town!"

The farmer went back to the field, and
the wife,

In a smiling, absent way,
Sang snatches of tender little songs
She'd not sung for many a day;
And the pain in her head was gone,
and the clothes

Were white as the foam of the sea!
Her bread was light and her butter
was sweet

And as golden as it could be.

"Just think!" the children all cried in
a breath,

"Tom Wood has run off to sea!
He wouldn't, I know, if he only had
As happy a home as we."
The night came down and the good
wife smiled

To herself, as she softly said:
"Tis so sweet to labor for those we
love—

It's not strange that maidens will
wed!"

A Visit to the Old Home

I recall a wedding I once attended,
where the bride went from her
father's house a slender, lily-white
girl, who had been brought up most
delicately in an atmosphere of ease
and luxury. She accompanied the
husband of her choice into a rough,

hard pioneer life in a new country,
and there, far from neighbors, from
church privileges, or any social advan-
tages, she spent many years. Chil-
dren came rapidly. Her cares were
numerous. She grew old and hard-
handed, and prematurely bent.

At last there was received a press-
ing invitation from her girlhood's
home for her return there, to make a
long and restful visit. True to her
habit of self-abnegation, she was re-
luctant to consent, and desired to
send a representative in her graceful
Maud, the image of herself at seven-
teen, or her dimpled Agnes, a lovely
child of fourteen. But the children
were firm. Mother must go, they
said, and go she did. A new black
silk gown for occasions was an un-
heard-of extravagance, but it was pro-
cured; her wardrobe, though very
simple, was augmented until she felt
that it was presentable, and a shy, re-
served, timid stranger, the woman
who had forgotten the lightnessomeness
of her youth, appeared again in her
olden place. At first she described
her sensations by the homely appear-

mother who went home. It was a
mother rested, refreshed, and wonder-
fully rejuvenated; freed from the fet-
tering grooves, and with new
strength, new interest, and new de-
light in living. Such a new lease
might be given to many a tired out
mother.

When mother is blue, or a little dif-
ficult, or set too much in her own
way quite to suit the headstrong wil-
fulness of the juniors, bear with her
and set about bringing back her sun-
shine. Half the everyday sorrow of
this earth would melt into thin air
if we were all more anxious to give
joy than to get it, to be rather love-
worthy than grasping, and to make
others happy whether or not we were
happy ourselves.—Margaret E. Sang-
ster.

Home Courtesies

In the close relations of members
of the same household and the con-
stant contact through long associa-
tion, there is apt to be a lack of the
friendly greetings and delicate atten-
tions which are given to visitors and



Baby's Bath Time

ance of a cat in a strange garret; but
the unfamiliarity wore off, the rough
hands smoothed, and she found that
leisure had attractions of its own.

People did not know her when she
emerged from the enfolding solitude
of her far-off home, but bit by bit
they discovered her to be the same
that she used to be, and when, after
three swift months had gone, she
said that she must turn her face again
to husband and children, it was pre-
dicted that they would hardly know
her there. Nor was it quite the same

strangers in the household. Children
are commonly not trained to sweet
courtesies in their treatment of par-
ents and one another. Husband and
wife do not preserve their first gra-
cious care of each other. But thought-
ful and loving little services sweeten
home life and pour the oil of joy over
daily experiences. When a husband or
son is prompt and helpful in placing
her chair for her at table what woman
does not feel happier? An act of
courtesy cultivates in its performer
more appreciation and attachment.