

CHOICE LITERATURE.

AS OTHERS SLE US.

BY MRS. MARY K. P. HATCH

"Oh, wad some power the giffie gie us,
To see oursel's as ithers see us!"

"I really wish, Dora, you could have coffee fit to drink once a week," said Edward Taylor to his wife. "Why not try my method—pour 'n cold water and let it just come to a boil?"

"I did this morning," answered Mrs. Taylor pleasantly, "and this is the result. I knew you would find fault with it."

"Dora, any one would think to hear you speak that I was in the habit of finding fault. Thank heaven, that isn't one of my failings. I never find fault. I make a suggestion now and then. But," and he tasted his coffee again, "this is certainly better than we usually have. The flavour is excellent, but mild."

"Very mild," said his wife.

"Are these fritters, or are they lead?" asked Mr. Taylor shortly after.

"They are fritters, Edward, and excellent ones, too," said his sister, Mrs. Fred Hastings, pitying his wife's mortification.

"I am glad if you can eat them," said Mr. Taylor. "Here, Fred, try a hot one; perhaps it will be a trifle better," passing the plate to his sister's husband who was also Dora's brother. The two friends had exchanged sisters when they married five years before.

"Now please excuse me, I have important business down town that takes me away earlier than usual." He put on his hat and gloves and—pulled off a button.

"Dora, why can't you sew on a button so it will stay?"

"Those gloves are the ones you bought yesterday, Edward," replied Mrs. Taylor.

"The more reason why you should have looked at them. Sale work isn't intended to be permanent. But no matter, I can do very well without buttons," said he with an injured air.

"Leave them at home and take your others, do," urged his wife: "I will sew on the buttons so that you can have them this afternoon. Stay, I will do so now. It will take but a minute."

"I am in a hurry, as I told you; and I should not have bought new gloves at all if my old ones had been fit to wear. But a matter of one missing button is nothing for me." Mr. Taylor's tone implied that nothing less than half a dozen could disturb his equanimity.

"Dora," exclaimed Mrs. Hastings, after he was gone, "does Edward always find as much fault as he has this morning?"

"Not always," replied Dora. She omitted to say that he often did much more. "Edward doesn't mean half he says. It is a habit and one that he doesn't know he has at all."

"I can plainly see he thinks himself a martyr. What an abominable combination!" said his outspoken sister. "One might take him to be an idiot, but I know he isn't, and he is kind-hearted and loves you dearly."

"Yes, Kate," spoke up Fred. "Ned is a good fellow, and would be the first one to condemn in others what he does himself."

"Oh," said his wife eagerly, "I have an idea."

"Keep it, my dear, till you get another to go with it," said Fred, teasingly. But Kate did not notice the interruption.

"Dora, let us shew Edward up to himself as he is, using Fred for a mirror, you know."

"How? I don't think I understand exactly," replied Dora.

"Why let Fred find fault with me just as Edward does with you; and then he can see how he likes it. Of course, he must not suspect that it isn't Fred's real manner. He won't, for you know that it is five years since we met, and we only came last night. Fred is capital at theatricals, and I will do my best to be as meek as you are." And bright, talkative little Mrs. Hastings kissed her sister-in-law, while a sympathetic tear stood in her eye.

"I will agree to it, if Dora does not object," said Fred, for he was fully as indignant as his wife at Dora's treatment.

Dora was as straightforward and conscientious as she was gentle; however Kate overruled her objections, and so the matter stood when Mr. Taylor returned in the evening. He was unusually pleasant, and disagreeably surprised at Fred's fault-finding manner. Seemingly, Kate could do nothing without being called to account by her husband.

"Kate," as his wife took up a book they were both reading, "will you or will you not leave that book-mark where I placed it?"

"Why, I haven't touched it!" said she, "it is at the ninth chapter. Isn't that the place?"

"How do I know? If I did, should I be apt to need a book mark?"

"He ought to be sufficiently interested not to need one, ought he not, Kate?" said Mr. Taylor, pleasantly.

"Yes,—but Fred—" and she stopped and looked away.

"But Fred—what?" asked her husband gloomily. "If you have any fault to find with me, don't hesitate, I beg."

"Well, I was only going to say that you seemed to like to find fault," said Kate.

"No, thank heaven; that isn't one of my failings, I only make a suggestion now and then. But what were you saying, Ned, when Kate interrupted us?"

"I've forgotten. But suppose we have some music. Do you remember how fond we used to be of singing 'Annie Laurie,' we four?"

"Yes, indeed," said Kate. "Let us sing it to-night."

"Where is the music, Dora?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"I'm sure I don't know. I haven't seen it in a long time."

"I do wish, Dora, that you had your senses about you a little oftener. My mother used to say that she could go in the darkest night and find any article in the house. But perhaps we can sing it from memory."

"But for Bonnie Annie Laurie,
I would lay me down and die."

hummed Mr. Taylor, in his melodious tenor.

"How much easier it is for a man to die for woman—in song—than it is to live for her, and make her want to live, too," said Kate.

"Pour sis," thought Mr. Taylor, looking kindly at her, "no wonder she feels the difference! Will you play the accompaniment, Kate?"

"She replied by seating herself at the piano and playing a beautiful prelude. "You are playing horribly out of time, Kate," said Fred, complainingly. "You know my ear is perfect, and yet you will persist in spoiling the harmony."

"I didn't know."

"No, that's it, if you did you might possibly get to be, in time, a tolerable player. But play on, since Ned asked you. I can endure a good deal."

Kate continued.

"Horrible! wretched!" exclaimed Fred.

"Odd chords, you know," explained Mr. Taylor.

"Yes, the oddest ones I ever heard," said Fred, sarcastically.

Mr. Taylor said no more, but inwardly thought his brother-in-law's conduct detestable. But the others knew that it was almost an exact repetition of Mr. Taylor's the evening previous, when Dora, instead of Kate, had played the piano. After their guests had retired, Mr. Taylor said to his wife,

"I pity poor Kate."

"Why?" asked his wife, unconcernedly, as she began putting up her hair in curls.

"Why?" he echoed. "Can't you see that Fred is a perfect bear? But of course you can't, you never see anything." But his wife did not reply, and he said presently, "How long will you stand at that glass, frizzing your hair that looks a great deal better plain?"

"I thought you liked it better crimped; you said so last week."

"You are the most exasperating woman, throwing a man's speeches back at him in that way! I may have said so last week, but now I think you look better with your hair plain. You are just like Fred. You want to find fault all the time and then make it appear I am to blame."

"Very well," said his wife briefly; and she turned down the gas that he might not see her tears.

The four sat down the next morning at an excellent repast, but Mr. Taylor said, as he cut his steak, "I wasn't aware before, Dora, that you considered sole-leather a fit substitute for beef."

"It is not very good, I know, Edward, but it was too late to exchange it when I found it was not the sirloin I ordered."

Fred elevated his eyebrows expressively. "Ned, if you call this tough, you should see the steak Kate treats me to. Sole-leather! why sole-leather is tender by comparison. Ours is more like rubber. I assure you this is choice eating to me, accustomed to so much worse."

Kate bit her lip and her face flushed in her efforts to avoid laughing at Fred's extravagance, and her brother's surprised look. Finally she burst into a hearty laugh.

"You can see how little she cares for my comfort," said Fred.

"Hysterics!" thought her brother, "no wonder." He ingeniously changed the conversation to more agreeable topics, but his manner to Fred was a trifle cold and constrained.

Thus matters continued for two or three days. Whenever Mr. Taylor "made a suggestion," as he delicately expressed it, Fred capped it by finding fault with Kate, until, without thinking himself in the least to blame, yet out of pity for his sister, he began to be more prudent of "suggestions." Fred, however, found plenty of margin for complaint. "Kate," said he, coming from his room where he had been tumbling over the contents of his valise, "I have a dozen shirts here and not a single button on the whole dozen."

"Very true," said his wife, "you asked me to remove them, fancying studs would be better."

"Where are the studs, then?"

"Why, I don't know, I am sure."

"No, you never know where anything is. My mother used to say she could find any article she wanted in the darkest night. Would it be asking too much of you, Mrs. Hastings, to offer a suggestion?"

"I would suggest," said Mr. Taylor, sarcastically, "that they are in the one you have on."

"O thank you, Ned, so they are. You see I have to look out for myself entirely. Kate is so indifferent. As for the buttons, I did ask her to remove them, for they might as well all be off as only half. I never mind one missing button."

"Don't you think, Fred," asked Mr. Taylor, as they walked down street together, "that you are a little . . . and upon Kate?"

"Hard upon Kate?" echoed Fred. "What can you mean?"

"Finding so much fault with her."

"Why, I never find fault, I only offer a suggestion now and then."

"Forcible ones, Fred, or so they seem to me. Kate never used to be so careless and indifferent as you now seem to consider her."

"You don't know her as well as I do," said Fred, shortly. Mr. Taylor flashed with anger. "Well, it is not creditable either to your heart or manners to speak of your wife and my sister in that manner."

"Humph," muttered Fred.

"Kate is very sensitive."

"Exactly," said Fred, dryly.

"And she is so good a sister I am sure she cannot be other than a good wife. That you cannot appreciate her does not alter facts," said Mr. Taylor, incensed still more by Fred's indifferent manner.

At this point, however, it changed. "Ned, you are right, Kate is all and more than you say of her, and I appreciate her fully. I would not wound her feelings for the world."

"Then, I must say, you shew your affection for her in a peculiar way," said Mr. Taylor, drily, "that's all."

"Do you appreciate your wife?"

"I hope so," said Mr. Taylor, surprised at the question.

"Is she a good wife?"

"Certainly she is. When I married her five years ago," said Mr. Taylor, "she was the one woman in all the world for me, and I have never changed my opinion regarding her."

"Sensitive?" asked Fred again, briefly.

"Yes, rather. Why?"

"Only this, I have been trying lately to shew my appreciation and love for Kate in the same manner that you shew yours for Dora."

"I don't understand you," said Mr. Taylor, stiffly.

"Nor I you," retorted Fred. "You say you have a good wife and that you love her as well as you did five years ago; yet you constantly find fault with her; so much that Kate noticed it and suggested that I imitate your manner, and let you see how you admire it."

"You don't mean to say—"

"I do mean to say that I have copied your manner faithfully, as much as possible literally."

Mr. Taylor walked hastily forward some distance in advance of his friend. He was mortified and angry, but just enough to own, after due reflection, that Fred's words were true and justifiable. He had taken Fred to task for what was but a copy of his own manner. It will seem strange, but Mr. Taylor never considered himself a fault-finder. True it is that "men are more apt to use spectacles, to behold other men's faults, than looking-glasses, to behold their own." At last he waited and Fred caught up with him.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear fellow," said Fred, "you found fault with Dora almost constantly from the very evening of our arrival."

"I believe you are right," said Edward, frankly; "I have, but I never intended it. It is a miserable habit I have got into."

They reached the office just then, and no more was said until they reached home in the evening. Dora met them at the door, with her hair combed smoothly back, a fashion detested, and one that was very unbecoming to her.

"Dora, why will you—not wear your hair always that way, it is so becoming?" said Edward, recollecting himself just in time not to find fault, but violating truth so manifestly that a general laugh followed.

Edward did not promise his wife that he would mend his ways, but he did himself; nor did he from "that time forward" do altogether different. Old habits have too strong a hold to be loosened at once. His lapse into fault-finding had been gradual; his reform was also gradual. But in five years more, when Fred and Kate visited them a second time, he had become as remarkable for being easy to please as he once was difficult, and Dora looked far happier, as might be supposed.

SILENT INFLUENCE.

"I have no influence," said Elsie Lee to her friend, Miss Tomsin. "Why, I am so timid when in company with others that I hardly dare raise my eyes or open my lips."

"That may be," replied the older lady, "and yet you are always exerting influence wherever you go. You cannot help yourself. An hour ago I bought a bunch of violets from a German flower girl, and I set them on yonder shelf, beside my dear mother's picture. It is a very tiny bunch, and a person entering the room would very likely not see them, for they do not challenge attention. But every nook and corner of the apartment feels their presence, for their fragrance is pervading the atmosphere. So it is with you, my dear. You love your Saviour, and you try to serve Him. You think you cannot speak for Him, but if you live for Him, and with Him, in gentleness, patience, and self-denial, that is better than talking. It does more good. The other evening Jerry Halcomb, who is thoughtless and giddy, made a jest of a verse of Scripture in your hearing. You wished to protest against his act, and tried to do so, but the words would not come. Yet your pained look, your quick blush, your instinctive indignant gesture, spoke for you, and the young man turned and said, 'I beg your pardon, Miss Elsie.' Was not this a proof that he saw and felt your condemnation?"

"Silent influence is stronger than we sometimes think for good and for evil. Let us not underestimate it.—*Christian at Work.*"

STIMULATING THE INTELLECT.

Sir William Gull, one of the most distinguished of living English physicians, in his testimony before the committee on intemperance appointed by the House of Lords, said:—

"Many people believe that intellectual work cannot be half so well done without wine or alcohol. There I should join issue at once. I should deny that proposition. I should hold the opposite. As to whether a moderately temperate person might be benefited by a slight use of wine or alcohol—I should hold the opposite as regards the intellect; all alcohol, and all things of an alcoholic nature, injure the nerve tissues, *pro tempore*, if not altogether; you may quicken the operations, but you do not improve them. Therefore the constant use of alcohol, even in a moderate measure, may injure the nerve tissues, and be deleterious to health. It is very common for the effects of alcohol to be quite manifest, although there has not been any outrageous drinking or obvious excess. I should say that one of the commonest things in our society is that people are injured by drink without being drunkards. It goes on so quietly that it is very difficult to observe even. The effects are perfectly marked and distinct to the professional eye, although in many cases even the man's nearest friends will not know it. I might mention that on one occasion I was called to see a medical man who was so injured by drink that he was yellow like a lemon; he was in a state of *delirium tremens*, and his system was saturated to the last degree with alcohol. I was surprised that I should be sent for, but coming down—"