

UNDER THE EVENING LAMP.

FROM SHADOW TO SUNSHINE.

I learn as the years roll onward
And leave the past behind,
That much I have counted sorrow
But proves that our God is kind;
That many a flower I long for
Had a hidden thorn of pain,
And many a rugged bypath
Led to fields of ripened grain.

The clouds but cover the sunshine,
They cannot banish the sun;
And the earth shines out the brighter
When the weary rain is done;
We must stand in the deepest shadow
To see the clearest light,
And often from wrong's own darkness
Comes the very strength of right.

The sweetest rest is at even,
After a wearisome day,
When the heavy burden of labor
Has been borne from our hearts' away,
And those who have never known sorrow
Cannot find the infinite peace
That falls on the troubled spirit,
When it sees, at last, release.

We must live through the weary winter
If we would value the spring;
And the woods must be cold and silent
Before the robins sing,
The flowers must be buried in darkness
Before they could bud and bloom;
And the sweetest and warmest sunshine
Comes after the storm and gloom.

So the heart from the hardest trial
Gains the purest joy of all,
And from lips that have tasted sadness
The sweetest songs will fall,
For as peace comes after suffering,
And love is reward of pain,
So after earth heaven—
And out of our loss the gain.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE HOME.

"I can always tell," said a man of wide experience of the world, "what has been the home training of the man or woman I meet on the train, or in the street, in business, or in social life. The subtle air we call good-breeding is not to be attained by education or travel; it comes from breathing the atmosphere of a refined home." The unfailing courtesy to others without regard to condition in life, the tact which turns discordant social notes into harmony, the ability to see things in their true proportion, the self-poise which enables one to preserve his own rights from encroachment, while scrupulously observing those of others, all this is a matter of years of living in a home where constant and delicate consideration is shown for the feeling of others, and the ideas of personal honour are those worthy of the Court of the King. In such a household rude criticism is unknown, the sacredness of possession is recognised as an alienable right, no more to be assailed in the property of the child than in that of the State, while no unkind hand tears ruthlessly away the veil of privacy from outer or inner life.

I know children so happily nurtured, that never in all the years of their childhood have they heard a sharp reproof, or injudicious criticism; and the result is a gracious self-possession, a sweetness of temperament, which all the world's bitterness cannot sour. The heart that is never wounded in the house of its friends wears an invulnerable armour in the company of its enemies, untouched by the poisonous arrows of contempt or distrust. Far otherwise is it with the child whose every action has been under surveillance, whose daily food has been seasoned with fault-finding words. I recall one little soul whose shrinking manner and beseeching eyes seemed to crave sympathy, and whose every mouthful was swallowed in fear and trembling of sarcastic comment, or stern reproof on manners or morals, from his over anxious parents. One day an honoured guest was at the table, and in the charm of his conversation the shortcomings of the small member of the household passed unnoticed. At the close of the meal he folded his little hands and exclaimed with pathetic content, "It's been such a pleasant dinner!" Alas! that "pleasant dinners" were not of more frequent occurrence in that

family. A sensitive child is forced into life-long invalidism of character by such subjection, while one of spirit, obliged to yield his rights to superior force, will either be driven to deceit or into open rebellion. A plant may be set in good ground, well tended and watered, but if the air around it be filled with poisonous gases it cannot thrive; unless, like the flowers in Hawthorne's tale, it adapts itself to its unhealthy conditions, to become in its turn a menace to wholesome life.

Children are hurt by jar, and fret far more than older persons dream of. If a nervous, irritable teacher makes a restless, unruly set of pupils, as practical educators assure us, then the character of the house-mother and the house-father must determine the dominant spirit of the home, whether it be the above of peace, or the dwelling-place of the lords of misrule and discontent.

One of the greatest philanthropists and writers of England tells us that the main blessing of his childhood was the quite priceless gift of a peaceful home. Peace not of outward conditions, for crowded London was his birthplace, but peace of the inner life. "I never had heard my father's or my mother's voice once raised in any question with each other," he writes; "nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt or offended glance in the eyes of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner, blamed." Those who know something of the smoothness with which the domestic machinery moves in an Christian home, will credit his next assertion. "I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter; nor anything whatever either done in a hurry, or undone in due time." Perhaps the love of order, and the exceeding patience with which he prosecuted his own life work, was a gift not of nature, but of environment. Such households are not uncommon, but the whirl of city life with its engrossing duties and pleasures has a tendency to rattle the pinions of the angel of Peace, and make her more nearly resemble the wind swept plumage of the winged Victory of Samothrace.

In childhood's days I heard a song which still lingers in my memory;—

"There is beauty all around,
When there's love at home;
There is joy in every sound,
When there's love at home."

And love it is, after all, which is the main requisite of the atmosphere of the ideal home. I recall one household in which I have been a frequent guest. From the moment you entered the door, until your reluctant leave-taking, you felt its sweet restfulness. It seemed always sunshine and fair weather there, for it was one of the homes where Christ abode, not merely sojourned occasionally. It could not help but be the house Beautiful, and the Delectable Mountains of the promised land seemed always in view.

Of all the famous pictures which Ruskin has made us see, none has so impressed me as the one of the family of Paul Veronese, in the Dresden Gallery. The painter wished to represent his dear ones as happy and honoured. "The best happiness and highest honour he can imagine for them, is that they should be presented 'to Christ and His Mother.'" The father stands a little apart in prayer. The mother well in front, kneeling, but looking up steadfastly, not afraid to meet the gaze of the Holy Family, for she has brought up her children in the fear of the Lord. The two elder children are a little in front of her, in attitudes of rapt devotion. One of the younger children, somewhat frightened, has run to its mother, and she has thrown her right arm about and over him, with exquisite instinctive action, as one whom his mother comforteth. The other children are shy, or interested in their play, the youngest of all playing with his dog. The composition of this picture is highly characteristic of Venetian sacred art, when Venice was at her best in both art and religion. In it, as in others by the contemporaries of Paul Veronese, we find that, "The madonnas are no more seated apart on their thrones, the saints no more breathe celestial air. They are on our own plain ground—nay, here in our houses with us. All kind of worldly business going on in their presence, fearlessly; our own friends and respected acquaintances, with all their moral faults, and in their mortal flesh, looking at them face to face unalarmed;