



# Around the Hearth

By JENNIE ALLEN MOORE



"Remember a word spoken plainly  
May blight every effort and plan,  
Which a kind word would help in attaining;  
Then say a kind word when you can."

## APPRECIATION.

WE were having a telephone talk.

"I enjoyed your page so much this month," she said.

"Thank you; I am glad you liked it," I responded. "Do you know," she said, "I believe if I had been given any encouragement when I was young I could have been a writer? But no one ever helped my efforts by a word of praise, so I gave up trying."

I laughed so long and so merrily that she caught the infection over the wire, and joined in my mirth, asking: "What are you laughing at, what have I said to amuse you so much?"

"Just the idea of it," I rejoined, "to think of you waiting to be encouraged! Why, my dear, I would never have written a line for publication had I waited for my friends to assure me by a word that I wrote anything worth reading."

"You surely cannot mean that. Your pen is so facile, they must have recognized you had talent."

"Well, I always enjoyed wielding the pen, but no one belonging to me can ever claim credit for assisting me, if ever I acquire any renown along literary lines, for any compliments that came my way from my own family were solicited, and you know that kind do not carry much weight."

"But surely your husband is proud of your achievements, I know mine would be."

Again the merry laugh rang out as I answered, "I do not think he even reads my page, and I am sure the boys would consider it extremely dry stuff."

"It seems that 'a prophet hath honor, save in his own country' is true in most cases," she said.

And it is. We take it for granted that our friends know we appreciate their work, and seldom speak the helpful word that would cheer and lighten their labor, and help them to aspire to higher ideals. We are so prone to criticize instead of praise, to throw a damper on their soaring ambitions, that it would almost seem as though we felt it necessary to act as a "wet blanket," lest the elation they feel over their success should disturb their equilibrium. Thus they miss the assistance we could render by a kindly word of encouragement or sympathy.

I once stood looking at the quiet features of a woman in her last sleep, and her husband in broken voice said, "She was always a good wife to me." I wondered if he ever told her so. In my scrap-album I have pasted a clipping which reads: "Praise your wife man, for Heaven's sake praise your wife. Do not wait until her ears are dulled in death before you say, 'She has been a good wife to me.' Many a woman will be buried in a rosewood casket, whose heart was starved for a kind word."

In another album I find these words spoken by a man: "If I could only once hear her say that I pleased her," and that one sentence revealed a world of longing for a simple word of commendation. Many a kind-hearted man, whose best efforts to please and provide for, have been met with discontent and unbraiding, will leave a wife whose after years will be filled with remorse as she reflects upon her impatient words and exasperating manner. And many a true loving wife plods on through the weary years, ever at her post of duty, managing the home, training the family, and ever longing with an unspeakable desire for one tender word, a caress, kind sympathy, which she never receives. No wonder life becomes bitter and monotonous! No oil of gladness poured in occasionally to keep the wheels of life running smoothly. The trivial faults are given prominence, and a system of "nagging" is adopted, too often unnoticed by the persons themselves, but very apparent to others.

"We have been married twenty years," a woman wrote, "and never once has my husband shown one word of sympathy to me, or to the children." That sounds almost incredible, but there are natures so cold, so sternly repellent, that we do not doubt her assertion. He was a pillar in the church, too, but there was no beauty in his cast-iron religion. Alas, and alas, that such things are true! We are too scant with our praise, too slow to show our appreciation, but ever ready to pounce on a fault, too hasty and sharp with our tongues.

"We have kindly words for the stranger,  
And smiles for the sometime guest;  
But for our own the bitter tone,  
Though we love our own the best."

affection we often witness, the "my dear" at the beginning of a sentence, not only between husband and wife, but among society friends, and which oftentimes carries such bitter irony in its wake. It would seem to be used to swathe the cutting sarcasm that is meant to hurt, the prefix intended to accentuate the wound. For instance, "My dear, can you not spare time to superintend the meals somewhat, these vegetables are utterly tasteless?" or "My dear, you are stunningly gowned, but mauve is your color, and so suitable for your age." (Her age, forsooth! Herein lies the sting!)

I know a man—he did not die young, either, but 'lives and moves, and has his being' to-day, who always pats his wife's hand after a little "evening," and tells her how nicely she had everything arranged, and how good the refreshments tasted. He is quite opposite to one I heard described by a lecturer. "I was having dinner at a farmhouse, and such a good meal it was. The little woman had excelled herself, and when she asked her husband after his third helping of pudding, 'John, is the dessert good?' he drawled out, 'Oh yes; it's all right.' I felt like hitting him a crack over the ear. 'Why couldn't he have said 'It couldn't be better.'"

Some men are ashamed to be heard complimenting their wives; others are afraid it will spoil them should they bestow praise too often; and there are others who are too awkward to offer congratulation. There are women, too, who accept everything as a matter of course; men do not need praise; but, bless you, they do. What are men, anyway, but boys grown up, great babies indeed, and they like being petted and mothered? Just here let me tell the women who fail to practice this little art, that they are making a grave mistake, for men like appreciation and kind words as well as they, and a judicious application of praise secures many a favor. But, there now! Don't give away the secret. Of course there are exceptions, men who exist only for themselves, upon whom praise and blame fall alike, just as there are women whose hearts have grown callous under years of silence and indifference.

"GOOD night, father," said a young girl of fourteen, as she waited for her good night kiss. "You have been very wilful and disobedient to-day, I do not want to kiss you to-night."

The girl turned away, her heart embittered by the stern reproof, and rejection of the usual caress. "I will never kiss him good night again," she muttered, and she never did. He had failed to appreciate the fact that she was no longer a child to be corrected according to his idea, for the minor faults of the day, and so lost the token of affection which had never been omitted, even on her naughtiest days. He failed to realize that she had passed the stage of existence where he could nag at and check her for petty offences; he could not understand that there comes a time when childish punishments will not avail, but rather sour and harden the spirit of the child. Had he been a wise parent he would have known that his customary kiss would have softened her and brought repentance; he would have known that the heart of a woman beat in the child's body, that he no longer could hold her in control by fear of his displeasure; that he must trust to the early years of training to bring forth the fruits of his "line upon line, precept upon precept" teaching, and that the *must do* this or that has to be substituted by "don't you think you had better do the other?"

He made a mistake, as do many others. As the years rolled by, it must have hurt him, as the truth was forced home to him that he had not appreciated this filial act, which may have been largely a natural impulse beginning in babyhood, but ripening in meaning and devotion as she grew older. But he had spurned her approach, had lost this priceless token of love. He was too proud to ask for it, the steel had entered his own heart, and he accepted the shaft, and bore the results of his rash speech in silence, just as many another father or mother has done, when in a moment of intense anguish or passion, they have driven from home the son or daughter by "Never cross my threshold again," or "I disown you forever, you are none of mine."

Have you a girl or boy in their teens, this impressionable age when they feel that they know everything, when they are merging into young manhood or womanhood; when they resent being corrected, when their thoughts, their ambitions, and physical nature are all undergoing a change from childhood's dream to the more mature years of discretion? Look well to your tongue, to your temper, to your demands upon their obedience to your every whim, for they are thinking out problems for themselves now, and many a naturally sweet-tempered child has been transformed into a morose and sullen

disposition by being watched and questioned, and called to account for very trifling faults. Better temper your judgment with a sane levity than lose the kiss of your boy or girl, a boon that ought to be precious to any parent.



IF we bigger and older folk desire and enjoy being appreciated, how much more the children, for they feel the hurt of being overlooked in very tender years. "Mamma, do you love me any more?" said little Bessie, as her mother hugged and crooned over the tiny baby brother. The dear little ones, many a heartache it has given me to see the two-year-old toddler quite forgotten in the joy of the new baby, the deposed little monarch deserted, and the usurper receiving all the homage. "I don't like papa, I don't like mamma, I don't like that baby," my little sister wailed. So, instead of foolishly teasing the little ones by telling them that no one loves them now, just keep a margin of worship for the ruler who has been ousted from his throne.

There is nothing sadder in all the world than the wistful, yearning eyes of an unloved child. A little girl was visiting her friend. She saw the mother approach and after adjusting her daughter's hair-ribbons drew her close and kissed her, then turned to her and did likewise. She asked if she was kissed like that every day, and being told that it happened many times a day, she said that her mother had not kissed her since she could remember.

Oh, mother, is this you? Do you give your children the chance to tell such a thing? Have you a starved little human being in your home, enduring childish troubles without the aid of mother's manifestations of love? May God help the little hungry being who was given to you for your mother love and protection, and may the same all-wise Father enable you to lay the little head upon your breast, and speak words of tenderness, and do it now. The traps for young feet are many, and as in the Vision of Mirzale, they may drop out of sight, and be lost, and through the long years you may stretch empty arms into the darkness of remorse.



## Coffee-Cakes and Cupid

NO American mother would ever admit that she set out with intent and purpose to marry her daughter off well. Mothers high and low vum and avow that Cupid must take his course.

But that only shows what subtle psychologists mothers are. They have a strange way of knowing just how far General Cupid has progressed in his campaign against the valvular citadel. When he is in his last trenches and ready to charge, they make their daughters move their forces from the uptown restaurant to the home; from the after-theatre supper to the home luncheon.

It makes no difference how honest a mother may be, she knows many tricks in the trade of love. She knows that whoever was responsible for the old adage that the nearest way to a man's heart was through his stomach had first-hand information. But she has gone a step further than the proverb-maker, for she has added that it must be done at home, and not at a restaurant. She knows that her daughter never looks more entrancing than when pouring a cup of tea; she knows that a hotel dinner with thirty-five minute waits between courses never melt's a lover's heart so quickly as peanut-butter spread on salt crackers by a young girl in the privacy of her own residence. Thus it is that the mother manoeuvres to have her daughter pass the coffee-cakes in a quiet hour in the home. The young man looks ahead and sees her going through that delightful operation at a breakfast table of his own in a time to come. The circuit between his heart and his stomach is complete.

The glare and glitter of a restaurant where it takes three boys to open the door does not affect the young man's heart nearly as much as a *tete-a-tete* over a table laid for two in a girl's own home. A waiter with a number on his coat can't compare to Hulda with a smile on her face.

Of course the young man never thinks of it; it never enters the girl's mind. The mother merely suggests to the daughter that she have the young man to lunch some day; and, presto! Cupid has twanged his bowstring. Truly, mothers move in a mysterious way their wonders to perform.—Lippincott's Magazine.

IT is the little attentions which furnish the spice of life, the quiet side-speeches breathing of love and thoughtfulness for each other that bind our hearts together, not the public demonstrations of