



Around the Hearth

By JENNIE ALLEN MOORE

"So of water drain a glass,
In my arbor as you pass,
And I'll tell you what I love, and what I hate, John
Brown.

I love the song of birds,
And the children's early words,
And a loving woman's voice, low and sweet, John
Brown;
And I hate a false pretence,
And the want of common sense,
And arrogance, and fawning, and deceit, John
Brown."

THE TRUE RING.

I LIKE John Brown's philosophy, not only the few lines I have quoted, but I like it throughout. I always liked the swing, the rhythm, the heartiness and good sense of it. I believe in it, I endorse it, and wish I could sow its sentiments broadcast through the land. It has the ring of a true, sane life, and holds up an ideal symbol of what constitutes true greatness—not "to inherit wealth, estate, and high degree—not lineage, pomp, and worldly honors—but a nobility of soul; merit gained by truth and honesty of life and purpose; worth that has sprung from innate feelings of humanity to fellow beings; these are the uplifting, ennobling tenets "A Plain Man's Philosophy" would inspire.

Pearlie Watson's composition on true greatness in Mrs. Nellie McClung's new book, "The Second Chance," is not only entertaining, but wholesome. Here is an extract: "A person can never get true greatness by trying for it. You get it when you are not looking for it. It's nice to have good clothes—it makes it a lot easier to act decent—but it's a sign of true greatness to act when you haven't got them just as good as if you had. One time when Ma was a little girl, they had a bird at their house, called Bill, that broke his leg. They thought they would have to kill him, but next morning they found him propped up sort of sideways on his good leg, singing! That was true greatness."

One time there was a woman that had done a big washing, and hung it on the line. The line broke, and let it all down in the mud, but she didn't say a word, only did it over again; and this time she spread it on the grass, where it couldn't fall. But that night a dog with dirty feet ran over it. When she saw what was done, she sat down and didn't cry a bit. All she said was: 'Ain't it queer that he didn't miss nothing?' That was true greatness, but it's only people who have done washings that know it!"

"Let's p'tend we have tea," lisps the tiny tot, as she pours out water in her little tea-cups, and they sip and eat imaginary good things instead of the bread and butter reality. "I'll pretend I'm a big bear," says Johnnie, as he crawls under the table and growls. At home and at school, how early this life of pretence begins! The scholar is reading a story book, while pretending to be engaged in his lessons; the mother pretends she is going to bed, and steals away to a party; the father makes business pretensions to the world, and so are laid the foundations of this life of pretence.

It is a hard life, to be ever watchful, lest in some unguarded moment the mask should be forgotten, and the affection that has shielded the reality unveils the hard facts. It must be a hard matter to crush the natural impulses, and substitute for them a feigned personality, to assume a position that cannot be upheld, to lead a double life. It is so much easier to live naturally, to speak your own thought, to appear what you are, to have a glorious independence all your own. "Isn't it a treat to meet anyone who acts herself?" said a man to his wife, as they discussed a new acquaintance. Just to be one's self, to adopt no mannerisms, to affect no airs not peculiarly your own, to be genuine, these are sterling qualities we all may possess.

I do not like to see people who have no ideal but those they borrow, who are carried about with every "wind of doctrine," and forever quoting other people's opinions. It is amusing the tight boxes in which they sometimes find themselves. "I do not like potatoes put into a pan, and all hashed together," said a woman at a little gathering one day. "I like them sliced, and nicely browned on both sides." "So do I," "And I," said two others. The fourth remarked brightly: "Oh, I do, they taste so good, all chopped up with butter, salt and pepper, and sometimes a little raw onion added. It takes so long to slice and brown them for a big family, all right where there are only two or three to cook for." Number Five did not voice her liking, but she was grateful—she had eight children, and always did her potatoes that way—and suddenly they all remembered, and in the silence that reigned for a moment there were recollections of how good her

potatoes tasted, as well as a desire for another chance to speak from the two echoes, who inwardly admired the courage of the woman who dared to differ, and thus saved the situation for her friend.

Yes, I enjoy people who are outspoken, and have a strong individuality, who freely say and do what they think. I do not like to see people who pride themselves on this immovability, and who will not leave their minds open to conviction. That is the want of common sense—pig-headed, if you will—to seal the mind against a possible chance of enlightenment. That is no sign of strength of character, and the person who practises it now is behind the times; for we are called upon in this age of advancement to forego many of our long cherished ideas, and accept new light and logic.

Who can afford to be arrogant these days, when fortunes are made and lost in a day? Who can haughtily look upon others when riches are only ephemeral, for it is usually in connection with wealth where arrogance is met. In my lexicon, I would spell it in nine letters, too, *ignorance*. Driving through the streets of an old familiar town one day, with a company of friends, a middle-aged gentleman ruminated aloud in his slow, drawling tones. "So this is the old Brown mansion—*pret-ty* well gone to ruins—swell place once, and weren't they just right, too, eh?—kings and queens among us—rode in their carriages, and we poor Smiths trudged along on foot—well, well, changed about now, we ride, and they walk—every dog has his day." That's the whole story, as I would describe it, of arrogance. We cannot afford to snub the man who attends to our furnace, or the woman who stands at our tubs. They may have memories that you have not yet attained to, of full dress suits and lovely grounds all their own, of gowns and social functions you know nothing of; it is just a case of, well—"Every dog has his day." No, no; arrogance has no place in this twentieth century of the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man.

Fawning—what does it mean? Webster defines it—"courting servilely: meanly flattering." We call that *toadying*, don't we? A man has no respect for the candidate, but he works for him, votes for him, because he may make him useful in securing the position to which he aspires. A woman "has no use" for another, but she invites her to her home, flatters her, toadies to her, because she wants to participate in the grand entertainment she gives, and share in the good time. We tolerate the objectionable traits of those who are practically no benefit to us, because they are such jolly good fellows, or because they have money, and means of giving pleasure, and prestige. If that means fawning, like John Brown, I do not like it, for it likewise means deceit—the chief corner-stone.

Some one has said, "It costs more to revenge an injury than to suffer it, so I do not like to see people taking revenge for a wrong into their own hands. Think of the time spent trying to out-scheme the enemy, the dark, lowering thoughts, the scorching soul revealed in the countenance, for somehow it does mar our expression. John Wesley said: "We cannot prevent the birds of the air from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building nests in our hair." And so, when our nature thirsts for revenge, and bitter thoughts are crowding in and pressing their claim, just remember that "The fairest act of a human life is scorn-ing to avenge an injury."

We cannot afford to go through life holding grudges. If people do not suit us, and we do not like their actions, or the way they treat us, we need not make friends of them. We can be civil, and yet they can be made to understand that into your *ego* they can never enter, they are effectually barred from your real self. It is yours to prohibit intimacy with uncongenial people, yours to ignore the faults of those with whom you do not wish to associate, because of dislike, on your part or theirs; the world is full of people, and there are kindred spirits for every class and condition of mankind, and life is too short to parry thrusts and hold spite; live down that kind of thing, until

"The hatred flies your mind,
And you sigh for human kind,
And excuse the faults of those you cannot love,
John Brown."

I love hopeful people, those whose vision can see past the present cloud that dims their horizon, and back of the darkness view the silver lining. Call to your mind some friend whose sunny face and hopeful disposition always gives you a brighter outlook, some one to whom you turn in difficulty, a friend who is a very tower of strength when your heart fails, and the way seems blocked. Recall the day when desperation seized you, because of your perplexities, and some strong impulse drove you to

unutterable extremities; when hope, in the guise of a calm, far-seeing friend, stepped in, and through her glasses, a gleam of light was afforded. You imbibed the virtue of that grace, took fresh courage, the mountain rolled away as you boldly faced the troubles, and you remember the relief—yes, you remember. Then pass it on; some one else needs your hopefulness.

Among my gifts last Christmas was a little book entitled, "The Beauties of Friendship," full of jewels of thought, a book I want close by me, one I shall read many times, and because the giver chose so wisely, knowing the heart and work of the recipient, it shall some day lodge in the drawer labelled "sacred," where many other relics of by-gone days—locks of hair, and shining curls, and bundles of yellow letters lying side by side, with old-fashioned photographs, and boxes tied with faded ribbon, repose. Here is one of the gems—"Friendship is a word, the very sight of which in print makes the heart warm." I value my friendships, they are dear to me; they mean so much in the busy lives we lead. We are sometimes obliged to neglect them, but we feel they understand; we seem to drop the thread of our intercourse at times, and months or years roll by, we meet and resume the old ties, for friendship's flame has still burned on. It renews itself, and requires no explanation of the long silence—that is the real, the true, the genuine.

Sarcasm I heartily dislike, although I believe there are times when it is necessary as a means of defence against itself—when Greek meets Greek, as it were. It may be all right between editors, and public men on the platform, who shake hands and laugh over it afterwards, but among social friends, and in the family, it should have no place. The effect is so chilling, a coldly-worded retort meant to hurt; in fact, it is deadly between people who should love each other, it kills the finer sentiments that should exist in the family relation. It is closely akin to ingratitude, which is a common foe in domestic life, because it is cutting, and of which it has been said, "Far keener than a serpent's tooth, it is to have a thankless child."

John Brown did not like "the constant whine of the foolish who repine, and turn their good to evil by complaint." Neither do I. We fall into that habit. But it does not help us. It becomes confirmed with many, and their whole conversation is imbued with murmurings, until the listener is wearied of hearing of the woes and troubles that ought to have been buried in the long past, and misfortunes that are held in anticipation. Why oppress others by grumbling at our lot, why not take the "sunny side," and find a joy in living, believing that the tide may turn, and bear you with it to success, and to the fulfilment of your ambitions? True, it is easy to talk; the rut is deep; the effort costs something that perhaps we are not equal to, but it is worth trying to take life's hardships with a spice of humor.

Such multitudes of thought crowd upon me as my space grows less that I find it hard to pick and choose. I dislike cruelty in any form, to human or beast. The boy who exercises a bullying spirit over those weaker or smaller than himself, I like to see "meet his Waterloo" at the hands of some competent person; and the girl who deals out scorn, meet with payment in her own coin. I like to hear of some one horsewhipping the man who beats his wife, and the strong arm of the law interfering with the inhuman mother who unmercifully whips her children. I dislike to witness the discomforts that arise from idleness and laziness, and hate to see people suffer because of it. Many homes could be bettered, and lives made bearable if the heads of it were thrifty and industrious.

I love music, especially sad music with a little wail in it. Something within me responds to the strain of sadness noticeable in some instruments like the plaintive undertone of the bagpipes. "I love a simple song, that awakes emotions strong," and grave old familiar hymns like "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," and "Lead Thou Me On." I was always fond of reading, but my taste has altered with the years, and more sober works with the current literature of the day, fill the place of books of fiction I devoured in my early years. Even yet, a good love-story, well told, has its attraction.

Editor's Note.—We dare to add that we know something else that Jennie Allen Moore does not like—in fact, she *hates*, and that is to be misquoted. The office staff know what to expect when a blunder occurs, especially when it gives a wife an "evil eye" instead of an "eagle eye," as happened in the January number. We all winced when the avenging angel descended, for every line of that letter savored of "Now, will you do it again?" "Had you only given that eye to the husband," she said, "it might have seemed more fitting."