

Copied for the REVIEW.

CONCERNING OUR FRIENDS.

THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP—WHY WE
NEED IT—THE LOSS OF FRIENDS
—OUR SAD NEGLECT—THE
WORLD'S FRIEND.

"The only way to have a friend is to be one."

"Happy the man who knows the solemnity of friendship and honors its laws."

"There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship—one is truth, the other is tenderness."

The gentle philosopher of concord knew something of the value of friendship when he uttered these words; knew also of its fine texture, so strong, yet fragile; so vigorous, yet easily bruised.

I have been re-reading Emerson's Essay on Friendship, and, as I have closed the book and pondered over its wise sayings, I have been impressed anew with the thought of our careless treatment of this most sacred affection, next to love.

Indeed I am not sure that perfect friendship between rare high natures is not a relationship greater than love, or, at least, purer and more elevating. And yet we treat it often with a careless neglect or indifference that would kill the strongest love between man and woman.

But let us come away from Emerson's transcendentalism from the rare esoteric relationship of which he speaks, and into which it is not given to us all to enter, to the plain ordinary friendships of every day life; not acquaintanceships, mind you, but those kindly impulses between heart and heart, those kinships of spirit, that, upspringing instantly, or by the growth of years, constitute genuine friendships.

First, we confess frankly that we need our friends, some of us perhaps to a greater degree than others, but all

to some extent. It is a healthy, happy, human instinct, the indulgence of which brings a certain cordial exhilaration.

The man or woman who has many friends is never despondent. He or she who has one friend is never lonely. "Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it should regain its friend, and it would be content and cheerful alone for a thousand years."

We may speak lightly of friendship, it is the fashion of the age; we may flout at the relationship, cast gibes and deride it; we may pride ourselves on our independence, self-reliance, what you will; yet our every impulse is toward it, and the loneliest heart in the world is that which casts away its friends.

What are we doing to possess friends, or possessing, to retain them?

"The only way to have a friend is to be one," says the philosopher, and surely truer words never were spoken. Let us add to it: "The only way to keep a friend is to deal with him or her in truth and tenderness."

"A friend is a person with whom we may be sincere," with whom we must be as sincere as one mortal may with another. Friendship does not flourish in an atmosphere of duplicity; it cannot be nourished on artifice. You and I must be ourselves to our friends if we, having won them, would retain them. Have you not noticed? It is the pleasant people who win friends; it is the sincere ones who retain them.

But there is something else needed in our conduct towards them—tenderness. It is a comprehensive word, including an infinity of gracious minor virtues—thoughtfulness, courtesy, kindness, active interest, self-restraint, sympathy, protective love.

Stop for a moment and let us consider, you and I, how friends, dear friends of past years, have slipped away from us; not because we have loved or believed in them less, not from in-