

The Fireside.

AFTERWARDS.

"I was just at the end of my tether," said Mrs. Bascom to her neighbor, as they sat on the piazza watching the city boarder driving out of sight.

"I don't think I could have stood it one day longer. There's all the difference in the world in folks, and this summer I had a trying set of them. They didn't seem to have any consideration and sometimes I thought they imagined Mary Jane and I were made of iron.

"Well, the summer is over. They've gone, and I believe it will take me all winter to get rested."

"I had lovely people this season," rejoined her neighbor. "I was really sorry to have them go. They were interested in everything and were friends to us all. The young people went with Hattie and Will to the Christian Endeavor meeting Sunday nights and took part. They helped to get up the entertainment at the Sunday school picnic and made lots of fun for the children. They took a pew in church and were generous when the collection plate was passed, and they gave fifteen dollars towards the new carpet. They are quite rich and highly educated. They took a trip around the world, too, but they are not one bit 'stuck up.' Miss Agnes, the eldest daughter, trimmed Nancy's hat for her, and Nancy was so set up over it that she couldn't do enough for Miss Agnes. But they were church folks, you know."

"So were my boarders church folks, at least they said they were when in the city," said Mrs. Bascom. "But they said they came here to rest, and Sundays they used to go off driving and walking in the woods. Their religion must be like the religion I read about in a story, that was taken off and put on as the occasion required. I thought many times this summer how much good my boarders might do here in the community if they would only show some interest. City folks could do much for country folks and country folks could do lots for city folks, if they would only be sort of friendly together. But, as I said before, there's all the difference in the world in folks."

"That's so, Mrs. Bascom, but I must run across the lot now, and go home and clean up my house. I am going to let Nancy go home tomorrow."

Mrs. Bascom watched her neighbor as she walked across the lot with such a sprightly step. Her summer had proved such a great success, looked at from many points of view. "Mrs. Bascom is one of the best women in the world, and I know did everything in her power to make the summer pleasant for her folks — but they were a different sort from mine," was the neighbor's thought as she went into the house.

Walking along the roadside after hearing the "comparing of notes" by these two good women, I thought of the "afterwards," of the coming and going of the city boarders. What an influence they leave behind them! They do not realize how much that is helpful they can do in their summer outings.

Just as I was trying to make an estimate of the power of a good influence, an old friend came slowly driving by with a large load of corn which had been harvested. He stopped at the side of the road as we country dwellers do

when we pass each other to ask after the family at home, and to hear what new interests have come to light.

"Well," said he, "the summer is over. It's been very short—the shortest one seems to me I ever knew. Did you hear that young lady from the city, who has been boarding up on the hill this summer, sing in our church one Sunday? Too bad you didn't hear her. She's a beautiful singer.

"I never heard anything like it, and the song sticks to me all the time: 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' The words never had such a powerful meaning to me before. I heard she sang at one of the tent meetings down in the hollow. That is the kind of city folks that are good to have."

The farmer drove up the road; I sat down on a rock under the white birches and looked at the waning of the golden rod and purple aster and listened to the crickets making music in tones of minor key. The summer was gone and the aftermath was being gathered in.—*The Evangelist.*

HER PLACE.

"There's no use, Aunt Emma. I can't think of anything that I do well enough to earn a living by it. I surely can't wash, as most of the heroines in stories do, and as surely can't teach school or tend in a store, and there are more to sew now than are needed. What I shall do is a conundrum, over which I've been puzzling these three weeks. I seem to be no nearer its solution, but I'll never give it up. Somewhere in the world there's a place for me, and I'll find it yet!"

From the look of determination on the speaker's face, one might be sure she would make her words good.

"You know you are welcome to stay here, dear, forever, if you like. We would all be glad to have you."

"I know, Aunt Emma; I feel very grateful to you for all your kindness, more grateful than I can express; but you don't need me and, if I stayed here, it would be as a dependent on your charity, and my father's daughter could never fill that position gracefully."

There was silence for a while, as the two ladies sewed busily, the elder with a steady, restful manner, like one who, having found her place in life takes placid content therein; the younger, with rapid, impatient fingers and a brow clouded by thought.

At length she folded the garment on which she had been working, laid it on the pile beside her, and carried them all to her aunt. That lady said "Thank you," and looked at the neatly mended garments with a most gratified air, saying, as she did so:

"Well my dear, you needn't feel that you are dependent on me while you mend like that, for you are worth your weight in gold. Two or three of those garments—now as good as new, thanks to your skill—would have gone for rags; for positively I cannot find time to do all of such work that needs to be done, but do what I can and let the rest go."

Laura said she was glad if she had helped her, and turned to go with the same preoccupied, thoughtful look. She had taken but a few steps when she paused, turned towards her aunt, and exclaimed:

"Does every housekeeper have as much mending as you, aunt?"

"Why, yes," that lady replied, wonderingly; "more, usually, and ever so much more where there are children."

"Then, that's my business. I'll go from house to house and mend."

"What are you talking about, child?"

"I'll show you in a week or two."

In the *Daily Record*, two days later, there appeared the following:

"Miss Laura Baldwin, No. 8 B street, will mend and repair neatly, at the houses of those who desire her services, for 15 cents an hour. Telephone connection."

"The idea took," as the saying goes, and Laura soon had her hands full, while her aunt comically remarked that the telephone bell rang incessantly. A handsome handbag containing an assortment of silks and threads, scissors, thimble, etc., and with this equipment Laura went from place to place, earning a comfortable livelihood.

She made it a rule from the start that no one word of gossip should be told at any house, and when she went from Mrs. B.'s to Mrs. A.'s she was "as dumb as an oyster" in response to all inquiries, were they ever so smoothly worded. People soon found this out, and she was welcome wherever she went, keeping all her old friends and making more. So daily she walked her pleasant, independent way. Her bank account grew, and her purse allowed her luxuries for herself and gifts to others, and she laughingly assured her aunt that her place, once found, was vastly comfortable.—*The Household.*

A CONTENTIOUS HABIT.

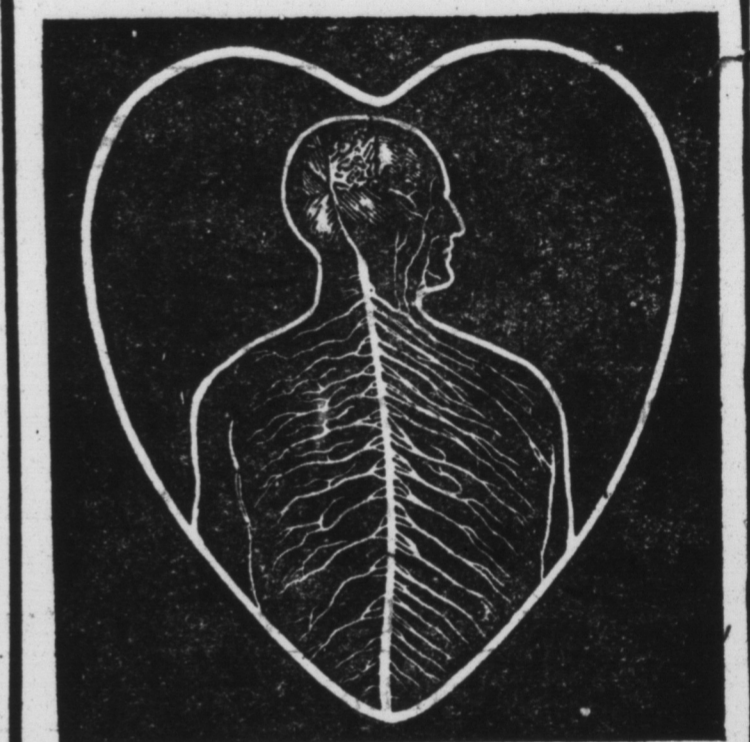
Honest criticism for the sake of the truth may be profitable, and lead to fruitful results; contentious criticism for the sake of criticism is likely to be mischievous in its effects, and to lead to an odious habit. We are divinely directed to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and to "strive earnestly to enter the narrow gate," but we are also frequently admonished to beware of those who are "puffed up, dotting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth."

There are such men among us to-day. They have cultivated the habit of idle criticism, contention, strife about words, until it has become a second nature, and a very bad nature. They are on "the other side" in every discussion, not because they believe it, but because they see a chance for "an argument," and they thrive on "arguments" as a goat thrives on thistles. They will tell you that Nero had doubtless good reasons for lighting up his gardens with burning Christians, that Ananias and Sapphira were probably not so bad as they are painted, and that Judas Iscariot could possibly make a very good defense if only we had the whole story of his alleged treason. In the heat of the argument you will sometimes hear these men, who want "to give full opportunity to both sides," rise to remark that there are reasons for believing that the Niagara Falls flow up the precipice and not down it, and that we must not be so dogmatic in insisting that the sun is larger and brighter than the earth. "There is nothing of which the opposite may not be true," these great logicians assure us.

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be able "to divide a hair 'twixt south and southwest side," but it has its perils. Besides making a nuisance of one's self in all social circles, it is not difficult so to cultivate this pernicious habit as to make it impossible for us to recognize the truth, even the brightest and highest. This is really that "reprobate mind" of which the apostle warns us that to it the knowledge of God is inaccessible.

"Our nature is subdued To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

He that loves the truth shall know the truth, and it will make him free. He that loves contention shall have the spirit of contention as his abiding and just recompense of reward. "Leave off contention before it be meddled with."—*Examiner.*

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