

**The Opportunity of Being Pleasant.**

She and her husband and children; and they are well and they are good and they are contented; and yet, she was actually unhappy because — her dressmaker disappointed her!" says some poor soul who has paid the price — a woman whose house is left unto her desolate. To such an one, the whimpering and scolding complaint about the unimportant seems an incredible folly, and she is moved to say to her complaining rich friend: "Do stop to remember that you are rich; remember all you possess!" But instead of remembering her wealth, the foolish woman is bewailing her poverty; she is consumed with worry over unimportant things. The dressmaker brings tears to her eyes; the domestic problem keeps her awake at night, an invitation which does not come turns the world black before her.

Shame! says the poor creature, whose sense of proportion has been born in some bitter hour of fear or bereavement or wrongdoing.

And it is a shame—a shame for people who have in their lives the consciousness of love and character and courage to fall into the wasteful folly of unhappiness about the unimportant. It would be bad enough if this shameful kind of unhappiness could be confined to the person who experiences it; but, unfortunately, its "black edge spreads over on to other lives." No woman who comes down to her breakfast table with what her son frankly calls a "grouch on" is grouchy to herself alone. Her husband feels it; her servants feel it; and so the day falls a little more darkly than it need on the world.

It is curious how rarely we stop to reflect upon the duty of being conscious of our happiness, of being pleasant, in fact, for the sake of other people's happiness. And it is so simple a duty, too, always at our hand! It does not need that we shall go out and look for it, as we might look for a high deed to do—a dragon to slay, a movement to reform the world, a vocation, a martyrdom! Sometimes we have to hunt for such things; while right at hand is this great and simple and serious opportunity—the opportunity of being pleasant.—*Margaret Deland, in Harper's Bazaar.*

**FOR THE SAKE OF THE NEXT ONE.**

"Why, auntie, I thought you were all through!"

"So I am, with my work," returned Aunt Carrie, as with a smile she went on threading her needle. "I am only trying to smooth the way for the next one."

"Who, for instance?" questioned Will curiously.

"Well, suppose that just as papa is starting for business to-morrow morning he discovers that he is about to lose a button from his coat, and he can spare only about two minutes in which to have it sewed on. Don't you think that it would be quite a relief for mamma to find her needle already threaded?"

"Of course, for I shouldn't think one could find that little bit of an eye at all if he were in a hurry. I had a dreadful time the other day when I wanted to mend my ball. I'm sure I should have been glad to be your 'next one'."

"Suppose again, Will, that whoever dropped that piece of wood on the cellar stairs had stooped to pick it up, remembering that some one else would be coming that way soon—wouldn't it have been worth while? Just think how poor Bridget has suffered from her fall, and

how the household has been inconvenienced."

"Yes, auntie; and if I had wiped up the water I spilled this noon, sister wouldn't have been obliged to change her dress when she was in such a hurry to get back to school; but a fellow will have to keep pretty wide-awake to remember every time."

And with a thoughtful expression on his boyish face, Will passed out of the house and toward the front gate, munching a banana as he went, but evidently engaged in deep thought. Reaching the sidewalk, he threw down the banana-skin, and proceeded on his way; but presently he turned and looked hard at the yellow object lying on the pavement, and then, quickly retracing his steps, he picked it up and flung it far into the road, where no one would be likely to slip on it. Turning toward the house, he saw his aunt watching him from the window, and with a merry laugh he lifted his hat and bowed, while she in turn nodded approvingly.—*Morning Star.*

**Why an Artist Becomes a Missionary.**

One of the most successful of modern missionaries is the present Bishop of Uganda, sent by the Church Mission Society to that field in the darkest days of the missionaries. He had been an artist, and at one time painted a picture which brought him considerable fame, entitled "Desolation." It was a picture of a desolate woman on a stormy night, dragging a little girl along the streets, while no one had an open door or a word of kindness. The shadows were as thick as despair has painted it. However, he felt utterly disappointed, and a voice seemed to say to him, "How much better to spend your life blotting out the pictures of desolation."

He left his profession and became a city missionary in the slums of England, winning many souls. At last the Church Mission Society heard of him; they wanted a man to go to the field where Bishop Hannington had been murdered, and he said: "I will go if it is the hardest field you have." To-day he is the under shepherd of nearly 100,000 African souls, and has been honored by God to establish the most successful mission in the Dark Continent.

Dear friend, are you investing your life, your money, your influence in the best things?—*C. and M. Alliance.*

**THE HEAVENLY ATTRACTION.**

No, we need a spiritual power to lift us to the plane of holy living. One is reminded of the bridge company that had long tried to sink their piles in the bed of a river where they were constructing a steel bridge. But they found imbedded in the channel an old water main of solid iron which they could not remove. They hitched tug-boats to it and locomotives were derailed, the engines broke down, but the obstruction would not lift. At last a man came along and offered to lift it at a very small price. His contract was gladly accepted. He simply got two big mud scows, put some beams across them, connected the two and then anchored them right over the obstruction of the river. Then he took a powerful chain cable, fastened it to the water main below securely and waited until the tide was low and then he firmly attached the upper end of it to the beams that connected the two scows. Then he went and sat on the bank and folded

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his arms and laughed. The tide began to rise slowly but resistlessly, the chains tightened and pulled and creaked with the strain, the mighty scows shook a little and were pulled under water a few feet and then stopped sinking; but the tide rose on and pulled, and pulled, and pulled at those mighty chains until suddenly there was a crash, the water leaped high in the air, the chain relaxed, the scows rose, and lo, the watermain was torn from its foundation, and was hanging by the cable. That higher force of a heavenly attraction had lifted the impossible barrier.

**THE SIN OF UNKIND SPEECH.**

"One trouble with me," said a young man, confessing his spiritual weakness, "is that I say nasty things about men." I see so much that I don't like and can't help condemning it. And I say a great many things that are not kind. We all do. And we ought not.

Unkind speech is not Christlike. He never said anything unkind about a single soul. He denounced certain classes, but he welcomed and acknowledged the smallest flash of worthiness in individuals even of these classes.

Unkind speech is unjust. There is more good than evil in our acquaintances. And what we condemn is more than balanced, if we would but see it, by good. And probably the one we condemn is struggling against the very thing we are criticising. And if untrue, how wrong our unkindness is!

Even if true, unkind speech about others harm ourselves. It discloses in us the capacities for what we condemn in others. It confirms our evil and unkindness of heart. It blunts our sense of generous perception of good. It throws us out of sympathy with the kindly Jesus.

If we intend it to hurt, how can we justify it? If we don't intend it to hurt, why do we run the risk? In either case its reflex influence on us is bad. If it is a harmful act, it will harm us, too. If it is a futile act, it will hurt us to have wasted strength on doing it.

**CURES ECZEMA.**

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