

The Fireside.

ECONOMIZING ONE'S SELF.

BY MRS. HELENA H. THOMAS.

"I just ran in to telephone for some groceries, with your permission, for I am too dead tired to make myself sufficiently presentable to go for them." Saying which a certain neighbor gave her order and then dropped into an easy chair like a dead weight.

"Have you had an unusually hard day?" I queried.

"Not especially," was the answer, followed by a long-drawn sigh. "Indeed I had planned so little for the day that I hoped to get some rest, seeing the washing and ironing was out of the way, but I may as well give up looking for an opportunity to rest this side of the grave, for if it isn't one thing it's another to keep me on the keen jump."

"I haven't much to show for the day, either," she added, with another sigh, "but it has been such a hot day that I have quite exhausted my strength running up and down cellar."

"Why, what for?" queried an aged neighbor who had "just come to sit awhile because the time hangs so heavy."

"Because we don't take ice this summer, consequently as trifling a request as 'a drink of water, please,' means a journey up and down a long flight of stairs. When they came up on the price of ice I said, 'That settles it; we will go without,' so I have to take the consequences."

Just here the woman who "only finds time to glance over a daily," reached for a household magazine which chanced to be open at a prize offer for "Pet Economics," which provoked:

"Well, I couldn't for the life of me name a single 'pet economy,' for I economize so constantly that I often say, 'Economy is half our income.' Now my husband is begging me to consent to having a gas range, says I look so heated every time I sit down to the table that he does not enjoy his meal; but I tell him he can endure it if I can. It is well for him that he has a wife who knows how to economize, though he does not seem to realize how much I save by studying economy at every turn."

Now this woman prides herself on practising what she considers economy, and avails herself of every opportunity to throw out hints which imply that she alone is worthy to be called an economical housewife, consequently one listener was more than glad when the "Grandma" of the neighborhood, who is equally outspoken, in her way, said, in a chiding tone:

"Still you are ignorant of the first principles of economy, it seems to me, my dear."

"Me! grandma, why, what do you mean?" was the puzzled reply of the woman who, forgetting her weariness, sprang to her feet but resumed her seat when urged:

"Oh, sit down while I have my say. I'll not hinder you long, but I hope you will take it kindly when I tell you that you are making the same mistake that is made by many another housewife, when you fail to economize yourself."

"Economize myself!"

"Yes, and the sooner you begin to do it the better it will be for all concerned," was the emphatic rejoinder. "Now, for instance, you confess that you are

'dead tired,' and you surely look it, all because of your many errands to the cellar, which might have been prevented but for, what appears to me, a false or at least one-sided idea of economy in going without ice during the summer months."

Then, turning to her hostess the observant old lady put the query:

"How much more do you pay for ice than last season?"

"Twenty cents a month."

"How many months have you been in the habit of taking ice?" asked grandma, looking at the woman who knows how to be the good listener when someone else has the floor.

"Four or five months," was the hesitating answer.

"And so you wilfully travel up and down cellar day after day, all summer, just to save a paltry dollar. Well, well, I thought you had more sense," said grandma, in so laughing a way that offense could not be taken. "Now when I was young I was obliged to swelter over a hot stove and sit down to the table looking like a boiled lobster, and run up and down cellar the live-long day, as many who are far from city conveniences are still obliged to, but that is no reason why you should not make the most of what costs so little and means so much to yourself and family."

"Pardon my plain speaking," urged grandma, in a less earnest tone, "but I've so much time to think, these days, and so I think of my neighbors and how I would like to give others a lift, as I used to, but all I can do to help along is to speak my mind, once in a while, and I don't know as that amounts to much."

Grandma paused an instant and then, as her thin lips trembled, continued:

"You see I can never forgive myself for the mistake I made in bringing up my Maria to economize as I'd always done, even if it did come out of her very flesh and blood. But when I came to realize that she had inherited my ambition and hadn't the strength to go with it, I tried to hold her back, especially after we moved into the city where she could better save her steps: but she wouldn't see any necessity for trying to economize herself, and soon became a nervous wreck."

"She lived in that condition over a year and wailed from first to last over her mistake in not trying to economize her own strength before it was too late. Well," added the speaker, in a tremulous voice, "her place has long been filled by another, and I am childless. But forgive me if I have wearied you, dear."

"Oh, that is all right, grandma," rejoined the woman to whom the foregoing had been addressed, looking unusually thoughtful, "but I must run home now and start a fire or dinner will not be on time."

"Make a fire this hot night! when she can well afford to have a gas stove and all possible helps!" said grandma, with a sigh, when we were left alone. "Well, I presume I might have better kept silent, but I couldn't for the life of me."

"Grandma's advice proved to be good seed-sowing, however, for the day following the telephone was again in demand, and over it went an order for ice "box service." Then, when the receiver

was hung up, I listened to the following:

"Yes, I have decided to take ice, and I am not even going to lift it into the refrigerator, as I have done other years, and, besides, I have at last consented to have a gas stove, too."

"I confess that I was at first half inclined to be angry with grandma, even when she frankly told me that I, of all women, failed in economy, but—but I have been 'penny wise and pound foolish.' For some of my so-called 'economies' have really amounted to very little in the aggregate, while they have well nigh ruined both health and temper."

"However, from this time on, thanks to grandma's eye-opener, I shall consider it my first duty to economize myself."—N. Y. Observer.

BETTER IS A NEIGHBOR.

BY ANNA A. PRESTON.

"Am I a neighbor, Dr. Dond?" asked Florence May, eagerly, as the minister bent his tall figure to take her tiny hand, for Glendell was a real homelike, hand-shaking, friendly church, and to-day the pastor's sermon had set them thinking anew—how very lovely it was to be neighborly, and to love one another—and they moved about after service, chatting pleasantly and laughing softly until a stranger might have been reminded of the buzz of honey-bees in apple-blossom time.

"Neighbor, my dear? Of course, you are a neighbor. Don't you remember Jesus said, 'Little children, love one another?' and he meant all his people, old and young, large and small. Yes, yes, you are a neighbor; never forget it."

Those who happened to hear, smiled and said Florence May was such a dear, thoughtful little girl, which was proved true by the little girl herself going quietly to her mother after Sabbath-school and asking:

"Please, mamma, can I go up and call on Mrs. Weaver, just now, before I go home?"

"Certainly, dear, if you think you have a good reason for making a Sunday call. Here is one of the new Sabbath school library books that you can carry for her to read, and give her my love, and tell her I shall call very soon."

"Thank you, mamma," said Florence, and she slipped out and walked, because it was Sunday, instead of going at her usual hop, skip, jump, up the street a short distance, and rang the door-bell at a large house that looked rather dreary with most of its window-blinds closed.

Soon a face appeared at a sunny window, and then the door was opened by an elderly lady walking with the aid of a crutch, who said pleasantly:

"Why, my dear, is it you? I'm glad to see you. Walk in and sit in this low chair. How do you do?"

"Thank you," said Florence. "Yes, it's me. I'm well, thank you," and then, looking up into the lady's face, she added very abruptly:

"Oh, dear me, you have been crying."

"Yes, I have," admitted Mrs. Weaver, "but I'm laughing now, you see, since you have come. It has been the loneliest day. Of course, I couldn't go to church with this sprained ankle, but I made sure somebody would call, and there has."

"It's only me," said the little visitor, "but the sermon was about 'Better is a Neighbor,' and I'm a neighbor." Dr. Bond said I was, I asked him. Some

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of the others wanted to call. They said, 'There's Mrs. Weaver; sprained her ankle; I want to know; That's too bad; I'm sorry; and they talked about calling, and they couldn't. My mamma sent her love and this book for you to read, and said she'd come soon. I wore my best suit. I thought it would seem to you more like Sunday. Mr. Hartt had chickens hatchin' and he couldn't wait for his wife, and Mr. Lawrence's horse wouldn't stand easy a minute. Oh, Mrs. Weaver, that's Lizzie's picture, the Lizzie that was here in the summer. How nice it was here then, the windows all open, and such a lot of company, and the piano going, and swing and ice cream. Oh! and the little girl clapped her small hands in delight at the memory picture. "Oh, I hope they all will come next summer!"

"I haven't heard from them for a long time," said Mrs. Weaver, "but

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