

LETTERS TO YOUNG WOMEN.

Housewifery and Industry.

(Continued from last issue.)

A girl growing up to womanhood, is, when unemployed, habitually uneasy. The mind aches and chafes because it wants action for a motive. Now a mind in this condition is not benefited by the command to stay at home, or the withdrawal from companions. It must be set to work. This vital energy that is struggling to find relief in demonstrations should be directed that habits may be formed—habits of industry that obviate the wish for change and unnecessary play, and form a regular drain upon it. Otherwise the mind becomes dissipated, the will irresolute, and confinement irksome. Girls will never be happy except in the company of their playmates, unless home becomes to them a scene of regular duty and personal usefulness. There is another obvious advantage to be derived from the habit of engaging daily upon special household duties. The imagination of girls is apt to become active to an unhealthy degree, when no corrective is employed. False views of life are engendered and labor is regarded as menial. Each comes to be looked upon as a supremely desirable thing, so that when the real, inevitable cares of life come there is no preparation for them, and weak complainings or ill-natured discontent are the result. And here I am naturally introduced to another subject. Young women, the glory of your life is to do something and be something. you very possibly may have formed the idea that ease and personal enjoyment are the ends of your life. This is a terrible mistake. Development in the broadest sense and in the highest direction, is the end of your life. You may possibly find ease with it, and a great deal of precious personal enjoyment, or your life may be one long experience of self-denial.

If you wish to be something more than the pet and plaything of a man; if you would rise above the position of a pretty toy, or the ornamental fixture of an establishment, you have a work to do. You have a position to maintain in society; you have the poor and the sick to visit; you may possibly have a family to rear and train; you must take a load of care upon your shoulders and bear it through life. You have a character to sustain, and I hope that you will have the heart of a husband to cheer and strengthen. Ease is not for you. Selfish enjoyment is not for you. The world is to be made better by you. You will be obliged to suffer and to work; and if there be a spark of the true fire in you your heart will respond to these words.

The time will come when you shall see that all your toil, and care, and pain, and sorrow, and practical sympathy for others has built you up into a strength of womanhood which will despise ease as an end of life, and pity those that are content with it. Get this idea that your great business is simply to live at ease, out of your head at once. There is nothing noble or ennobling in it. Your mental and physical powers can only give you worthy happiness in the using. They were made for use, and a lazy woman is inevitably miserable. I do not put this matter of enjoyment before you as the motive for action. I simply state the fact that it is the result of action; an incident of a life worthily spent.

When you have properly comprehended and received this idea, the recreations of life and the pleasures of social intercourse will take their appropriate positions with relation to the business of life—its staple duties. Recreation will become re-action—simply the renewal of your powers, that they may all the better perform the work which you have undertaken, or which circumstances have devolved upon you. Social pleasure will rise into a sympathetic

communion with natures and lives earnest like your own, upon the subject nearest your hearts and it will give you strength and guidance. The pleasures of life will become the wells, scattered along the way, where you will lay down your burdens for the moment, wipe your brow and drink. You may go into the work before you refreshed in body and mind. In these quiet hours you will feel a healthy thrill of happiness which those who seek pleasure for its own sake never know. There are few objects in this world more repulsive to me than a selfish woman—a woman who selfishly consults her own enjoyments, her own ease, her own pleasures. If you have the slightest desire to be loved; if you would have your presence a welcome one in palace and cottage alike; if you would be admired, respected, revered; if you would have all sweet human sympathies clustering around you while you live, and the tears of a multitude of friends shed upon your grave when you die, you must be a working woman—living and working for others, denying yourself for others, and building up for yourself a character, strong, symmetrical, beautiful. If I was you, I would rather be that insensate and quietly gliding shadow which the wounded soldier kissed as the noble Florence Nightingale passed his weary pillow, than the pampered creature of luxury, who has no thought above her personal ease and personal adornment.

Do not seek out for yourselves any prominent field of service where you will attract the attention of the world. Remain where God places you. Some of the noblest heroisms of the world have been achieved in humble life. The poor ye have always with you. You can lighten your father's burdens. You can restrain your brothers from vicious society. You can relieve your failing and fading mother of much care. You can gather the ragged and ignorant children at your knee and teach them something of a better life than they have seen. You can become angels of life and goodness to many a stricken heart. You can read to the aged. You can do many things which will be changed to blessings upon your own soul.

Florence Nightingale did her work in her place; do your work in yours and your Father who seeth in secret, shall reward you openly. I would be the last one to cast a shadow on your brows, but I would deceive you at the first, so that you may begin life with right ideas. Life is real—it is a real and earnest thing. It has homely details, painful passages, and a crown of cares for every brow. I seek to inspire you with a wish and a will to meet it with a woman's spirit. I seek to point you to its noble meanings and its higher results. The tinsel with which your imagination has invested it will all fall off of itself, so soon as you shall fairly enter upon its experiences.

Then if those ideas have no place in you, you will be obliged to acquire them slowly and painfully, or you will sink into a poor, selfish, discontented creature, and be, so far as others are concerned, either a nonentity or a disgraceful hanger-on and looker-on. So I say, begin to take up life's duties now. Learn something of what life is before you take upon yourself its grave responsibilities.

Yours truly,

TIMOTHY.

(To be continued.)

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