

The Disappointed.

There are songs enough for a hero
Who dwells on the heights of fame;
Ising for the disappointed—
For those who missed their aim.

I sing with a tearful cadence
For one who stands in the dark,
And knows that his last, best arrow
Has bounded back from the mark.

I sing for the breathless runner,
The eager, anxious soul,
Who falls with his strength exhausted
Almost in sight of the goal.

For the hearts that break in silence
With a sorrow all unknown—
For those who need companions,
Yet walk their ways alone.

There are songs enough for the lovers
Who share love's tender pain;
Ising for the one whose passion
Is given and in vain.

For those whose spirit-comrades
Have missed them on the way
Ising, with a heart o'erflowing,
This minor strain to-day.

And I know the solar system
Must somewhere keep in space
A prize for that spent runner
Who barely lost the race.

For the plan would be imperfect
Un'ess it held some sphere
That paid for the toil and talent
And love that are wasted here.

Elia Wheeler Wilcox.

A Cheerful Breakfast Table.

You always have such a pleasant time at breakfast, Mrs. Drew, said a guest, how do you manage it? With us, the first meal of the day is the least enjoyable.

I have no secret which all housewives do not know, said pretty little Mrs. Drew. At Aunt Martha's, where I lived until I was married, the breakfast hour was always a dreary time, when the members of the family were generally silent, if not morose and out of sorts. Every one was in a hurry, and we all left the breakfast table with a feeling of relief. When I came to this pleasant house, I resolved to experiment on breakfasts, and try to institute a reform.

It seemed to me a matter of importance that the first hours which the family spent together during the day, should be bright and cheery and give the keynote to all the others; and that an ill-ordered table, and hurry, carelessness, or confused service, which is so generally the result of haste on the part of the family, aroused all the unpleasant elements of one's disposition at the time when the sweetness and forbearance necessary to meet the cares of the day were needing a little coaxing.

I studied the matter pretty thoroughly and found that nothing like peace and comfort at the morning meal were possible if the head of the family was constantly watching the hands of the clock; Bridget rushing the rolls in half-baked, lest there should be no time for eating them; and the mistress, worried and anxious and unfit to digest her food because of the worries of others. The secret of it all lies in making ones plans with plenty of time for margin, and in punctuality in rising on the part of the family. I make all the arrangements for lunch, dinner and breakfast, after the children have gone to school in the morning and I take ample time for doing it thoroughly. Then my other plans for the day are not disturbed by unpleasant reminders of neglected duty from the kitchen. All possible preparations for breakfast are made the night before, and I nearly always go to the kitchen in the evening to see that my plans have been carried out, and (you may laugh at it if you will, but I think it has something to do with Bridget's faithful service) to say a pleasant word to her cousin. Michael is a fine, honest lad, always greets me courteously, and Bridget fully appreciates the small attention.

But by far the most difficult part of the undertaking was to bring the family to my plans. You know that Mr. Drew had been a widower several years when I married him, and, after the reign of various housekeepers of all degrees of ideas about punctuality, had acquired very careless habits. I find that most people cannot sit up until after midnight, and be fresh and bright for an early breakfast. John has to take the half-past eight train to reach the city in convenient time for his business. If he retires by ten or half-past or even eleven, he can easily rise at seven. We have breakfast promptly at half-past, and as we are but a short distance from the station he has abundance of time to eat his breakfast leisurely, and sip his coffee discuss the morning paper, and say a pleasant word to the children. In summer, we all walk down the orchard path with him on his way to the train.

I generally come down stairs in time to find a fresh flower for each plate; but little May is just discovering this is a pleasant thing to do,

and I am glad to admit her to partnership.

We never talk about dismal things at the breakfast table. No one is expected to tell his bad dreams, and we do not consider it polite or kind to talk of our own pains and aches in the presence of the family, least of all at the table. At Aunt Martha's each member of the family thinks it his duty to inquire for the health of the others, every morning, and to ask if he had a comfortable night. Usually some one succeeds in casting a gloom over the circle by a particular narration of an attack of indigestion or insomnia, or a sick headache, which excites the sympathy and depresses the spirits of the listeners. If the pain has passed, of what use is the recollection; if it still exists, the breakfast hour is not the time to narrate the symptoms.

The children have a pleasant custom, not however invariable, of reciting some pretty verse or poem which they have found in their children's papers and magazines, at this hour. So many dainty, graceful bits of verse are made for little folks now-a-days, that we often have great pleasure in listening to them. I often reserve a funny story or a pleasant bit of news for the breakfast table. And I assure you, my John goes to his office, the children to school and I to my household cares with hearts of good cheer, and with pleasant remembrances of each other to carry with us through the day.—Helen Marshall North, in *Christian Intelligencer*.

The Value Of Cottage-Meetings.

A cottage-meeting is a meeting for praise, prayer, reading and exposition of the Word, and testimony, held in a private house. Such a meeting is, when wisely conducted, one of the most valuable agencies in congregational work. It offers at least two distinct advantages, to which we shall briefly call attention:

1. *It fosters the growth and usefulness of young Christians.* Those who have recently come out on the side of the Lord need the sympathy and strength of fellowship. Loneliness often dwarfs their spiritual development. Association in the worship of the sanctuary is not close enough for them; they long for the sense of personal contact and individual friendship. That want is supplied in cottage meetings. A home feeling diffuses itself among those in a room not to be found in a larger gathering. The absence of restraint and informal nature of the services also help. Cordial greetings are exchanged, and words which warm the heart are spoken. The young convert realizes that he is among brethren who are at once with him. He is encouraged to burden his fears and testify to his gracious experiences. He sings and prays in a spiritual environment which is adapted to foster his growth in the Christian life.

In the course of time he desires to work for Christ. The cottage-meeting was a nursery, is now a training-school for him. He tries to get a neighbour or friend to come with him, welcomes a stranger, and does whatever he can to minister to the comfort of those at the meeting. He leads in prayer occasionally, and may even attempt an exposition of some verses of a chapter in the New Testament. At first his words are few and faltering, but growing knowledge gives him confidence. He speaks from his heart, and so speaks with power. His modes of thought and expression are such as will gain the ear of his hearers. He is practical, perhaps homesy, in his illustrations and appeals; he does not beat the air, but makes every sentence tell. He soon reaches another stage in his development as a Christian worker. He is called on to take part in congregational prayer-meetings, where a larger field for the exercise of his gift and grace is opened up. So he goes on, step by step, until the timid convert of the cottage meeting becomes the useful office-bearer, who is a support to his minister and a power for good in the congregation.

2. *It carries the Gospel to those who will not come to the Gospel.* Within the bounds of our congregation there are some families which neglect church services. If they will not come to hear the Gospel, it is our duty to bring the Gospel to them. The cottage-meeting is the best way of doing this. Do all you can to persuade such people to allow you to hold a meeting in their house. If you fail hold one in the nearest house available, and get the neighbors to attend. Do not give up the effort to get such people to a cottage-meeting until you have exhausted every expedient. Success will be its own exceeding great reward. You may be the means of saving a soul and ennobling a life.

Those who come once are likely to come again. The coldness of the church and the unsocial ways of its members are often offered as an excuse by poor people who neglect the services of God's house. Such

an objection cannot be urged against cottage meetings. There a cordial welcome and a comfortable seat are given to all. They are made to feel at home, and the homeliness of the Gospel appears in its most attractive form.

If any minister thinks too much has been said about the value of cottage-meetings let him put it to the test and he will find that "one half hath not been told."—Rev. D. Sutherland in *Christian at Work*.

Take Care of the Boys.

Our towns and cities are full of young men away from home. Many of them have no friends or acquaintances. The dram shop stands open; theatres are ablaze with light and gaudy with sign-boards; churches are closed; Christian homes are full of light and sweetness, and beauty, but strangers are not welcome there, hence the way to hell is crowded; but the path of life is trodden by comparatively few.

People go to the house of prayer and retire unnoticed. Sometimes a stranger has attended a place of worship for months without ever being spoken to; but what man ever visited a rum shop for months without being recognized or spoken to? A man who is bound down to the post-office gets hailed, invited, and fairly dragged into a rum shop; have not Christians as good a warrant for compelling men to come into the house of prayer? And if there is anything to come for, will not these lonely, homeless, friendless, heart-hungry souls be thankful for the kindly invitation and gentle constraint that brings them among the people of the Lord?

Take care of the young men. A little while and it will be too late. Our prisons, our hospitals, and our potter's fields are largely filled with young men. The wages of sin is death, and death workshove among young men who forget God. A large proportion of criminals are young, and have been neglected in their youth. The average age of the inmates of the Massachusetts State prison is twenty-nine years—and none are sent there for less than three years.

The greater crimes are committed by young men. And the greatest cause of crime is strong drink, sold by men who are licensed by the State to make maniacs, rowdies, bullies, prostitutes, thieves, hoodlums, and murderers. Is it not time to thunder at this iniquity from every pulpit and every platform, and blot out a business more horrible in its consequences than slavery or piracy, and more destructive to human life and human happiness than war, and pestilence combined?

The community cannot afford to have young men ruined. The lowest kind of commercial common sense should make business men noble and generous to take care of young men. One young man led into sin will steal more than it would cost to provide comfort and entertainment for a dozen. It will cost more to arrest, try, and hang one young man, than it would to run a Young Men's Christian Association for a year. Business men need to learn that there is no sure foundation for business but righteousness and the fear of God. Let the principles of truth, virtue, and uprightness die out of the young men, and society is wrecked, and humanity drifts toward perdition.

Take care of the young, and especially of the young men. Invite them to the Saviour. Fling open your dwellings. Welcome them to your homes. Give them kindly greetings, hearty hand claps, and genial smiles. Instill into their hearts principles of honesty, manliness, and truth, and you shall find that young men thus welcomed to the privileges of the Christian life and drawn into the friendship and fellowship of the Church of God, will be a blessing and not a curse, a help and not a hindrance, and in this as in all other respects it will be found that Godliness is great gain.—*The Safeguard*.

Which Was The Wisest?

Mrs. Hunt was left by the death of her husband in limited circumstances, with three little girls dependent on her. Mr. Hunt had made a good living, but his wife, thinking she must have all the luxuries her husband had money to buy, did not encourage or help him to lay up for a rainy day. When the rainy day came there were nothing for her to do but to go to work and support the family. She had taught previous to her marriage with great success, and could doubtless have secured a good situation, and earned enough to live in modest comfort, all the time having her girls with her in school, and her little family to herself out of school.

But she decided to invest the small sum at her disposal in furnishing a house for taking boarders. She had fine administrative ability and prospered. She was able to dress her daughters as well as any millionaire dressed his, and to gratify their every wish for nice things.

She sent them to school, they learned to play on the piano, took French lessons, etc. They did not learn to sew or do housework, and never knew anything about the sanctities of home. They were accustomed to discuss the characters and peculiarities of their boarders, mimic any queer way they may have had, and to live generally as though there were no such things as partitions, doors portieres, and screens. Yet they were as lady-like and well-bred as girls brought up in luxury and idleness and a boarding-house atmosphere could be.

When at last their school-days were over and they were waiting for a rich husband, and no habits of industry, no practical knowledge of domestic arts, no sense of the value of time or the sacredness of home, Mrs. Hunt was at a loss to know what to do with them, and they were at an equal loss to know what to do with themselves.

Mrs. Lewis was left a widow with a family of five, and about as much money as Mrs. Hunt had. What-ever else she did, she determined that she should not bring up her children in a boarding-house; they should have a home, and they should all be trained to work for it. She invested her little all in a snug little cottage, with garden attached, and set the three boys to work in the garden under her own superintendence. She obtained employment with her pen, and was able to do her work at home, so she could be with her children much of the time when not in her study.

That her children might learn to work she dispensed with a servant, and with their help all the offices of the household were performed. She dressed them very modestly as befitting their narrow circumstances but they had abundance of juvenile literature of the best kind, and she took great care to form their literary tastes so they would love only the best authors.

When the girls grew old enough they spent some time sewing, first with a dress-maker and then with a milliner, that they might know how to make their own clothing with taste and correctness—"in a workman-like manner."

All the children were sent to school, but at intervals the boys got positions in offices and some training in business. As one after another they reached maturity they were able to take care of themselves and find it no hardship to do so. They had habits of industry, of self-reliance, of developing their own resources, and all these years they had enjoyed the seclusion and sanctity—inescapable treasures—of a home.—*Chris. Adv.*

Keep a Clean Mouth.

A distinguished author says: "I resolved, when I was a child, never to use a word which I could not pronounce before my mother." He kept his resolution, and became a pure-minded, noble, honored gentleman. His rule and example are worthy of imitation.

Boys readily learn a class of low, vulgar words and expressions which are never heard in respectable circles. The utmost care on the part of parents will scarcely prevent it. Of course, we cannot think of girls as being so much exposed to this peril. We cannot imagine a decent girl using words she would not utter before her father or mother.

Such vulgarity is thought by some boys to be smart,—the thing next to swearing, and yet not so wicked (?) but it is a habit which leads to profanity, and fills the mind full of evil thoughts. It vulgarizes and degrades the soul, and prepares the way for many of the gross and fearful sins which are now corrupting society.

Young or old reader: Keep your mouth free from all impurity and your tongue from evil; but, in order to do this, ask Jesus to cleanse your heart and keep it clean, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.—*The Christian*.

Meals Spoiled.

An easy way to spoil the evening meal is for each member to tell the sad tale of all that has gone wrong during the day. To mention the disappointments and vexations, to tell of the slights that were endured and the offenses that were given, and to lament over the results of this infelicitous combination of affairs is enough to counteract the refreshing effect of all the good things which the most skilful housewife can load the table. Better put this complaining off until some other time. What is the best time it is hard to say. Perhaps an indefinite postponement would be a happy thing for all concerned. Half of the things we groan over to-night will right themselves before to-morrow night if we let them alone.

Some men like a hornet are always found stinging uppermost. They sting their friends to show their independence; their enemies, to show their impartiality; and each other to keep themselves in practice.

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