

A Prayer.

Higher, purer,
Deeper, surer,
Be my thought, O Christ, of Thee!
Break the narrow bonds that limit
All my earth-born, sin-bound spirit
To the breadth of Thy divine!
Not my thought, but Thy creation,
Be the image purely Thine;
Deep within my spirit's shrine
Make the secret revelation;
Reproduce Thy life in mine.

Truer, clearer,
Lovelier, dearer,
Be my thought, O Christ, of Thee!
Not my earthly, crude conception,
But the holy, true reception,
Of Thy Spirit's teaching high!
May He heighten, clear, enlighten,
Every thought intensify!
So Thy lovely image brighten,
Till I see Thee transfigured see!
Oh, reveal Thy life in me!
—MRS. M. E. GATES, in S. S. Times.

How To Kill A Prayer-Meeting.

The prayer-meeting has fallen into such unpopularity of late that I have thought you might possibly be interested in knowing how to kill it. The theatre does not seem to have lost its hold on the people, nor the football match, nor even the nigger minstrel show; but the prayer-meeting does appear to be falling into disuse, and so perhaps it will be better to kill it and thus get it out of the way. To have a dog and starve it has always been considered the pink of cowardice; it is better to kill it outright. I have in hand quite a number of recipes, and a very moderate dose of poison I am about to prescribe, properly administered, will do all you want.

1. Stay away.

That is so modest, so easy, and so congenial a course that it will commend itself to you without words of mine. You have but to universalize your conduct, get others to do what you do, and the prayer-meeting is dead. As this, however, depends upon the consent of others who may not be so murderously inclined as yourself, I mention other methods of killing.

2. Do not pray yourself, but criticize those who do.

Prayer is either the formal and articulate utterance of devout thoughts, or the voiceless lifting of the heart to God. Now don't you pray in either of these two ways. By no means rise to your feet yourself, and by no means come with your soul attuned to harmonies divine. Preserve a frivolous attitude of mind, and even a frivolous exterior. Busy yourself with thoughts about to-day's work and to-morrow's pleasure. Think about the young man, or the girl, as the case may be, who will be waiting for you as soon as the meeting is over, and set yourself to wonder how long this performance is to last. And be sure to criticize those who lead in prayer, make a mental note of any uncouth metaphor, any quotation misplaced, any word mispronounced. To give your neighbour a nudge when such a slip occurs is also a good practice. I strongly recommend it—if you want to kill the prayer-meeting.

3. In prayer parade all your virtues.

Tell the Almighty what services you have been rendering to Him all day—maybe He does not know! Besides, it will keep the brethren informed as to your many excellencies, matters which are in grave danger of being forgotten. There was a good man I knew who made a point of doing this. We knew exactly what sick friend he had visited, what tract given away, what clasp caught, merely from his prayers. He was a good man, but he killed the prayer-meeting; a far better man than I am—but he killed the prayer-meeting.

4. Parade, also, your neighbours' feelings.

Any lapse from spirituality, any coldness of service, any failure in complete consecration, bring it before the Lord in prayer—especially if the erring brethren happen to be present. Some country friends were kind enough to ask me to take special services for them, and when I went were kind enough to meet early to plead for a blessing upon the labours of the day. One man prayed, "O, Lord! grant that our members may come up to the sanctuary to-day. Lord, Thou knowest they can go off to the seaside from Saturday till Tuesday, but they can't come to the services." To be sure he meant well—but he killed the prayer-meeting.

5. Use stock phrases and go on too long.

Long prayers are a device of the devil for breaking up prayer-meetings. He hates prayer—real prayer. And a deacon, or other good brother, who prays so long that, although he prays us into a good frame of mind at the beginning, before he has done prays us out of it, is really instigated by the evil one. Instead of saying, "Amen," at the end of the prayer which has so wearied you,

you might fittingly and usefully say, "Servant of Satan, well done." It may be, of course, that you do not wish to kill the prayer-meeting—would rather keep it alive. In that case I have nothing whatever to say except this—do precisely the contrary of all I have said, and the prayer-meeting will infallibly 'live'!

Two Valuable Rules.

The two most valuable rules of housekeeping are: "A place for everything, and everything in its place;" "A time for everything, and everything in its time." The last rule is not easy to keep unless the first one is rigidly kept; for if one must stop to hunt up utensils to do any piece of work with, time is consumed, enthusiasm is consumed, and the work is inevitably delayed. For those in whom the "organ" of order is not well developed, it is a good plan to have the places of utensils labelled or indicated in some unmistakable way, so that their absence from their places will be as conspicuous as their presence there. We knew a tool-room once in which on the white wall was drawn in charcoal the outline of each implement that had its proper place on the wall. If it appeared that any tool not in use was missing, prompt search for the missing tool and the offender was instituted, and as a result that tool-room was rarely in disorder.

Some such device for keeping kitchen utensils in place might be adopted, after which no "tender mercies" should be shown to offenses against order in this matter. Children who are trained in season and out of season in orderly habits will respond sooner or later to the training, and those in whom no habits of this kind have been formed can train themselves if they will.

As to the keeping the other rule, it is a help to estimate just how long it ought to take to accomplish a certain piece of work under the most favorable conditions, then to allow abundance of time for hindrances that may or are likely to arise, and then to prosecute the work at the beginning as though no time for hindrances had been allowed.

Another help in keeping the rule is to make suitable preparation for tasks that must be done. The successful housekeeper is always forecasting and laying her plans weeks and months ahead, so that when due time comes for the accomplishment of any special work all hindrances will be removed, and all helps will be on hand.

Another help in having every thing on time is a certain logical arrangement of one's work, so that tasks shall succeed each other in an easy and natural manner, those that require longest time being first attended to, and those that may be done on the spur of the moment left to the last. When such an arrangement is effected the work goes through by its own momentum in a great degree.

The relentless demands of good housekeeping allow no margin for frames of mind, and it will be found that a rigid adherence to the rule of having everything on time, even when at much sacrifice of the natural inertia, is the easiest solution of daily problems of labor.

A Touching Letter.

My Dear Son: What would you think of yourself if you should come to our bed side every night, and, wakening us, tell us that you would not allow us to sleep any more? That is just what you are doing; and that is why I am up here a little after midnight writing to you.

Your mother is nearly worn out, and sighing because you won't let her sleep—that mother who nursed you in your infancy, toiled for you in your childhood, and looked upon you with pride and joy when you were growing up to manhood, as she counted on the comfort and support you would give her in her declining years.

We read of a most barbarous manner in which one of the Oriental nations punishes some of its criminals. It is by cutting the flesh from the body in small pieces, slowly cutting off the limbs, beginning with the fingers and toes, one joint at a time, till the wretched victim dies. That is just what you are doing; you are killing your mother by inches. You have planted many of the white hairs now appearing so thickly in her head before the time. Your cruel hand is drawing the lines of sorrow on her dear face, making her look prematurely old. You might as well stick your knife into her body every time you come near her, for your conduct is stabbing her to the heart. You might as well bring her coffin and force her into it, for you are pressing her toward it with very rapid steps. Would you tread on her body if prostrated on the floor? And yet with ungrateful foot you are treading on her heart and crushing out its life and joy—no, I needn't say "joy," for that is a word we have long since ceased to use, because you have taken it from us. Of course, we have to meet our friends with smiles, but they little

know of the bitterness within. You have taken all the roses out of your sister's pathway and scattered thorns instead, and from the pain they inflict, scalding tears are seen coursing down her cheeks. Thus you are blighting her life as well as ours. And what can you promise yourself for the future? Look at the miserable, bloated, ragged wretches that you see every day on the streets; and behold in them an exact picture of what you are fast coming to, and will be in a few years hence. Then in the end a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's doom! For the Bible says that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. Where, then, will you be if not in the kingdom of God?

Will not these considerations induce you to reform at once? And may God help you in the effort, for he can and he will if you earnestly ask him.

Your affectionate, but sorrow-stricken, FATHER.

—Exchange.

True Exaltation.

"I think I never received more real benefit from a duty performed than when I have asked pardon of my little ones for some hasty speech or unjust reprimand," said a conscientious little mother to me.

My face perhaps spoke my astonishment, for she hastened to add, "When my children were small—there were seven of them as nearly of an age as they could well be—I could only keep them comfortable at great cost to mind and body."

Under these circumstances, impatience became my besetting sin, and often upon the impulse of the moment I have uttered words which in my calmer moments I have sadly regretted. I went to my Heavenly Father with my sin, but often return to my work with the same feeling of heaviness with which I had sought my closet. I found that it was not enough that I should ask Divine forgiveness there. So I learned to go to my children, older or younger, as the case might be and ask their forgiveness.

"Did you not find it a very hard thing to do?" I inquired.

"Yes, very hard, and that was perhaps the reason why it proved such a help to me. I learned in time to speak less hastily, to weigh my words before uttering them."

My friend's counsel left a lasting impression upon my mind. During the press of overwork and weariness I too often found myself speaking hasty words in a tone of irritation. I resolved to watch myself closely, and when I fell into error to make all the reparation in my power. I am sorry to say that I soon found occasion to test my new resolve, and not only once but many times have I gone to my little ones with humbled demeanor and repentant words always to find their dear little hearts opening wider to me than ever before.

I am willing to add my testimony to that of my friend, and assure all weak, erring mothers that both myself and my children have obtained much benefit from my new rule of action. It is not an easy one to follow, it is true, but the result has shown that it was well worth all its cost. Are you afraid of losing self-respect by such a proceeding? To whom, think you, will children be likely to give the greater honor—to one who, overtaken in a fault, humbly acknowledges her error or to one who no less quietly goes on in her pride as though nothing had happened, ignoring both the fault and the rights of her little ones?

Children are quick to perceive the finer points of right and wrong, and we may be certain that we shall lose none of our self-respect by humbling ourselves before them. We lose respect by sin, but never by acknowledgement. —Mrs. S. E. Kennedy in *Phrenological Journal*

The Needed Stimulus.

Several years ago I was one evening sitting in my study when a lad entered my presence, and asked if I would be willing to lend him something to read. I replied in the affirmative, and inquired what kind of reading matter he desired. He expressed a wish for something that was "exciting," and I requested him to be a little more definite. Then he gave me a vivid summary of a work which he had recently read to his great enjoyment; evidently one of those trashy romances of which so many are published in "Boys' Libraries," whose perusal can in nowise be beneficial.

I went to my bookcase and took from it one of Abbott's histories for young people, "The History of Darius the Great." Opening it, I read the paragraph in which is given an account of the shooting by Cambyse of his friend's son through the heart with an arrow before the father's eyes. Then I asked if he thought the book would suit him, and he answered, "Yes, sir."

He carried the book away with him, and two evenings later returned with it, inquiring if I would lend him another similar to it. I did so, and let him have other volumes in

succession, until, within three months after receiving the first, he had read the thirty and odd volumes forming the series—read them understandingly I learned by questioning him—and acquired a taste for substantial literary food.

Next summer he will graduate with the highest honors from one of the foremost colleges in the country, having defrayed the expenses of the preparatory school and the college by his earnings when his mates were many of them resting. He intends eventually to practice at the bar, where one of his dispositions is likely to become a "shining light," if neither a Webster nor a Choate.

He is pleased to attribute his desire for an education to my encouragement years since; but I can conscientiously credit myself only with having brought to his consideration the books to which I have referred.

Young friends, read these same books, or books of a similar character, instead of the printed "stuff" which greets your vision on every side. You will find the story of real "flesh-and-blood heroes" and heroines as "exciting" as is that of fictitious personages, and, reading of them, will be stimulated to emulate their nobles, to abhor their worst traits. Best of all, such books will incite you to acquire additional information relative to those concerning whom you have been reading, and eventually to secure an education that will fit you to make your way through the world successfully. —FRED F. FOSTER, in *Harper's Young People*.

A Story of Strength.

The Bible is like a vast orchard, where precious fruit is often hidden behind the leaves. The story of Jabez—if you turn it out from under the leaves—has many a golden teaching. It teaches us not to be frightened at present troubles, or cast down by to-day's discouragements. Every true, deep, Christian life begins in grief over sin, and in sharp conflicts with temptation. A religion that has too easy a birth seldom grows into a strong, victorious Christ-likeness; he who never weeps over sin will never sing for joy, or chant harvest hymns over full sheaves of blessings. The enterprises also that cost us the most anxiety and toil and self-denial, are those that, like Jabez, "enlarge their borders," and yield the after-crops of large results. There may have been some wet eyes up in that prayer-room in Jerusalem, where the little band met after their Master had left them; they were sowing in tears, to reap with joy before the next day's sun went down. Never despair of a good cause! Never despair of a great heaven-directed reform, even when the powers of hell are striving to strangle it. Never despair of a child. The one that fills you with most solicitude, and occasions your most fervent prayers, may yet gladden your life with joys beyond your highest hopes. Never despair of a soul, as long as you can plead with God for that soul, or strive to bring it into a full view of Christ. Let us all learn that God is ten thousand fold wiser and more far-sighted than our poor, foolish fears. And also let us never name our children or our good undertakings sorrowful, until we know how they are going to turn out, and what our heavenly father intends to make of them. —Dr. Cuyler.

The Successful Man.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox says that if she were asked to define the meaning of a successful man she would say, "A man who has made a happy home for his wife and children. No matter what he has not done in the way of achieving wealth and honor, if he has done that he is a grand success. If he has not done that, and it is his own fault, though he be the highest in the land he is a most pitiable failure. I wonder how many men in the mad pursuit of gold, which characterizes the age, realize that there is no fortune which can be left to their families as great as the memory of a happy home."

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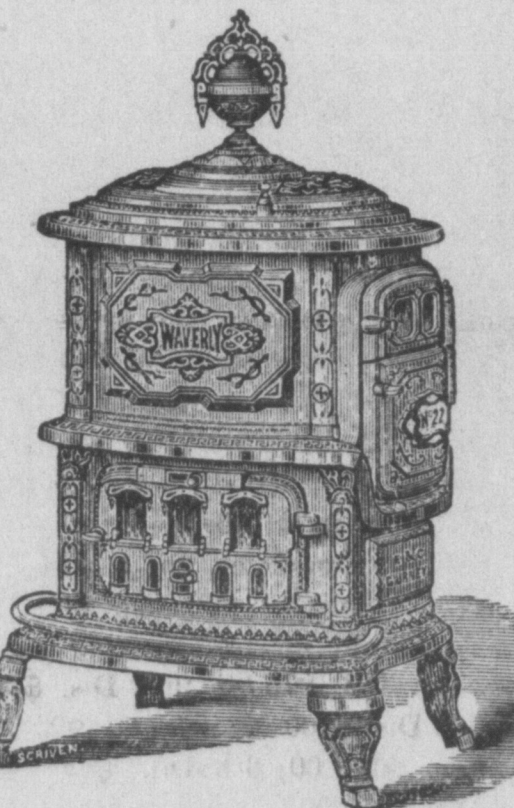
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