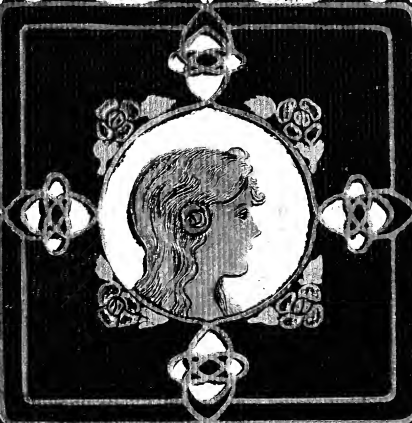


TALKS BETWEEN TIMES



By

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.



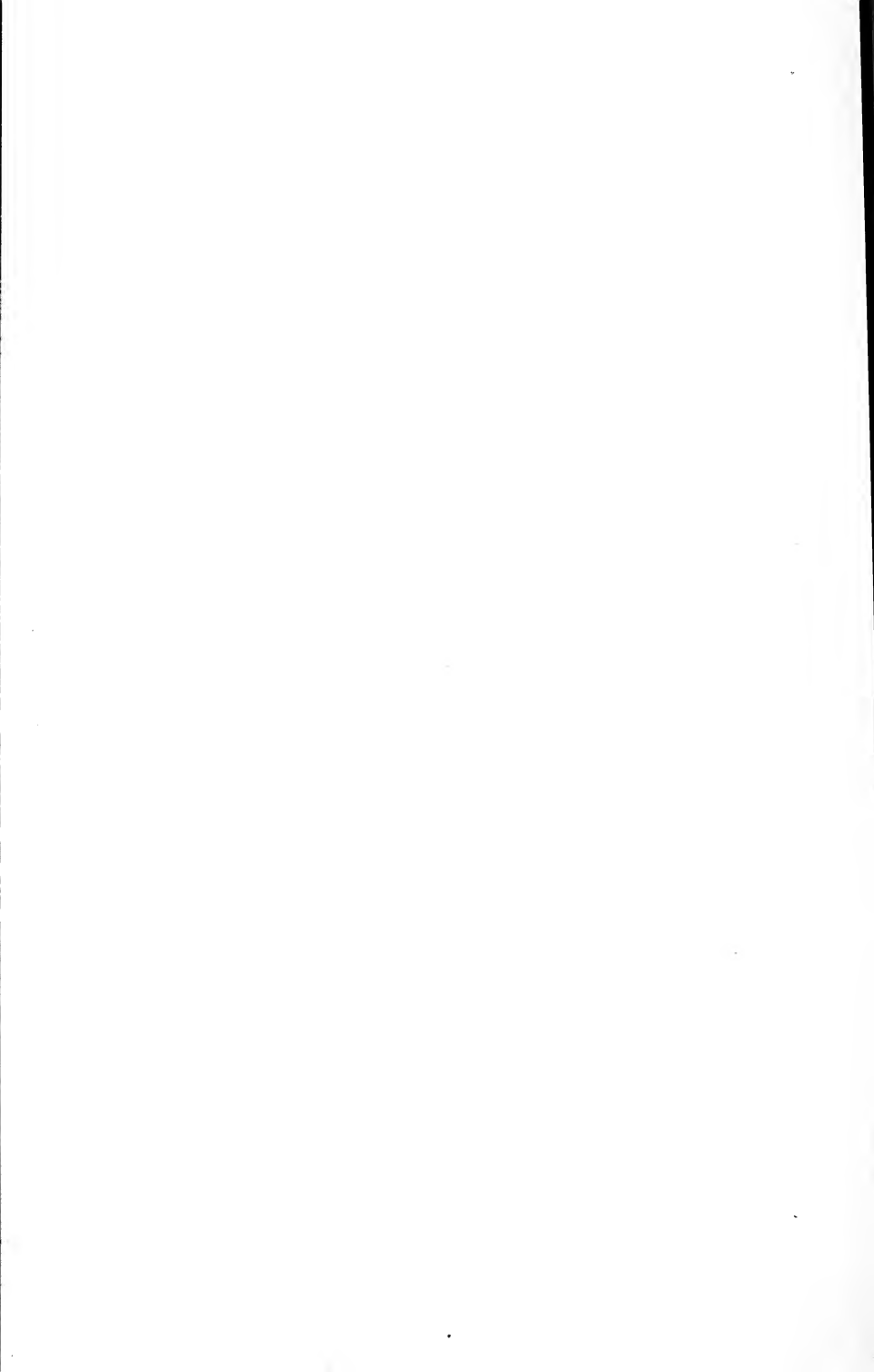
Class BY 4 11

Book 3 16

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.







Friend Mrs.
Margaret E. Sangster



Talks Between Times

By
Margaret E. Sangster

American Tract Society
New York

4.80.
a. 24/02
July 1929
Rec. cat. R. S. M. B. 11/2/36.

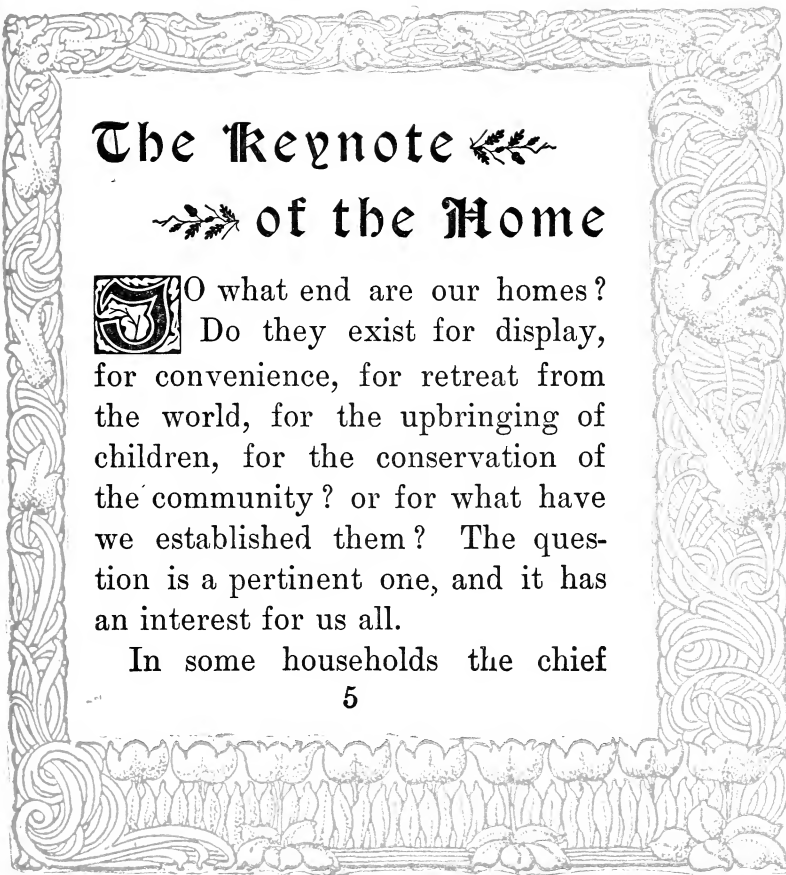
Contents.

I. THE KEYNOTE OF THE HOME, .	5
II. THE THANKFUL HEART, .	21
III. YULE-TIDE MUSINGS, . . .	36
IV. THE VACANT CHAIR, . . .	48
V. THE POWER OF PRAYER, . . .	64
VI. A PLAIN STATEMENT, . . .	80
VII. THE MOTHER IN HER HOME, .	98
VIII. OUR CHILDREN,	116
IX. WAY STATIONS IN LIFE, . . .	134






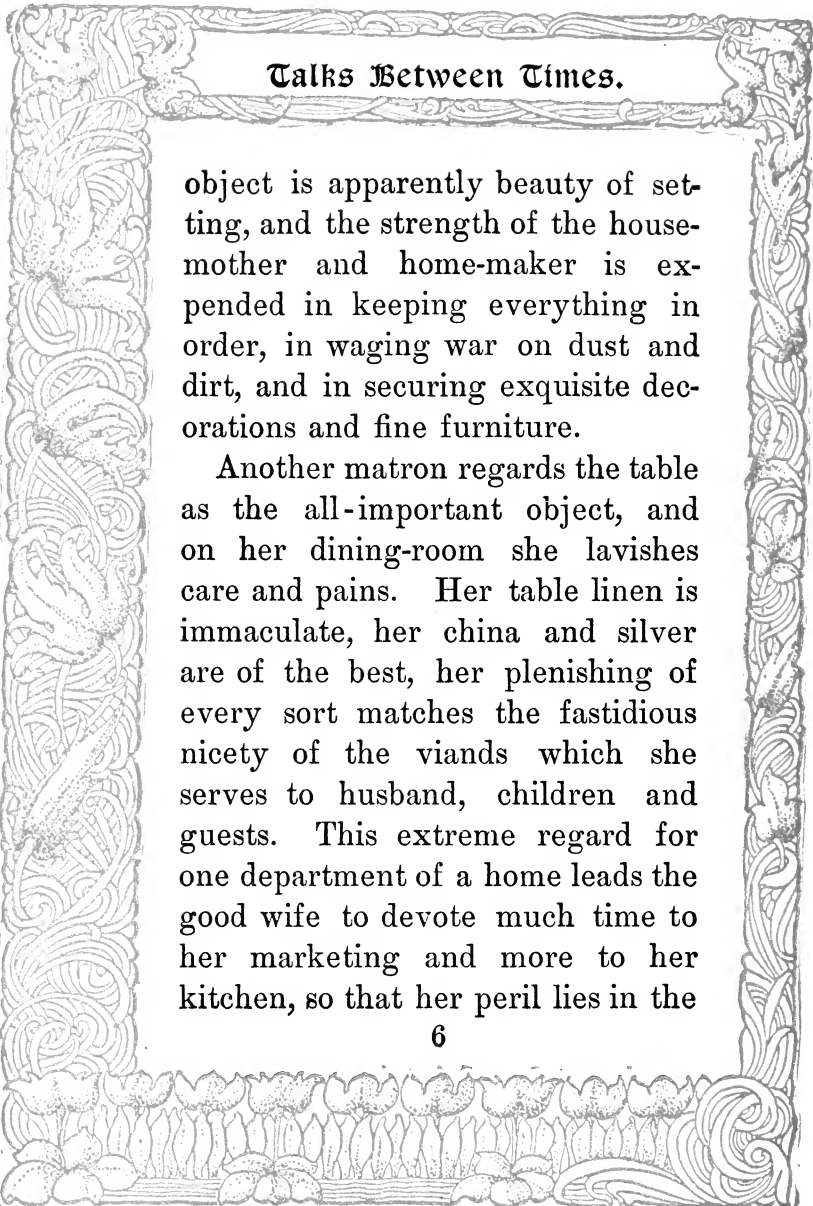
Talk First



The Keynote of the Home

O what end are our homes? Do they exist for display, for convenience, for retreat from the world, for the upbringing of children, for the conservation of the community? or for what have we established them? The question is a pertinent one, and it has an interest for us all.

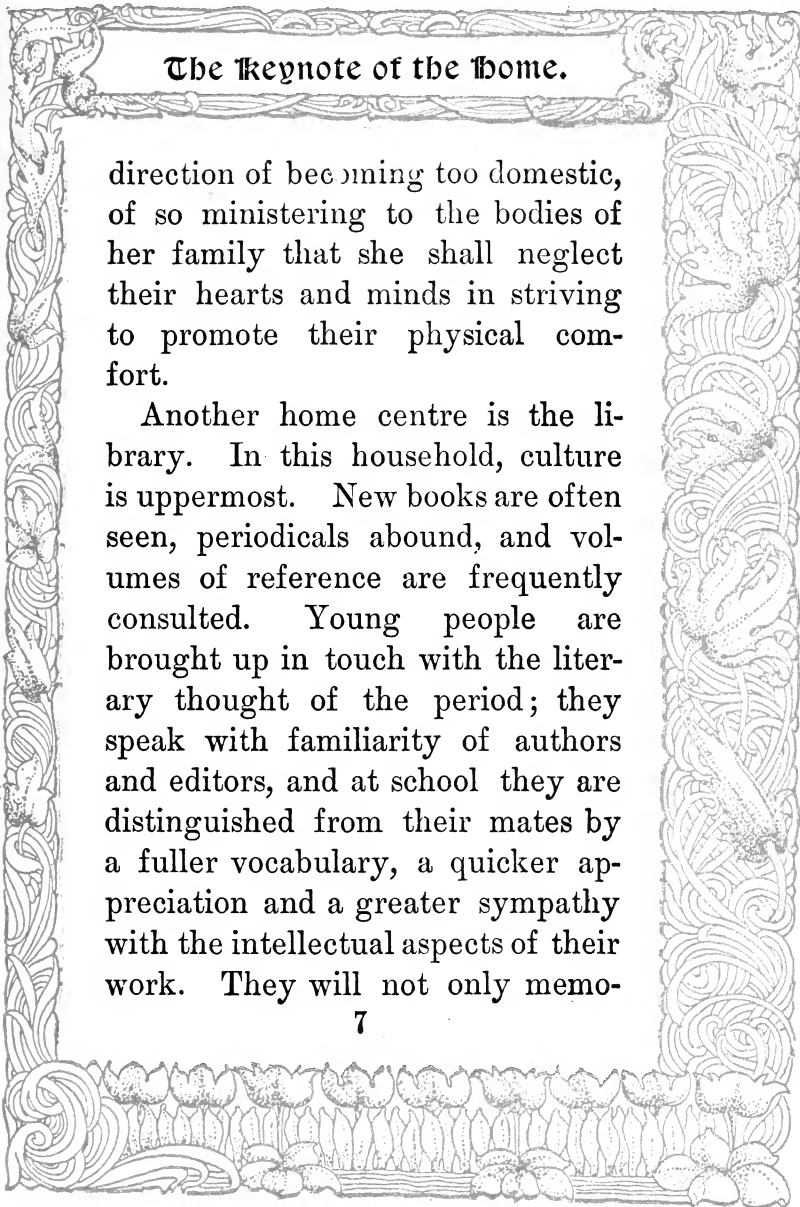
In some households the chief



Talks Between Times.

object is apparently beauty of setting, and the strength of the house-mother and home-maker is expended in keeping everything in order, in waging war on dust and dirt, and in securing exquisite decorations and fine furniture.

Another matron regards the table as the all-important object, and on her dining-room she lavishes care and pains. Her table linen is immaculate, her china and silver are of the best, her plenishing of every sort matches the fastidious nicety of the viands which she serves to husband, children and guests. This extreme regard for one department of a home leads the good wife to devote much time to her marketing and more to her kitchen, so that her peril lies in the



The Keynote of the Home.

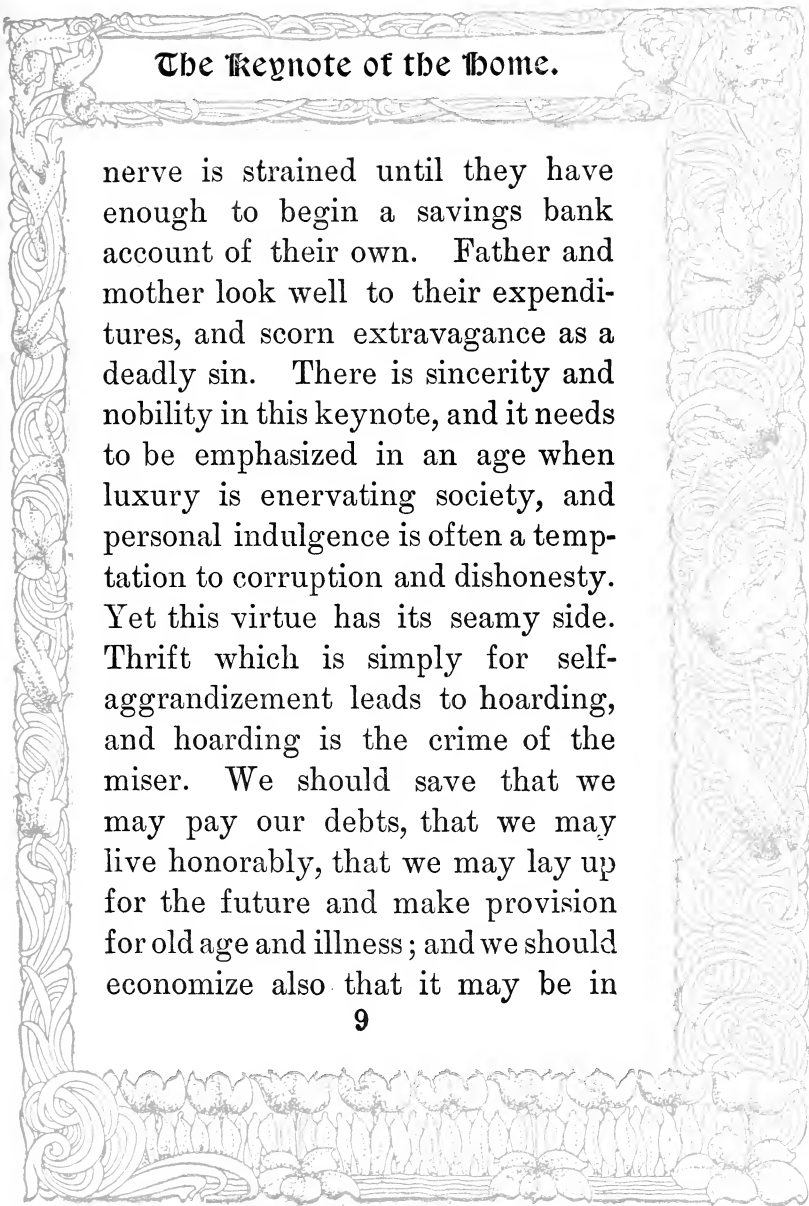
direction of becoming too domestic, of so ministering to the bodies of her family that she shall neglect their hearts and minds in striving to promote their physical comfort.

Another home centre is the library. In this household, culture is uppermost. New books are often seen, periodicals abound, and volumes of reference are frequently consulted. Young people are brought up in touch with the literary thought of the period; they speak with familiarity of authors and editors, and at school they are distinguished from their mates by a fuller vocabulary, a quicker appreciation and a greater sympathy with the intellectual aspects of their work. They will not only memo-

Talks Between Times.

rize and grasp facts and dates with ease, but the power of analysis and of intuitive comprehension will be more marked in the children of the home where books are of much account. It has been noticed that the sons and daughters of the parsonage are apt to seek a literary avocation, and one reason for this is that from infancy books have formed a part of their background, and writing has been as familiar to their daily routine as weeding and hoeing to the farmer's boy, or hammering and sawing to the lad who has been brought up in the carpenter's shop.

The keynote of a third home is saving, thrift, frugality. The children are encouraged to drop their pennies into a toy bank, and every



The Keynote of the Home.

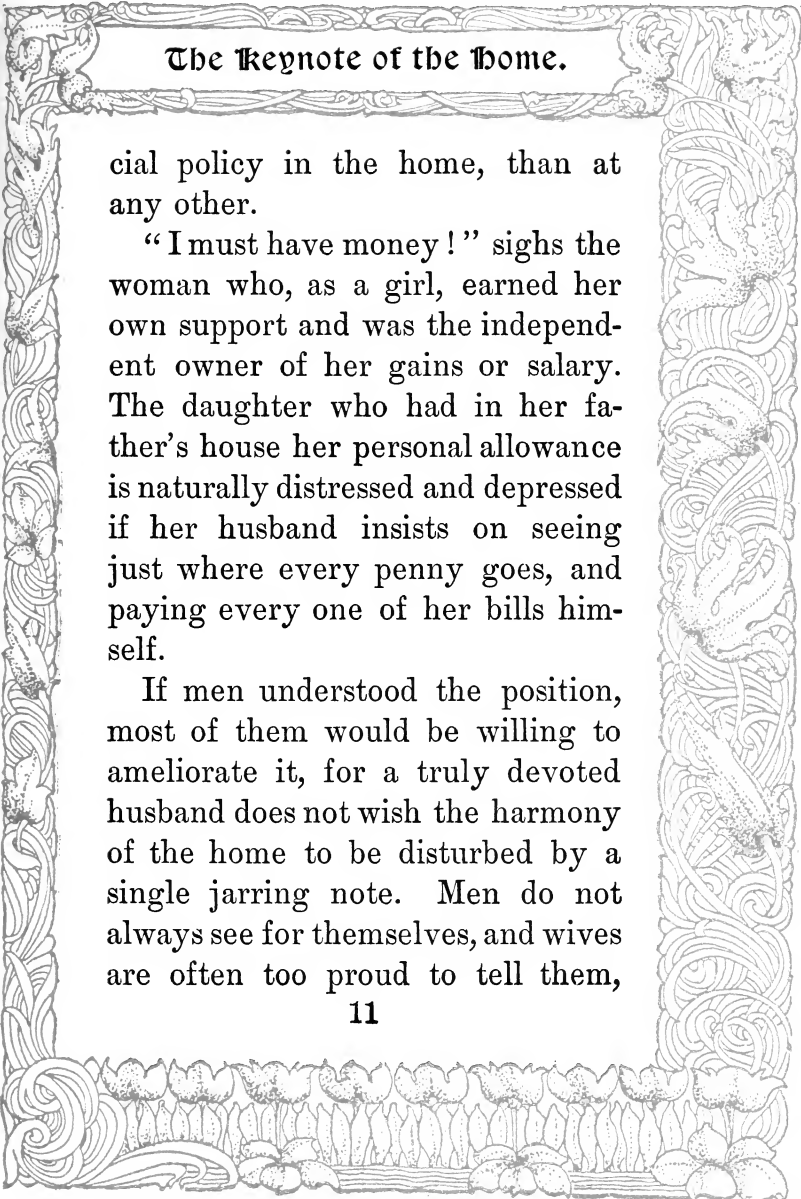
nerve is strained until they have enough to begin a savings bank account of their own. Father and mother look well to their expenditures, and scorn extravagance as a deadly sin. There is sincerity and nobility in this keynote, and it needs to be emphasized in an age when luxury is enervating society, and personal indulgence is often a temptation to corruption and dishonesty. Yet this virtue has its seamy side. Thrift which is simply for self-aggrandizement leads to hoarding, and hoarding is the crime of the miser. We should save that we may pay our debts, that we may live honorably, that we may lay up for the future and make provision for old age and illness; and we should economize also that it may be in



Talks Between Times.

our power to help on the Lord's work, and to send the story of His love and His redemptive grace to the ends of the world.

There are other keynotes; you can think of them for yourself. There are keynotes of happiness and of discord. One of the latter, unhappily too frequent, is found in the home where there is not a right understanding of the matter of money. Many a young wife finds her first disillusion, her first awakening to the sordid realities of life, in the discovery that her husband is keeping a tight grip on the pocketbook, and refusing her any portion of the family means. Probably there is more unsuspected domestic wretchedness to be laid at the door of this blundering finan-

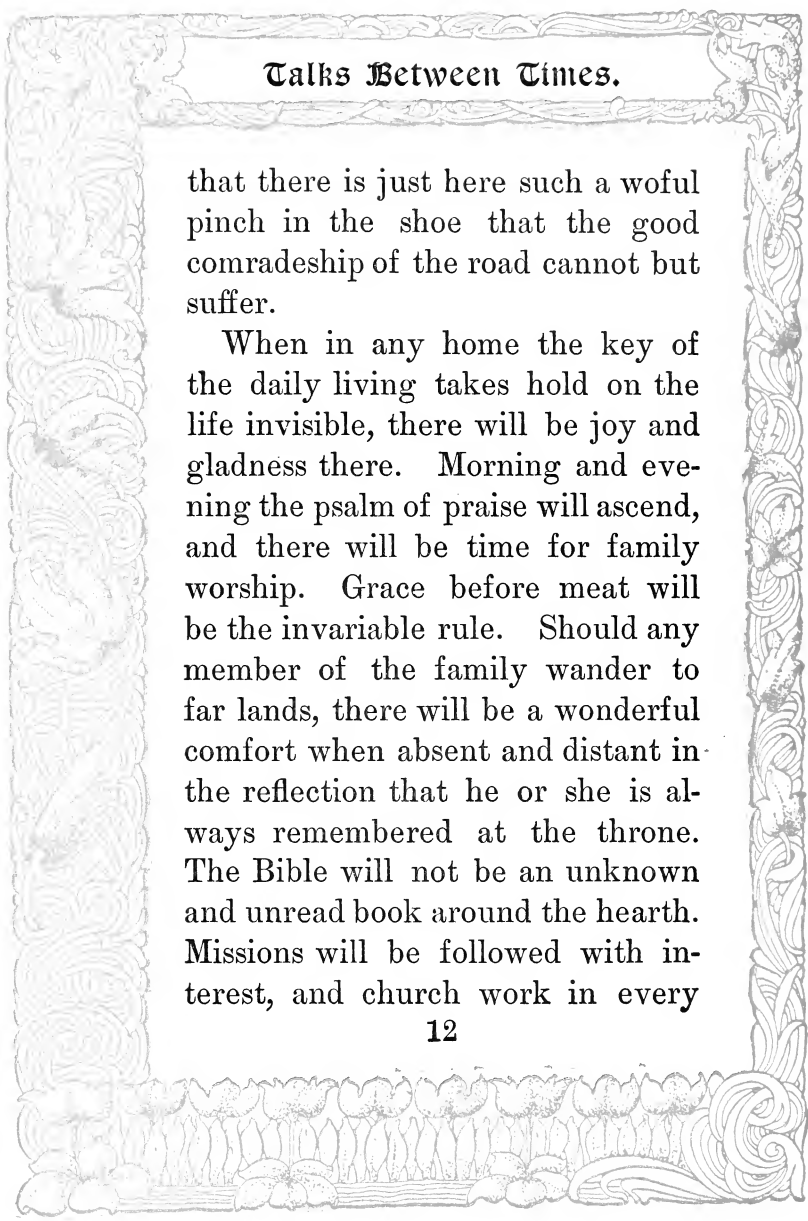


The Keynote of the Home.

cial policy in the home, than at any other.

“I must have money!” sighs the woman who, as a girl, earned her own support and was the independent owner of her gains or salary. The daughter who had in her father’s house her personal allowance is naturally distressed and depressed if her husband insists on seeing just where every penny goes, and paying every one of her bills himself.

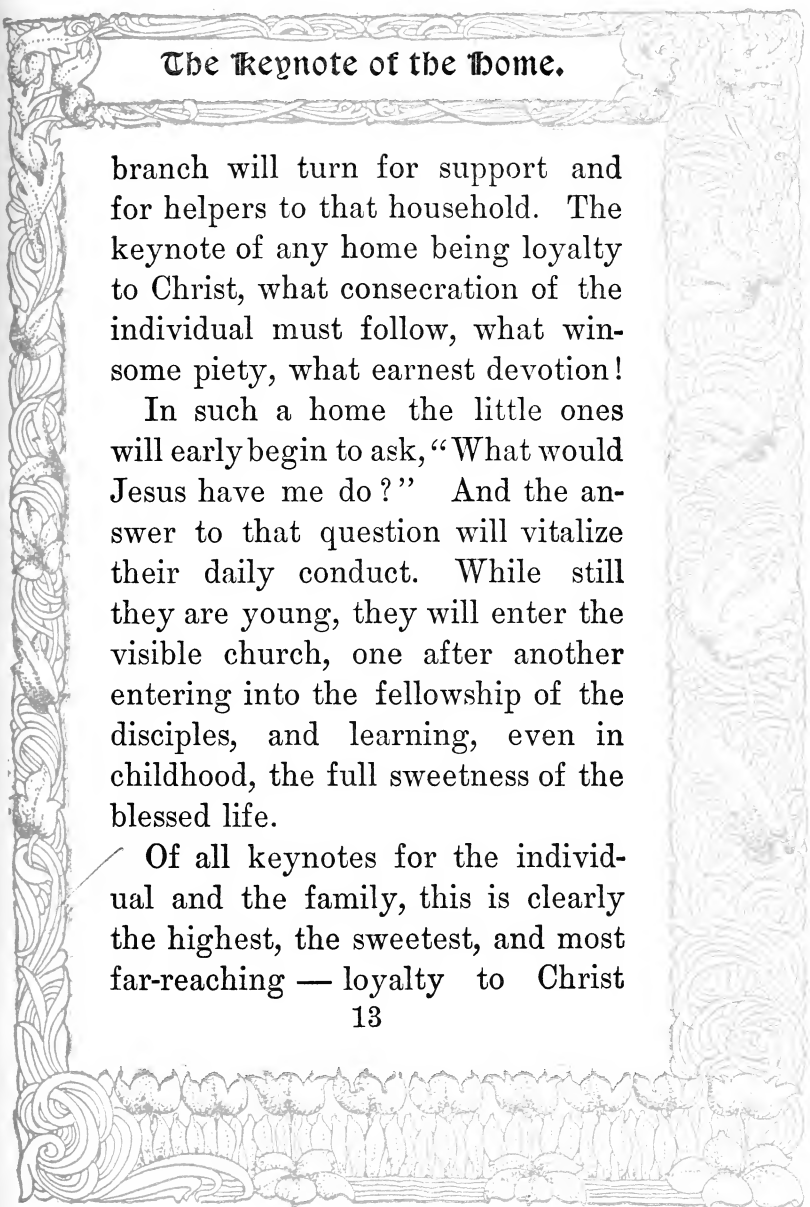
If men understood the position, most of them would be willing to ameliorate it, for a truly devoted husband does not wish the harmony of the home to be disturbed by a single jarring note. Men do not always see for themselves, and wives are often too proud to tell them,



Talks Between Times.

that there is just here such a woful pinch in the shoe that the good comradeship of the road cannot but suffer.

When in any home the key of the daily living takes hold on the life invisible, there will be joy and gladness there. Morning and evening the psalm of praise will ascend, and there will be time for family worship. Grace before meat will be the invariable rule. Should any member of the family wander to far lands, there will be a wonderful comfort when absent and distant in the reflection that he or she is always remembered at the throne. The Bible will not be an unknown and unread book around the hearth. Missions will be followed with interest, and church work in every



The Keynote of the Home.

branch will turn for support and for helpers to that household. The keynote of any home being loyalty to Christ, what consecration of the individual must follow, what winsome piety, what earnest devotion!

In such a home the little ones will early begin to ask, "What would Jesus have me do?" And the answer to that question will vitalize their daily conduct. While still they are young, they will enter the visible church, one after another entering into the fellowship of the disciples, and learning, even in childhood, the full sweetness of the blessed life.

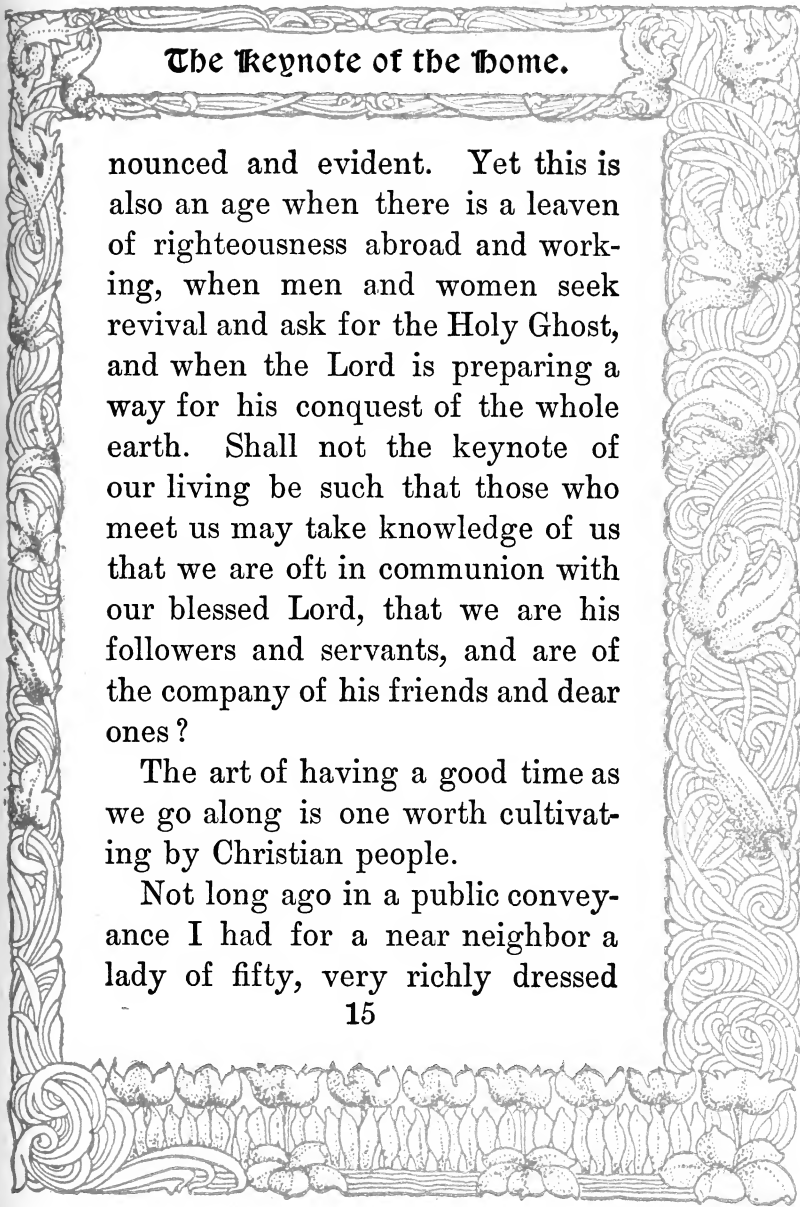
Of all keynotes for the individual and the family, this is clearly the highest, the sweetest, and most far-reaching — loyalty to Christ



Talks Between Times.

as the Master, as the Risen One, as the Friend for life and for death. This would lift us out of the commonplace and dignify for us the lowliest routine, and make our lives emphatic and impressive. If the house mistress were loyal to Christ, the maid in the kitchen and the laundress at her tubs ought to be the better for it, ought to feel the perfume of the lilies in her soul's garden. If the employer were loyal to Christ, every clerk and office boy and porter in the establishment would be fully aware of it.

We are dwelling in an age of materialism, when poetry and romance are banished to retirement, and commercial greed and great accumulations are everywhere pro-



The Keynote of the Home.

nounced and evident. Yet this is also an age when there is a leaven of righteousness abroad and working, when men and women seek revival and ask for the Holy Ghost, and when the Lord is preparing a way for his conquest of the whole earth. Shall not the keynote of our living be such that those who meet us may take knowledge of us that we are oft in communion with our blessed Lord, that we are his followers and servants, and are of the company of his friends and dear ones?

The art of having a good time as we go along is one worth cultivating by Christian people.

Not long ago in a public conveyance I had for a near neighbor a lady of fifty, very richly dressed



Talks Between Times.

and belonging to the ranks of those who fare sumptuously every day. Her face was high-bred and cultured, and her features regular and beautiful. Refined, wealthy and educated, it was soon apparent that discontent and fretfulness were the keynotes of the woman's character. Small discomforts loomed large in her eyes. She was pettish and cross at the trifling delays of the journey and her travelling companions were irksome to her. The daily habit of finding needless fault had stamped itself on the forehead, covered with criss-cross lines and fine wrinkles; the corners of the mouth drooped, the countenance was disfigured by a perpetual frown. Yet, once this woman had had in her own hands the making of her

The Keynote of the Home.

expression. It might have been composed, benignant, and tranquil. Somewhere, at some stage, she had struck the wrong keynote.


The shut-in, the invalid to whom years bring little relief, and who endures much torturing bodily pain, is often so attuned to peace by the ineffable resignation which accepts as best whatever cup the Master presses to the pallid lips, that the chamber of illness is as the vestibule of heaven. Christ can give to those who seek him, compensation for every hour of physical anguish, and ease for every pain. Often we have seen an active woman suddenly laid aside by a malady of the nerves, an inward agony, perhaps incurable, or by the creeping on of blindness. But so

Talks Between Times.

long had she dwelt in serene acquiescence with God's will, so utterly had she given herself to him, that she was willing to be laid aside, if she could thus serve him best, and in the keynote of such service there was no lack of harmony.

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”

To us all, and this thought is both solemn and practical, God gives a daily and hourly power of choice. He ordains our paths. But he also accords to us freedom in every step of every day. If we are to take care of the aged and the sorrowful, instead of cultivating our own mental powers, and fulfilling our own ambitions, he means us to live moment by moment, doing that and neither lamenting nor grieving. The angels, sent hither



The Keynote of the Home.

from his presence, never question what their ministry shall be. They simply go where they are sent, and, little or great as their errand may be, they perform it as sent with a warrant from the King. So we, his dear children, should go serenely and with courage on our daily path.

Give me, dear Saviour, every hour,
To know thy holy will;
In times of sorrow and dismay
To reverently be still;
In days of duty at the front,
Thy orders to fulfil.

We should listen in the silence of the closet for the message of the King. We should look for it in the Scriptures among the glorious "I wills" of the everlasting God. We should seek it in the society of Christian friends, and in the Sunday school class, the Christian En-

Talks Between Times.

deavor meeting and the prayer-circle. And "our lives will be all sweetness in the sunshine of our Lord," if the keynote of earthly labor be pitched to the melody of the heavenly home.

I sometimes wonder whether we are wrought upon as we might be by contemplation of the future and the world unseen. Ezekiel by the river Chebar and John in Patmos had visions of God. We might be lifted above many a small vexation, and strengthened in many a trial if we, too, seeking a revelation of the divine, looked rather into the heavens above than into the seething, anxious, and toilsome scenes beneath and around us. For

"We are on our journey home
Where Christ our Lord has gone."

Talk Second

✿ The ✿ Thankful Heart

QUANY people dislike the autumn season, finding a certain melancholy lowering of spirits in its march toward winter, and dreading the time of flying snow and leafless trees. To others the autumn, with its thought of fulfilment, with its garnered harvests, and pageantry of color, and final quiet and peace, brings only a sense

Talks Between Times.

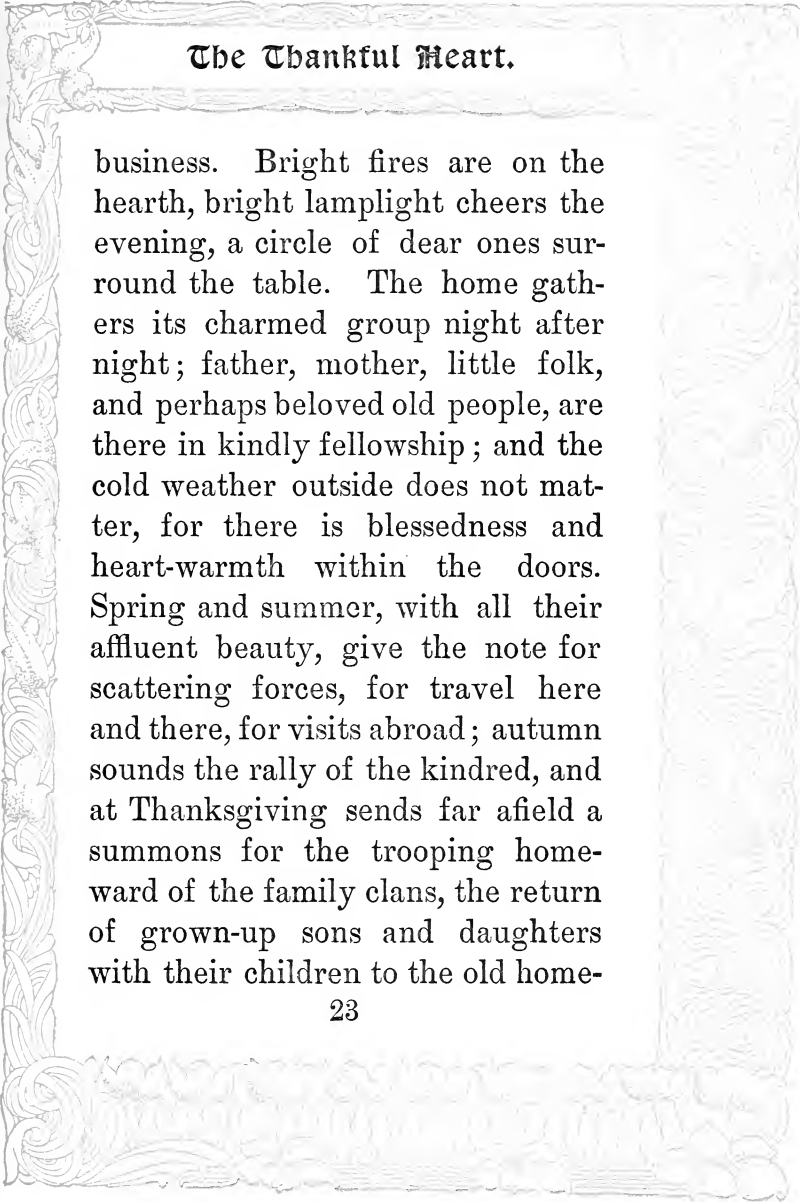
of enjoyment. The one sentiment finds expression in Lowell's familiar stanza :

"We, too, have autumns, when our leaves
Drop loosely through the dampened air,
When all our good seems bound in sheaves,
And we stand reaped and bare."

The other feeling is sung by Whittier in his tender lyric, "My Psalm," when he says :

"The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
The south wind softly sigh,
And sweet calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky."

A peculiar felicity of choice has given us our period of Annual Thanksgiving in late November, almost in the gateway of winter, when the household arrangements for cold weather are completed. The children are settled at school and the young people engaged in



The Thankful Heart.

business. Bright fires are on the hearth, bright lamplight cheers the evening, a circle of dear ones surround the table. The home gathers its charmed group night after night; father, mother, little folk, and perhaps beloved old people, are there in kindly fellowship; and the cold weather outside does not matter, for there is blessedness and heart-warmth within the doors. Spring and summer, with all their affluent beauty, give the note for scattering forces, for travel here and there, for visits abroad; autumn sounds the rally of the kindred, and at Thanksgiving sends far afield a summons for the trooping homeward of the family clans, the return of grown-up sons and daughters with their children to the old home-

Talks Between Times.

stead and the mother's knee, and the united acknowledgment of our dependence as God's children upon our heavenly Father. We may well rejoice that our distinctively American festival has this aspect of reverence, that it has never lost the religious character, while retaining its hold upon our people, so that it is still a force in the assimilation of the various elements which compose our strong young nation of the West. Thanksgiving Day robs autumn of gloom, and bids us all be glad and grateful—glad in our personal lives, and grateful for the wonderful things which God has done for us on land and sea, for the mercies which are new every morning and fresh every evening, and for safety from peril and



The Thankful Heart.

accident, help in temptation, grace for our weakness and sin, and relief in every time of need.

Dear friends, in our individual lives, most of us are apt to be too strenuous, too eager to see results from our efforts before they have had time to grow, too impatient with seasons of preparation, and too anxious after we have done our best. It is trite to repeat that hurry and worry lay waste our souls, drive their stern ploughshares through our daily tranquillity, and banish serenity from our faces. You know, beloved house-mother, how much you attempt and how short seems the time in which you can accomplish all you lay out to do. So many little garments to cut and baste and finish from seam to but-

Talks Between Times.

tonhole, so much mending to be attended to weekly, so much contriving and managing and working to keep the house clean, the meals attractive, and the machinery of life smooth and well-oiled. Sometimes you are prodigal of your own strength, and wear out when you are most needed, because you have never saved yourself. You know, husband and father, what a weight of responsibility you carry, and how heavily it presses upon you, in these days of intense competition and feverish struggle, especially when there is no corresponding increase of income to meet the multiplied demands of a growing family. To both of you life puts on sober raiment, you do not smile as frequently as you ought, and there is a pucker



The Thankful Heart.

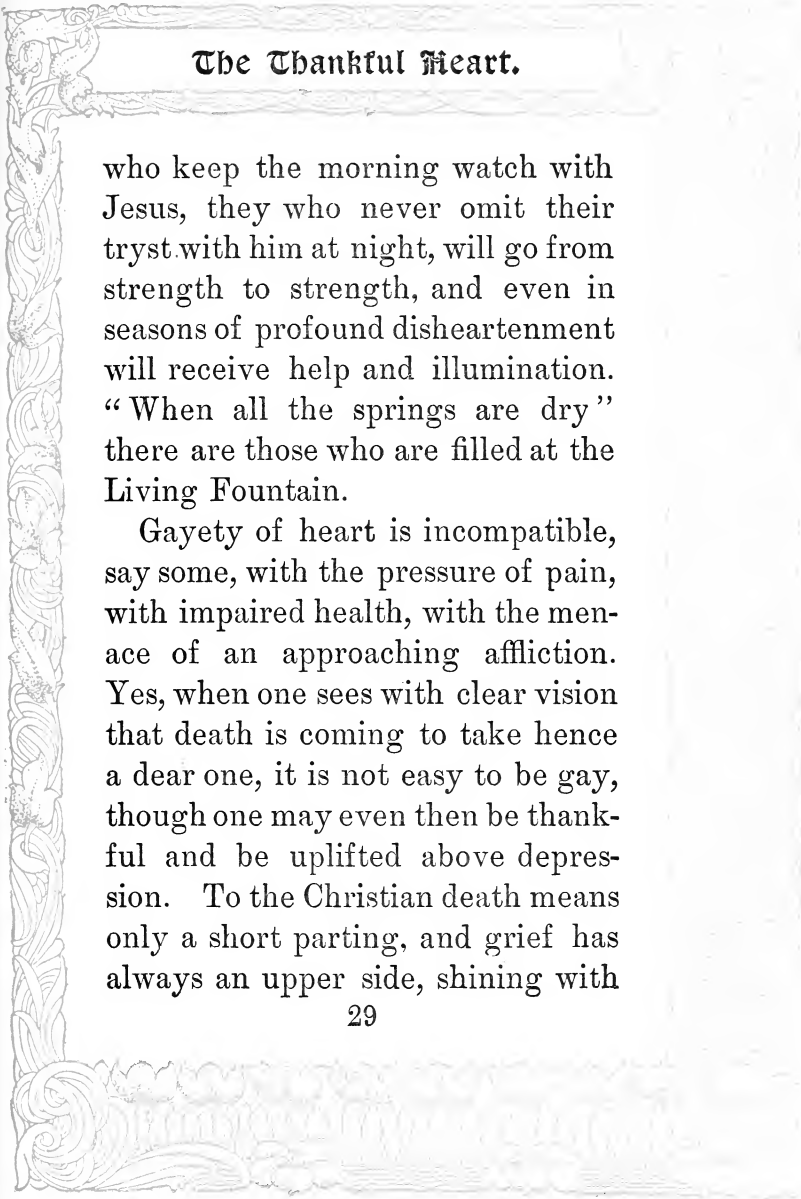
between your eyes. The children do not associate mirth with you; your very affection for them is so tintured with care, that to their apprehension it is grave and severe, and they will not comprehend its depth and unselfishness until they stand in the future where you now stand.

For every weary worker there is present rest. For every solicitude there is heartsease. For every cloud there is sunshine. In every vicissitude there is Christ. No one of us should ever be "blue," or depressed, or discouraged in the greatness of the way, for it is the way of the divine appointment, and our Lord is with us in it, going on before.

In the busiest life, in the busiest days, it pays, and it is the best wis-

Talks Between Times.

dom and the bounden duty of the Christian, to take a frequent resting-spell. Looking upon it as a duty, we shall see that even if we must struggle to be gay and light of heart, we cannot afford to give up the fight, and to walk through the world with bowed heads and shadowed faces. Often we, who have reached life's autumn, have forgotten how we felt in the spring. The habit of depression has become fixed. We are almost always too tired physically to be mentally elastic. We have so economized time in the interest of work, that we have left no margin for recreation. Perhaps we have fallen out of the habit of daily prayer, and daily Bible study, thus leaving the spiritual life needlessly barren and arid. They



The Thankful Heart.

who keep the morning watch with Jesus, they who never omit their tryst with him at night, will go from strength to strength, and even in seasons of profound disheartenment will receive help and illumination. "When all the springs are dry" there are those who are filled at the Living Fountain.

Gayety of heart is incompatible, say some, with the pressure of pain, with impaired health, with the menace of an approaching affliction. Yes, when one sees with clear vision that death is coming to take hence a dear one, it is not easy to be gay, though one may even then be thankful and be uplifted above depression. To the Christian death means only a short parting, and grief has always an upper side, shining with



Talks Between Times.

the glory of the land of great distances, which is not far from any one of us. I have seen the chamber of illness so beautiful with Christ's abiding that no place on earth was worthy to be mentioned with it for joy unspeakable. If we but accept whatever God sends, and rest our heads on his will as on a pillow, we shall not be sad, though we may often be thoughtful and may sometimes dwell for awhile apart. If Christ call us to the desert place, he will give us so much of his company there that we shall rest and gain renewed refreshment while we tarry with him.

One secret of maintaining an habitual frame of thankfulness is learned in cultivating acquaintance with the pleasant things in our lives.

The Thankful Heart.

A morbid tendency inheres in that quality of mind which dwells only on losses and disappointments. We may better remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. Every day it is a profitable exercise to recapitulate our reasons for rejoicing, such as the presence of children in our home, their development, their health, their amiability, our opportunities for work, our agreeable communion with friends, our church privileges, our restoration from illness, or our immunity from its ravages, and the happy surprises which come to most of us far oftener than the thunder-bursts of sorrow.

As we grow older we should endeavor to keep fast hold of youthful energy and youthful spontaneity

Talks Between Times.

and sympathy. I believe in the union of young and old people in the family, in the church, and in the community. Any hard and fast separation of the two is unfortunate for both. Especially may we say to the young, we, who have gone a little farther on, "Give us of your abundant vitality, of your quick and fearless impulses, of your effervescent cheer." And they, in turn, may derive staying power and receive counsels of discretion, of moderation, of tolerance and charity from us. Neither has a right to misunderstand or to discount the other. Youth has ever been in the van in the forward movements of civilization, because youth is impetuous, brave and full of faith. But all that is best in youth should



The Thankful Heart.

survive in us until we reach the end of the day here, and go home to the Father's house.

Life is composed of little things, little minutes, little duties, little experiences. We sometimes underestimate the importance of our own sphere, the nobility of our own calling, because we must do our own work in an obscure place, with no especial praise of men. Rightly estimated, no work is despicable, if it is done heartily as to the Lord, and all work is honorable when God-ordained, and intertwined in some way with every other good work in the universe. When you are selling a yard of blue ribbon or matching a bit of silk, you are as necessary in your small place to the great world of commerce, as is the well-

Talks Between Times.

known head of your firm with his splendid reputation. It is because you and others sell the ribbons and the silks with care and pains and conscience, that the great work of the great house goes on successfully. All vast enterprises include an immense number of individual fidelities, many of them seen only by God, but none of them forgotten of him.

Another thought in this frank consideration of thankfulness as a habit is that it grows by use. The more we look for occasions of gratitude, the more we exercise the power in us of expressing gratitude, the less churlish and niggardly shall we be in this beautiful grace. To be poor in thanks is unworthy of the Christian. If we have hith-



The Thankful Heart.

erto lived below our possibilities in this regard, let us take the Word and try to count the bright texts and shining passages which emphasize our relation to God, and praise him for his wonderful goodness to the children of men. Then may we joyfully say :

“Hitherto the Lord hath blessed us,
Guiding all the way;
Henceforth let us trust him fully,
Trust him all the day.

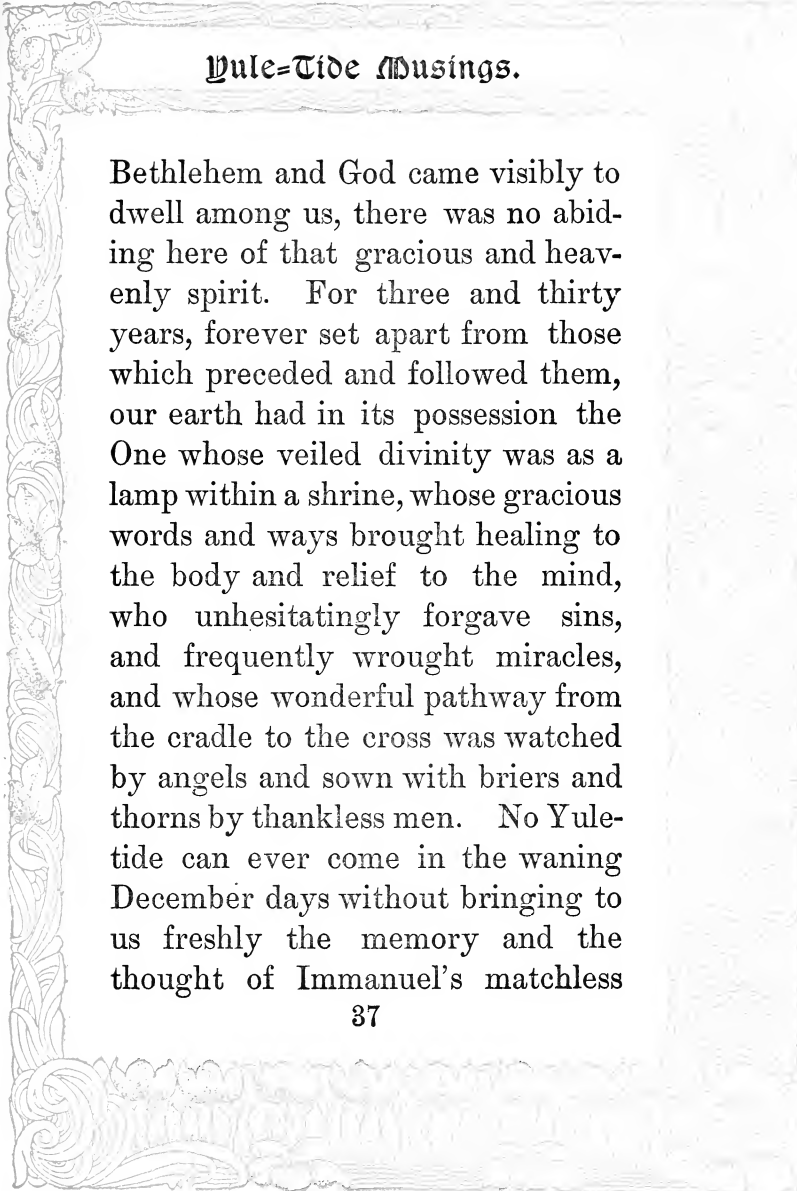
“Hitherto the Lord hath loved us,
Caring for his own;
Henceforth let us love him better,
Live for him alone.”

Talk Third

Yule=Tide ❀ ❀ ❀

❀ ❀ ❀ Musings

WHEN our dear Lord came to this earth and took upon him our robe of flesh, he brought hither in its fullest manifestation something which the world had never known before. In partial revelation, in glimpses and flitting gleams, humanity had seen the beautiful spirit of brotherhood, but until Christ was born in



Yule-Tide Musings.

Bethlehem and God came visibly to dwell among us, there was no abiding here of that gracious and heavenly spirit. For three and thirty years, forever set apart from those which preceded and followed them, our earth had in its possession the One whose veiled divinity was as a lamp within a shrine, whose gracious words and ways brought healing to the body and relief to the mind, who unhesitatingly forgave sins, and frequently wrought miracles, and whose wonderful pathway from the cradle to the cross was watched by angels and sown with briars and thorns by thankless men. No Yule-tide can ever come in the waning December days without bringing to us freshly the memory and the thought of Immanuel's matchless

Talks Between Times.

life. We, the pilgrims of the twentieth century, take the same road, following the Star in the East, to the same goal which allured the shepherds and the wise men; we kneel again beside the Babe in the arms of his mother, and we offer him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

A pertinent question comes to us as we approach the final weeks of the year, and if we are conscientious and candid we cannot evade it: How have we spent the time? Has it brought us the rewards we craved? Have we so used the talents entrusted to our stewardship that they have been increased and multiplied at the King's pleasure? Have our homes been happier because we have been Christians? Has our

Yule-Tide Musings.

friendship with Christ been a deep and real experience pervading our actions and making vital our interest in the conversion of the world? What have we done for Jesus? As Christmas approaches there is renewal and quickening of our vows and our love, but how beautiful would that life be, in which there should be uninterruptedly the consciousness of growth and the joy of communion!

We have few greater satisfactions in our heart life and our home life than those which arise from our own self-denial that we may make our dear ones happy. The gift which the mother planned weeks ago, for which she economized, on which she sewed when the children were asleep, is worth all the love

Talks Between Times.

that went into its making, and cannot be estimated in any mere commercial way. Reverently I say that we plan for our earthly kindred and friends, but forget the plans and the pleasures we might offer at our Saviour's feet. Is there no gladness we may bring to the Elder Brother? Are there no sheaves to be garnered for the Heavenly Friend? Still he says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock;" and now in the chill winter, when the loved ones gather about the hearth and the storms are abroad, through our gayety and our mirth, through the sweetness of the carols and beside the Christmas tree, we hear that low, insistent knocking, "Open to me, my sister, my spouse, for my head is wet with dew and my locks

Yule-Tide Musings.

with the drops of the night." Shall we not haste to unbar the soul's door and invite the Master in? And shall we not make our Christmas offering to him our crucifixion of self, our consecration of the new life to the new love?

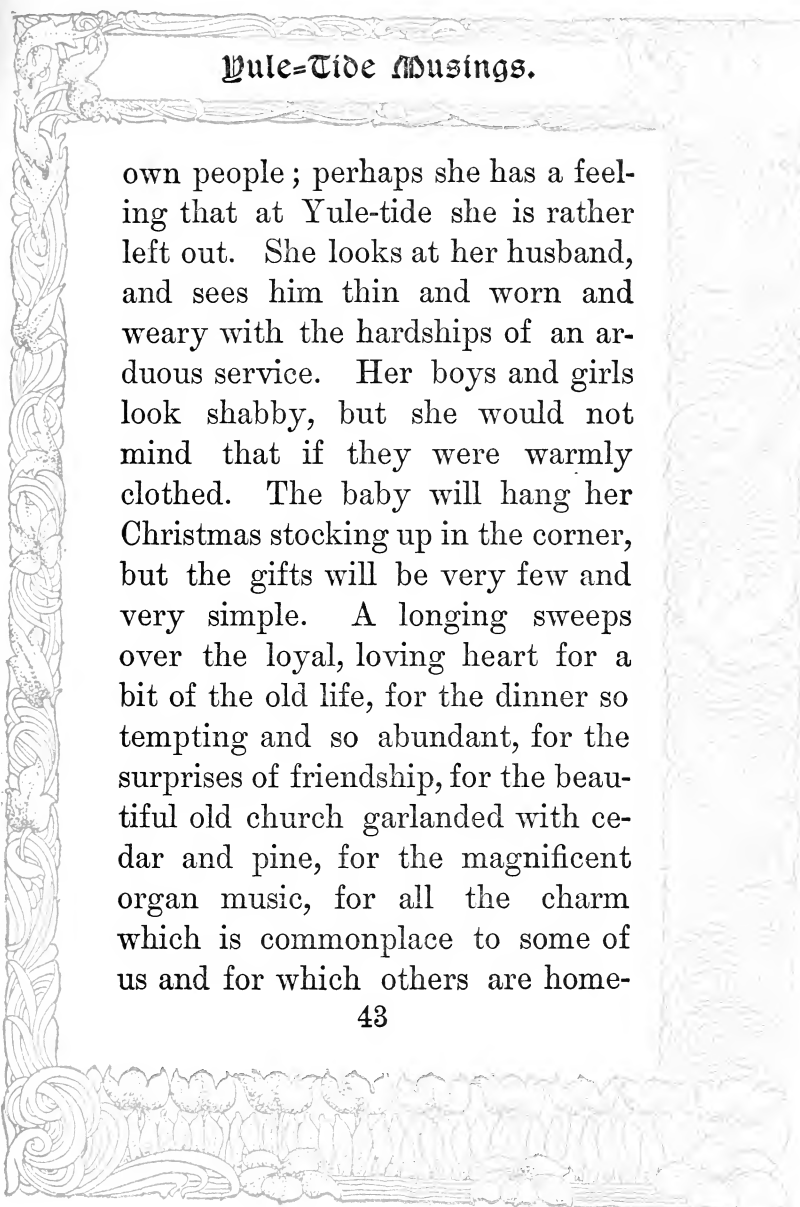
My circle of acquaintances includes a large number of those who have much treasure in heaven. Never has the reaper, whose name is Death, been busier than of late in carrying hence those whom the Master needs in his presence-chamber above. It is not easy to be cheery during a shadowed and sorrowful Yule-tide, for the general rejoicing emphasizes the contrast between what used to be and what now is. As Naomi did of old, the stricken say, "I went

Talks Between Times.

out full and I have returned empty.”

There are acts of heroism which are never lauelled in an earthly court. The woman who bravely puts her grief in the background that she may not cloud the faces of her children, the daughter missing her mother, but taking her place smilingly beside the vacant chair, the desolate who strives to be acquiescent in God's will, may each claim something of the Christmas blessing. They are doing in God's strength the best they can, and He acknowledges the effort as worthy.

Somewhere among my readers there is a little woman who is far from home. Perhaps she is a missionary on the frontier ; perhaps she has not lately had a letter from her



Yule-Tide Musings.

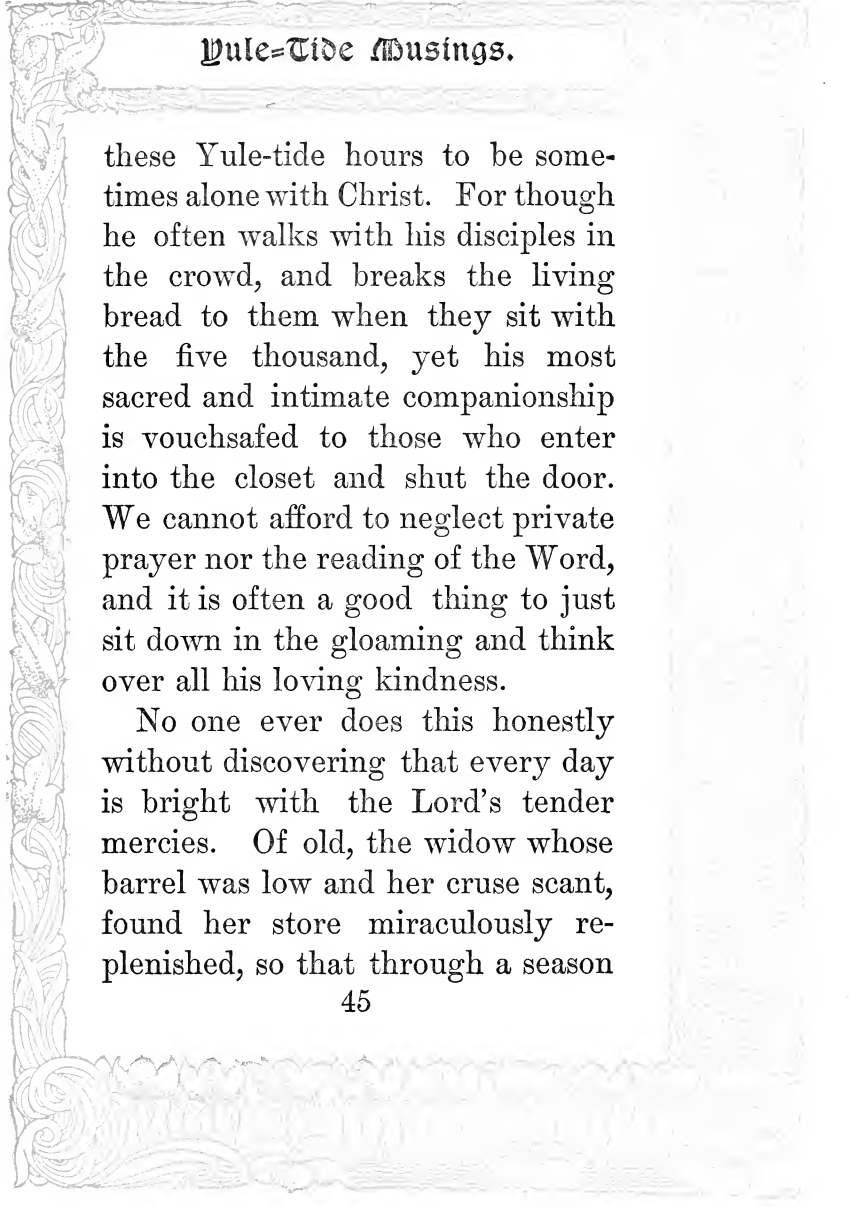
own people ; perhaps she has a feeling that at Yule-tide she is rather left out. She looks at her husband, and sees him thin and worn and weary with the hardships of an arduous service. Her boys and girls look shabby, but she would not mind that if they were warmly clothed. The baby will hang her Christmas stocking up in the corner, but the gifts will be very few and very simple. A longing sweeps over the loyal, loving heart for a bit of the old life, for the dinner so tempting and so abundant, for the surprises of friendship, for the beautiful old church garlanded with cedar and pine, for the magnificent organ music, for all the charm which is commonplace to some of us and for which others are home-

Talks Between Times.

sick in absence. Only for a little while is this mood dominant. Our missionary is too strong, too devoted, to indulge it long. But could not you and I to such a one manage to send oftener than we do the largesse of true Christmas cheer and the sweetness of assured remembrance?

The best thing about the Christmas gladness is that its spirit and essence last so long. The pleasure which comes with the Christmas tree, and the Christmas carol, and the Christmas stockings, is not gone with the day; it endures through the frost and snow of the rest of the winter, and it elevates the family life for the rest of the year.

We shall be wise to withdraw from other company, and seek in



Yule-Tide Musings.

these Yule-tide hours to be sometimes alone with Christ. For though he often walks with his disciples in the crowd, and breaks the living bread to them when they sit with the five thousand, yet his most sacred and intimate companionship is vouchsafed to those who enter into the closet and shut the door. We cannot afford to neglect private prayer nor the reading of the Word, and it is often a good thing to just sit down in the gloaming and think over all his loving kindness.

No one ever does this honestly without discovering that every day is bright with the Lord's tender mercies. Of old, the widow whose barrel was low and her cruse scant, found her store miraculously replenished, so that through a season

Talks Between Times.

of famine it was sufficient for her and her household. When the guests at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee tasted the water that was made wine by the Master, they knew that never had they drunk such wine at any other feast. Sitting down and meditating, making amid the world's bustle and haste a little clear space where we may be still, we cannot but own that God's goodness is evermore flowing round our incompleteness, and his bounty making our deserts to blossom as the rose. And so—

We may never doubt his goodness,
We must ever trust his love;
By a cord that cannot sever
We are bound to our home above.
Therefore on our daily journey
Henceforth we will walk by faith,
Till he gives us fuller vision
On the other side of death.


Yule-Tide Musings.

To every Christian family, to every Christian follower, God sends a merry Yule-tide. Under whatever sky, of whatever creed he be, the Christian who believes on the Son and trusts in the blood of Calvary, and looks forward to the day of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, is entitled, not to content, merely, but to joy unspeakable in all the days. For to him is the word, "Lo, I am with you always!"

Talk Fourth

❁ The ❁ Vacant Chair

“THERE is no flock, however watched and
tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no household, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

 HE words of the poet came
to me freshly as to-day I
spent an hour in a home which has
recently been visited by that Angel
of the Shadow, who leaves so deep
a darkness when he carries our

The Vacant Chair.

darlings away to heaven's fadeless light. As always, the one who had been taken seemed the one who could least be spared, and who must longest be missed. Had the sharpened arrow, which never fails of its aim, struck anyone else in the home group, the others would equally have felt that this was the stroke most painful, the bereavement most irreparable. A hush had fallen upon the household, the parents moved about as if weights were on their feet, the needful work was done because it must be, but the pleasure had gone out of it, and it was almost under protest that the daily tasks went on. Everywhere in the home—at the table, in the evening worship, in her vacant room—there was a

Talks Between Times.

sense of lack and emptiness: the beloved one was gone! "Death makes a clean sweep," said the mother. "I never realized before how utterly changed life can be, because one to whom we are accustomed at every turn is no longer here. I find myself wakening in the morning and saying, 'She will return to-day,' and then it all comes over me again that she can never return."

No mourner escapes the experience of heartache and vain longing which follow the tearing away of friend or child or kinsman, and the beginning again without the beloved presence.

And platitudes may be left unspoken, for they are resented in the hour of grief and are often unheard.



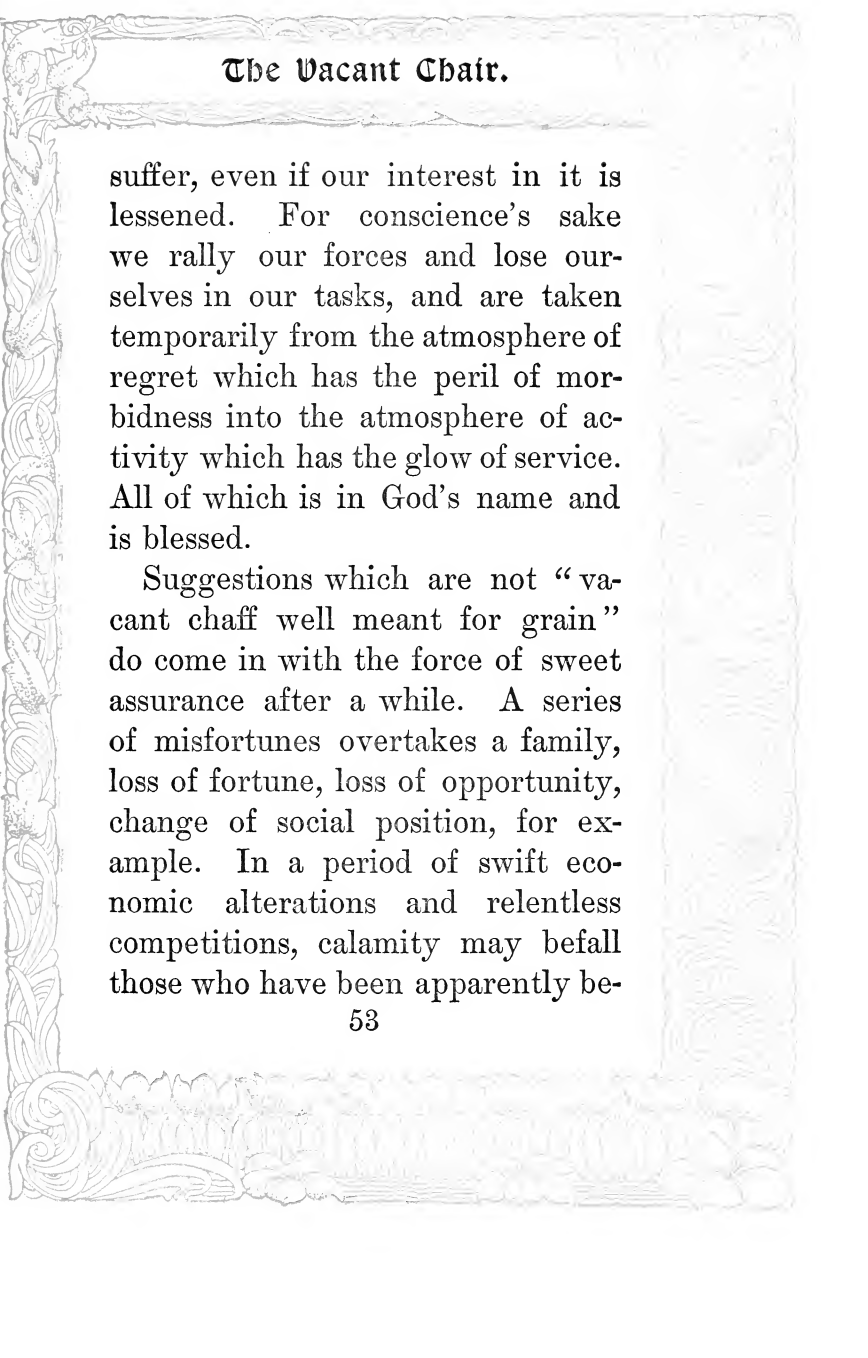
The Vacant Chair.

A simple handclasp, a tender assurance of sympathy, and a yielding of time and attention to the story which the bereaved one tells over and over—the story of the last days, of the last words and looks—are the best consolations which affection can offer. Apart from the stricken, too, we may intercede for them at the Mercy Seat, and help them a thousandfold more by our prayers in their behalf than by anything we can say. It is never wasted time that is spent in humble and believing prayer for our friends, whatever their necessity. I sometimes think that the sweetest message ever sent by one friend to another is, "I have been moved to pray for you by name." So personal and so insistent a prayer goes straight

Talks Between Times.

to the ear of Him who says to his disciple, under any sky, in every age, "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine."

The first shock and sadness of bereavement over, we fortunately are compelled to take up our old duties. The fire must be kindled in the morning, the breakfast cooked, the beds made, and the children sent to school. Father and the boys must be in the counting-room and the store as usual, and the daughter who teaches must go to her classroom, the daughter who is a stenographer must sit down with her note-book as if nobody had ever died. Though the face of the world is changed for you, the world's work and the Lord's must go on. And we cannot let the work



The Vacant Chair.

suffer, even if our interest in it is lessened. For conscience's sake we rally our forces and lose ourselves in our tasks, and are taken temporarily from the atmosphere of regret which has the peril of morbidness into the atmosphere of activity which has the glow of service. All of which is in God's name and is blessed.

Suggestions which are not "vacant chaff well meant for grain" do come in with the force of sweet assurance after a while. A series of misfortunes overtakes a family, loss of fortune, loss of opportunity, change of social position, for example. In a period of swift economic alterations and relentless competitions, calamity may befall those who have been apparently be-



Talks Between Times.

yond its reach. We live to see with thankfulness and relief that it was far better that the mother, the child, or the sister, was taken before she had known anything of reverse or disaster. Even bitterer cups are pressed to the lips of those in whose household some dear one goes astray, some name is by common consent dropped out of the daily talk. Well for those who were summoned hence before this crucial experience came to the shrinking and sorrowful circle of the kindred.

Looking at the vacant chair which is eloquent of a mound, green-turfed and flower-sown in the cemetery, we may remind ourselves that heaven is not so far away from the child of God as some dark regions



The Vacant Chair.

of this earth. A while ago there were those in this land who realized how remote was the Far East, where their missionary friends were exposed to the hostility of the heathen, where some of them spent their last breath under torture, where martyr fires as fierce as those in Nero's gardens were lighted at the very close of the wonderful nineteenth century. Parents with a lovely young daughter, safe in the many mansions, felt inexpressibly nearer her and much more at rest than those who had a child in China exposed to nameless horrors.

Indeed, if we can but appreciate it, the other world, the world of permanence beyond these shifting and passing shadows, is not distant from any one of us. A step, a

Talks Between Times.

breath, a lifting of the veil, and we may be at home with God.

“Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
But nightly pitch my moving tent
A day’s march nearer home.”

Those who are much in communion with heaven ought to take to themselves the solace and the joy there are in the thought that the Lord, to whom they can speak so readily, has made the place for their absent ones, and that the place is a *place*, not merely a condition; and that once there, whoever arrives is forever free from the limitations of the flesh, and forever with the Lord.

We can do without our sons and daughters, when it is for their good and happiness here. We send them to college; we give them to the

The Vacant Chair.

business opportunity ; we let them go to the ends of the earth, and we do not complain. Can we not equally, if Jesus need them, spare them to him to serve him, where the service is all free from bonds, from interruptions and from tears, in the Father's house, within the light that streams from the Elder Brother's face?

“Shall we know each other there?” Do Christians really doubt the fact that the reunion of heaven will include recognition, the meeting again of those who have been separated, the gathering of all the scattered clans? Is God, who gives us daily bread here, so unkind a Father that he will offer us a stone there? If there is immortality, is it to be apart from the sweetness

Talks Between Times.

and sacredness of love? In "Robert Falconer" the closing sentence of the book is this: "The boat went down in mid-ocean, and I have not yet seen my friend again." Not yet, but the day is coming fast when the friends shall meet. Is not this the implication on the Mount of Transfiguration: the saints, who had been for centuries in heaven knew each other and conversed, and were known to Peter, James and John?

"Beyond the smiling and the weeping I shall
be soon,"

says the trustful heart, but it shall be where there is "Love, rest and home;" and not love denied, nor rest in oblivion, nor home without kindred and friends. Thank God for the lost who shall be found again in the sweet bye and bye!

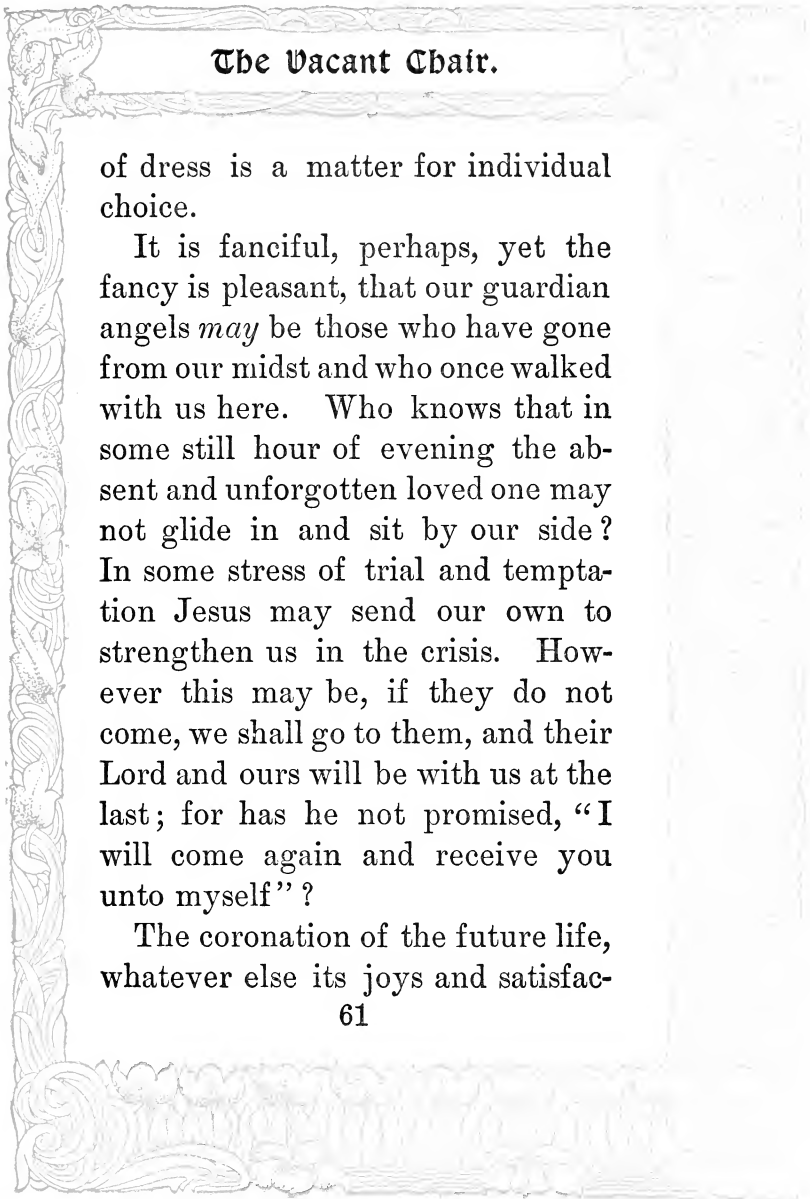
The Vacant Chair.

The vacant chair here means work dropped, interests left, charities curtailed. Can we not best remember our dear ones by taking up the tasks they leave and standing in their lot? A mother whose only son was taken from her has found great comfort in educating the sons of other mothers. A household from which a gifted child went home, computed what was the cost of caring for that child, and annually devoted the sum to missions. A family from whom three little ones had been snatched, endowed a bed in a child's hospital, so that perpetually a sufferer might be eased, a life made happier, in memory of the dear ones early called away.

A word about the wearing of

Talks Between Times.

mourning garments may not be inappropriate. For a time the black or somber clothing is in harmony with the mood and is a protection in society, as it announces our grief and our privilege to be for a while withdrawn from our former gayeties and allowed to be alone. Thus, to a certain extent, a mourning garb has its reason for existence, and is founded on common-sense as well as custom. Heavy veils worn over the face are unhygienic, and heavily swathing crape is not only costly, but unhealthful to the mind, as it leads the wearer to absorption in her loss, when she should rather seek diversion in new activities. Mourning should not be worn too long, nor should any be blamed who prefer not to assume it, as the style



The Vacant Chair.

of dress is a matter for individual choice.

It is fanciful, perhaps, yet the fancy is pleasant, that our guardian angels *may* be those who have gone from our midst and who once walked with us here. Who knows that in some still hour of evening the absent and unforgotten loved one may not glide in and sit by our side? In some stress of trial and temptation Jesus may send our own to strengthen us in the crisis. However this may be, if they do not come, we shall go to them, and their Lord and ours will be with us at the last; for has he not promised, "I will come again and receive you unto myself"?

The coronation of the future life, whatever else its joys and satisfac-

Talks Between Times.

tions may be, will be that its service and its rest alike shall bring us into the presence of the Lord, not as here in dim vision, but in the fullest light. Surely we may leave to him every detail of the blessed life. If we are with him, and our loved ones are with him, there will be no flaw, no rift within the lute, no disappointment. The child we lost years ago, may have grown strangely beautiful in the heavenly garden, but there will be something familiar, and love will spring to welcome love. Striving in the earthly life for likeness to Christ, ever praying for the grace of his indwelling, we are gradually made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; the robes we are to wear, it may be, are in process of making now.



The Vacant Chair.

Though we hear no whisper from the other land, it may easily be, that where there are none of our limitations, they sometimes know our struggles and our hopes, and are glad as we are renewed day by day in the image of their Lord and ours.

Talk Fifth

The Power ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ of Prayer

“**N**EVER had a prayer answered in my life!” The speaker was a young woman, and her emphasis was a sign of bitterness. It was evident to her friend that she had a wrong conception of prayer, and limited it to an application to God for things which she wanted—material things, or those which had to do with the exter-

The Power of Prayer.

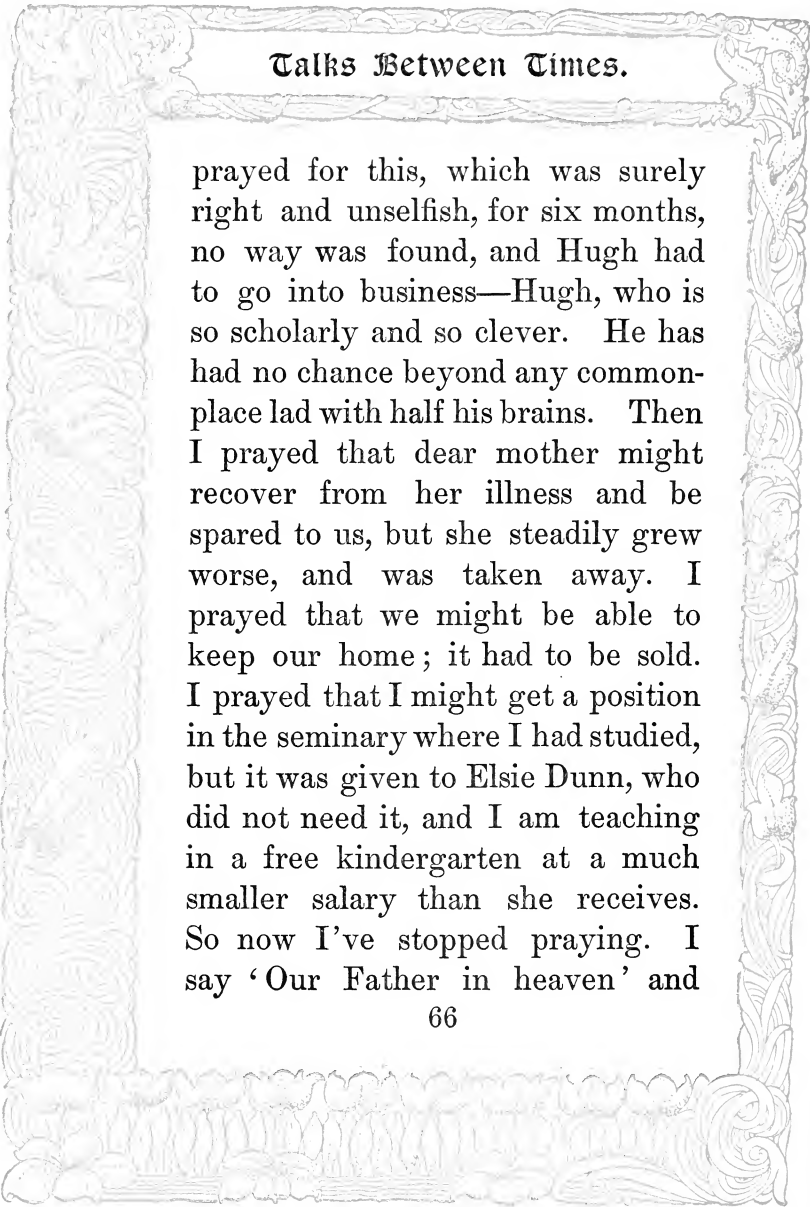
nals of life, rather than with the development of character, and with the experience of the spiritual part of her being. But the friend was wise and patient, and the years had taught her much, so she expressed no surprise at Miss Bettina's statement, and merely asked,

"For what have you prayed, my dear?"

"Oh, for a great many different things, Aunt Kate." The friend was called Aunt Kate by a number of young people who loved her, though she was really not of their kin.

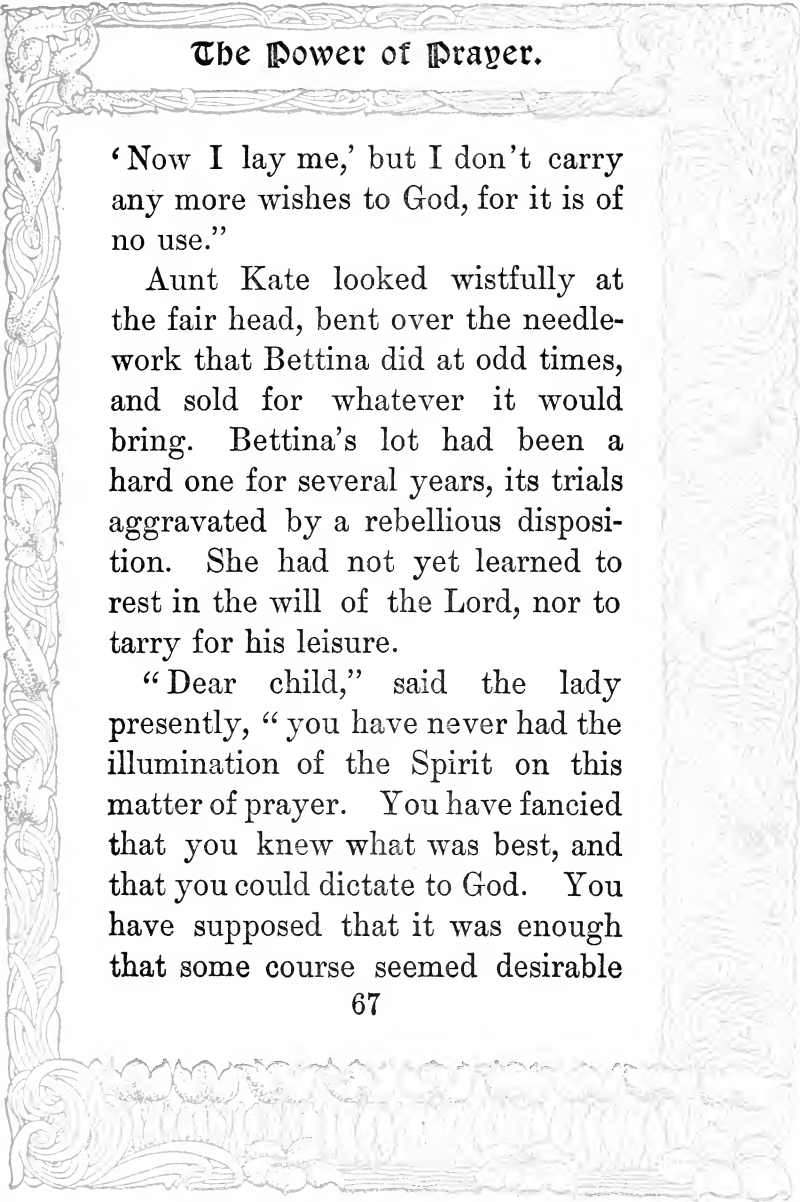
"Tell me some of them, please."

"I prayed that Hugh might be able to go to college; that God would open up a way after father lost his money. But though I



Talks Between Times.

prayed for this, which was surely right and unselfish, for six months, no way was found, and Hugh had to go into business—Hugh, who is so scholarly and so clever. He has had no chance beyond any commonplace lad with half his brains. Then I prayed that dear mother might recover from her illness and be spared to us, but she steadily grew worse, and was taken away. I prayed that we might be able to keep our home; it had to be sold. I prayed that I might get a position in the seminary where I had studied, but it was given to Elsie Dunn, who did not need it, and I am teaching in a free kindergarten at a much smaller salary than she receives. So now I've stopped praying. I say 'Our Father in heaven' and



The Power of Prayer.

‘Now I lay me,’ but I don’t carry any more wishes to God, for it is of no use.”

Aunt Kate looked wistfully at the fair head, bent over the needlework that Bettina did at odd times, and sold for whatever it would bring. Bettina’s lot had been a hard one for several years, its trials aggravated by a rebellious disposition. She had not yet learned to rest in the will of the Lord, nor to tarry for his leisure.

“Dear child,” said the lady presently, “you have never had the illumination of the Spirit on this matter of prayer. You have fancied that you knew what was best, and that you could dictate to God. You have supposed that it was enough that some course seemed desirable

Talks Between Times.

to you, not that the Lord knew what was most for your advantage. I fear you have altogether omitted from your prayers, 'Thy will be done.'

"I was a girl once, as eager, as wilful, as intense as you are now; I, too, set my heart on gifts that I longed for, and fretted when they were withheld or denied.

"I have lived to know that a wiser hand than mine has guided my life, and that I have never had a prayer which was unanswered. But God may answer 'No' as well as 'Yes.' You have to say 'No' to the wee tots in the kindergarten when they ask for favors which would not be good for them. I can truly say as I look back over the years of my pilgrim way that God has

The Power of Prayer.

always chosen the very best things for his child. My favorite song is,

“‘I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my Guide.
With a childlike faith I hold the hand
Of the mighty Friend at my side.’”

“Look, Bettina, at yourself,” Aunt Kate continued; “you desired that Hugh should go to college. Had the boy himself desired it as earnestly as you did, had he been willing to defer the period of helping his father in a sore strait, he might have gone. There are colleges which cost nothing, or very little in fees, and the boy could have worked his way through. God gave him the clearer vision, the truer manliness. He is developing splendidly in the business office, and good men are needed there. The dear mother was left with you until her

Talks Between Times.

children were grown up, then she was taken to rest and peace and perfect health, and she left you with a joyful light in her face. About the loss of fortune, of the familiar home, and the failure to secure the place you hoped for, I can see that these were trials; but God may know that you needed this discipline, to make you more sympathetic with others in trouble, and to fit you for higher work by and by. I think your great mistake has been that you narrowed the meaning of the previous words, 'Ask and ye shall receive,' 'Seek and ye shall find,' 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you,' to the lower needs of the day. 'Your Father knoweth ye have need of these things, before ye ask him,' and, dear girl, it is his

The Power of Prayer.

good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

“I wish I knew precisely what that means,” said Bettina, wistfully.

“Perhaps I can explain. At another time Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is within you.’ I think that when once a soul accepts the divine will as final and as best, and communes with God in submission to that will, there is no more agitation. There may be sorrow, there may be pain, but on the rock of the Lord’s will, the aching head lies as on a soft pillow, and the weary disciple gains courage and new hope, and picks up his load and goes on. Every interruption then becomes a token of the Lord’s constant care, and life goes on, as under the Captain’s eye.

Talks Between Times.

“ ‘ Dear Comforter, Eternal Love,
If thou wilt stay with me,
Of lowly thoughts and simple ways
I'll build a nest for thee.' ”

“ If the Prince of heaven abides
in a human soul, then the kingdom
of heaven must be there.”

“ What do you think it is right
to pray for, Aunt Kate ? ”

“ In nothing be anxious, but in
everything, by prayer and supplica-
tion, make your requests known
unto God.”

“ But with a reservation ? ”

“ With no reservation, except
that of our Lord himself, ‘ Thy will
be done.’ I think, dear heart, that
prayer need not be only asking some
 boon from the Lord: it may be com-
posed of praise, of telling him our
love, and of waiting for him to be
gracious to us. Those who are often

The Power of Prayer.

at the mercy seat are aware of times when they feel the presence of the Lord, and are sure of his brooding over them, as the bird over her young. They are, it may be, silent before him, they have not many words, but their want is their plea, and when they go out into the world from the place of prayer, they go with power to help others, with the Spirit of the Lord filling them and enabling them to conquer in the battle with evil. These men and women become the Great-hearts and the Valiants-for-truth of the world."

Bettina's gray eyes grew soft with tears. This was an ideal of the prayer-life which she had not before perceived. She felt that she had known little of what the Master had to bestow, because she had not

Talks Between Times.

sought himself, being anxious only for his gifts. Her friend took her hand tenderly, and said,

“Sometimes we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss. Said one of old, ‘If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.’ Can one who is only looking for the perishing dross of this world expect to have any better fate than Bunyan’s man with the muck-rake, who heaped up worthless rubbish, and never saw the crown that he might have had, glittering above him?

“And then we must not overlook the wide field of intercessory prayer. When we are in sympathy with Jesus, we are intensely filled with a desire that those who are wandering outside the fold may be brought

The Power of Prayer.

into its safety and shelter. We think of our acquaintances and our relatives, and we beg that they may be saved. Time passes swiftly as we pray that definite and positive blessings may come to individual lives. Rising into a still higher and purer altitude, we pray for the conversion of the whole world, for tribes and nations that now worship false gods, for the Hindoo, the Chinese, the Indian, the African, for the idolater wherever he may grope in the mists and fogs of his absence from God. We pray for the prisoner, for the tramp, for the enemy of good, that he may be changed and redeemed. When we read the Bible, we read it with new light on its pages; and whether we pray in our closets,

Talks Between Times.

or with others, we are sure that we are heard.

“And, Bettina, we go to the prayer-meeting, and carry our vase of perfume with us to be broken there at the feet of our Master. We always get good at the little meeting, no matter whether it be quiet and restrained, or whether a number speak and pray. If there are but two or three assembled there, the Lord is in their midst.

“People make great mistakes who shut themselves up in a shell, and avoid the company of Christian disciples. The stick that burns singly makes a wee bit of flame; several sticks piled and kindled together blaze brightly and freely on the hearth.”

“The more one goes to prayer-

The Power of Prayer.

meeting," said Bettina, "the more I observe one likes to go. I think I shall ask you to take me oftener under your wing hereafter, on the mid-week evening."

Aunt Kate kissed the dimpled cheek. "The day will come, my dear," she said, "when, if you follow on, you will know many sweet things, and gather many fragrant flowers in the garden of the Lord."

Aunt Kate said no more, but these thoughts came to me, a silent listener to the long talk.

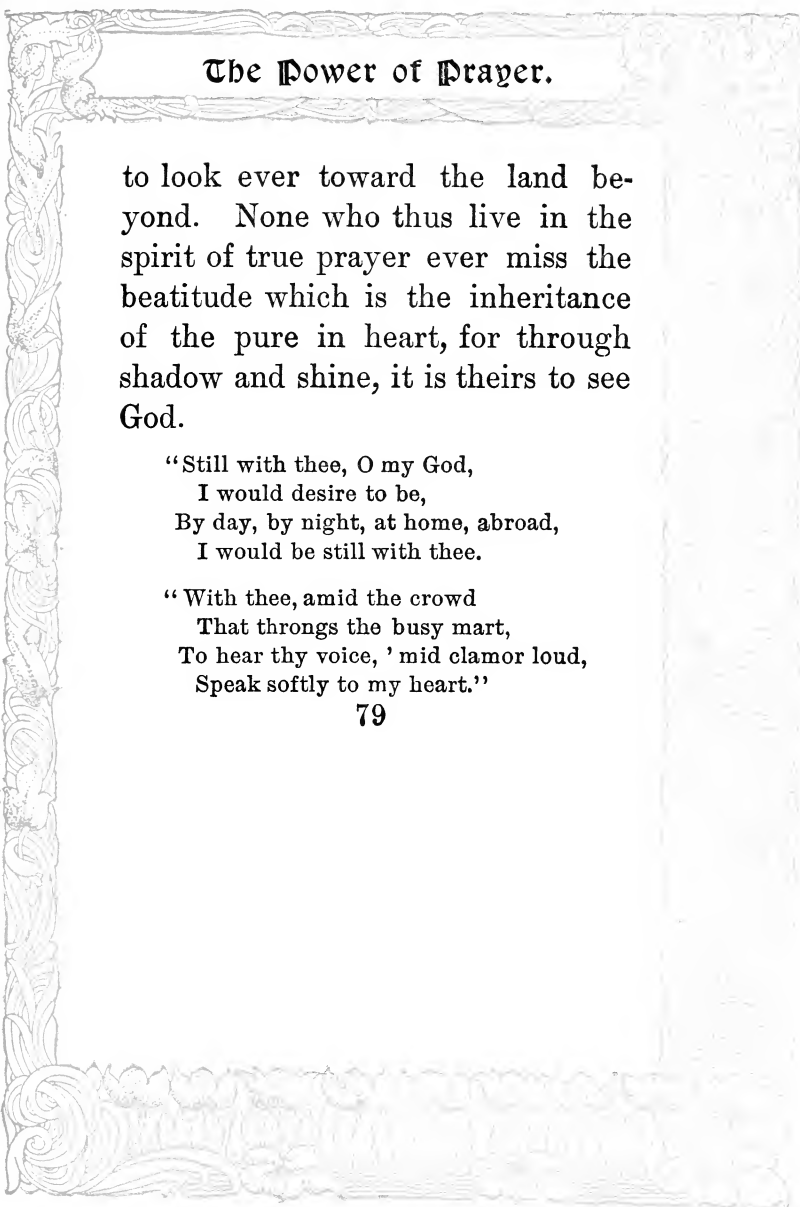
It belongs to youth to be impatient. As we go on in the Christian life and reach the higher levels of maturity, we learn to wait; we realize that we cannot have everything we desire at once and without delay. And we grow into a

Talks Between Times.

fuller appreciation of God's ability to care for us. We go to him, as weak and dependent as little children, and we come not empty away.

“Whatever we lack, whatever we crave,
We reach out our hands, we lift our cry,
And all in an instant, strong to save,
Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”

There is much in being always in the attitude of waiting upon God. In the beautiful life history of “Brother Lawrence,” a simple monk, who practiced constantly the habit of living consciously in the divine presence, we see that even the little things of the hour, the small losses, the petty disappointments, may become means of grace. Such dwelling with the Father ennobles life, makes impossible the low motive, shames our cowardice, and helps us



The Power of Prayer.

to look ever toward the land beyond. None who thus live in the spirit of true prayer ever miss the beatitude which is the inheritance of the pure in heart, for through shadow and shine, it is theirs to see God.

“Still with thee, O my God,
I would desire to be,
By day, by night, at home, abroad,
I would be still with thee.

“With thee, amid the crowd
That throngs the busy mart,
To hear thy voice, 'mid clamor loud,
Speak softly to my heart.”

Talk Sixth

✿ A ✿

Plain Statement

IN the flush of the sweet Spring blossoming, in a world full of music and fragrance, there are those who move our pity. Those whom we are fain to help if we can.

The people most in need of compassion, and of assistance as well, are not those who have too much to do, or too little money, or too many cares, not even those who

A Plain Statement.

have to live with the difficult-tempered and the uncongenial. These know their own hours of trial, but the pressure comes to them from the outside, and it can be borne. Anything which in its nature belongs to the objective world, from a pin-prick to a bayonet-thrust, can be endured with more or less fortitude. The really unhappy persons who need commiseration are found in the ranks of the difficult and ill-assorted, of those whose habits of mind are tempestuous and uncertain, who have never learned the ordered beauty of composure, and who vex their acquaintances because their inner moods are full of vexation. A homely phrase says that they have the black dog on their back. Heaven help the victims of the black dog!

Talks Between Times.

They are sour and surly and morose at heart, and therefore they are grim and curt and uncivil of speech and act. Because their souls are like dungeons, never warmed by the sunlight, they scatter gloom wherever they go; children run from them, and animals scuttle away out of their sight. A home ruled by one of these unfortunates is next neighbor to a mad house, and yet the most wretched being within the sphere of that home is the one who sways its sceptre. For we may escape from any despotism under the stars, except the tyranny which comes from within. Man or woman dominated by an evil spirit has hard work to get away from self. The Ego has a most tremendous power, and is capable of indefinite



A Plain Statement.

resistance, if set in the wrong direction. A little child, scowling and petulant, is sometimes aware that its fit of sulks has set it outside of the merriment of the playground, and it mopes in the corner until it is able to throw off the badgering demon of crossness; but when the playground is the broad arena of grown-up life, and the companions are friends and relations and business associates, and the mature individual is a chronic victim of ill-temper and contrariness, the case is a thousand times worse.

For, remember this, dear sufferer, harassed and worried and perturbed human being that you are, the fight which you wage is not against mere flesh and blood, nor against stone barricades and castle walls, nor yet

Talks Between Times.

against any solid foe which hits back and engages in straightforward combat, but against a fog, a vapor, the stealthy and creeping fiend, depression, against the intangible and receding and returning and infinitely various capacity for vague and desperate discouragement, in that curious piece of century-old building, your own life. If once you recognize this fact you are proof against despair. You may oppose the black dog, and gain the victory; but to do so, you must make a brave stand and put up a good fight.

The strife will be with what the Scripture calls principalities and powers, legions of adversaries, headed by Satan. Envy, jealousy, cowardice, inertia, in turn march upon the soul, when it is given over

A Plain Statement.

to low and selfish tempers and weak moods of vacillation and doubt. In one's own poor strength there is little hope of victory; but, thank God, none of His children need ever fight alone. The weapon All-prayer is potential, and with God on his side, any soldier may say, "Rejoice not over me, mine enemy; though I fall, I shall arise again!"

It is the part of discretion, when one observes deterioration in herself—if perhaps it is a wife and mother who is finding it increasingly hard to be patient and collected and calm—to seek the cause of the trouble. The body is often responsible for the ills of the mind. Nerves on edge for want of sleep, too much drudgery in the kitchen, too much work in the church, too

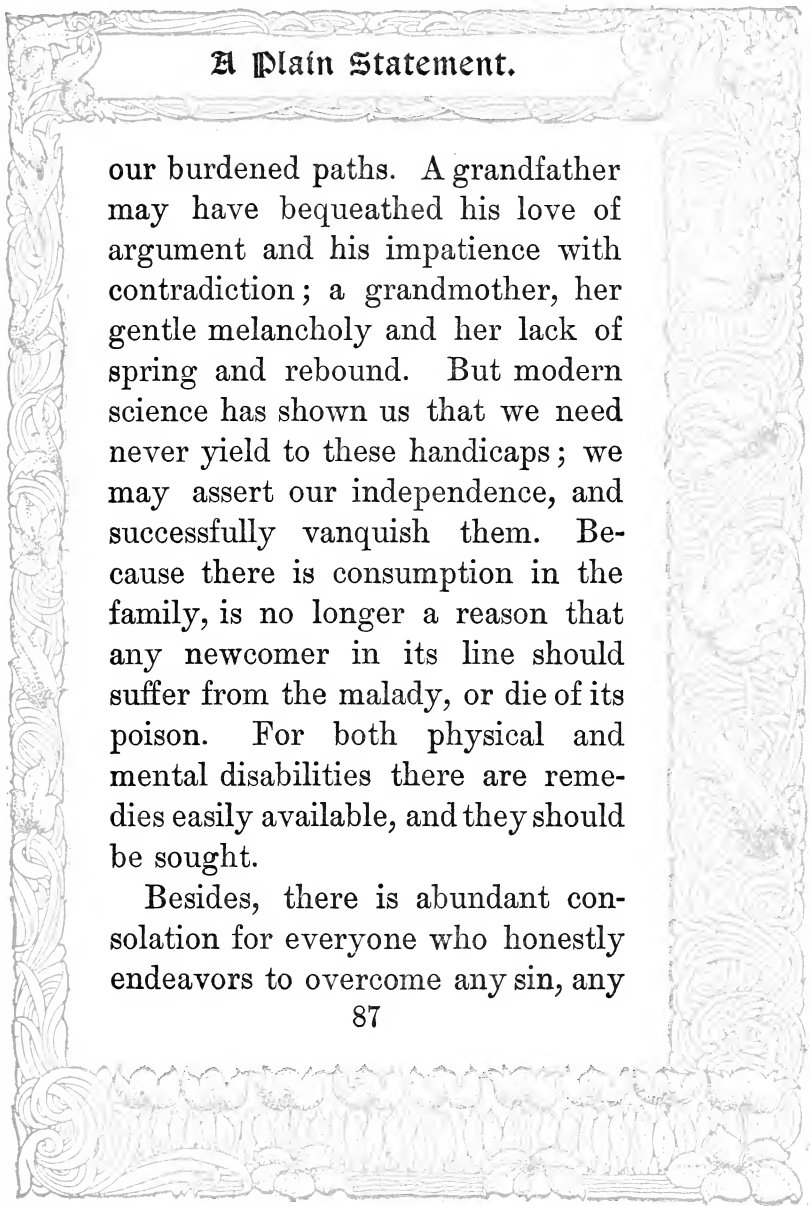


Talks Between Times.

much society, too great a strain, may be to blame for the sharp tone and the cross word. You scold the children because you are worn out. You give your husband a cold answer because the tears are not very far from your eyes.

Rest as often as possible, taking a tonic by going out of the house into the May sunshine. Never mind the work. Whether the windows are washed to-day and the sweeping is done, is of little moment; the thing which really matters is that you should be equable, cheerful, and able to overcome temptation.

From those who have preceded us on the stage we inherit tendencies which have a good deal to do with our buoyancy of feeling on



A Plain Statement.

our burdened paths. A grandfather may have bequeathed his love of argument and his impatience with contradiction; a grandmother, her gentle melancholy and her lack of spring and rebound. But modern science has shown us that we need never yield to these handicaps; we may assert our independence, and successfully vanquish them. Because there is consumption in the family, is no longer a reason that any newcomer in its line should suffer from the malady, or die of its poison. For both physical and mental disabilities there are remedies easily available, and they should be sought.

Besides, there is abundant consolation for everyone who honestly endeavors to overcome any sin, any

Talks Between Times.

shame, any black shadow which approaches him with menace and foreboding. Looking unto Jesus, we may find strength and courage, and grace for the day.

The question arises, why the Christian, with the Master ever ready and able to uplift, should not always lead the blessed life of immunity from the attacks of ill temper and sadness. Here, let a distinction be made and kept clearly in view, between the sadness which is grief over real loss and bereavement, and the sadness which is simply the expression of defeat and discontent.

To no query is there an answer more easily found. The Christian fails to look unto Jesus, as an habitual act of living; prayer is occa-

A Plain Statement.

sional, not constant, sporadic, not periodical. It is sometimes a mere rite, not a genuine cry from the depths to One Who is able to save. Looking unto Jesus is more than prayer. It is also taking pains to live as we pray.

When it occurs to any one, as by a swift intuition, that in his or her daily conduct there is a falling below the noble ideal, it is time to make a determined effort to do better. The revelation is often very sudden. Sometimes it is overwhelming. It is as though one had stepped into a room and caught a glimpse of his true personality in a crystal mirror. A glance intercepted, the frank comment of a child, the evident attempt of a companion to conciliate, or not to give

Talks Between Times.

offence, are like the lifting of a curtain—we see ourselves as others see us. This is very humiliating, if we are going on in a course of obstinacy, or unreason, or thoughtless caprices, careless what pain we inflict upon our friends and home people. But a more healing pain comes, if in some candid moment, we see ourselves as God sees us. Then we are shown not only that view, but something of the ineffable pity, the Divine tenderness of our blessed Lord, and, looking unto Him, we are able to put on a little of his nature.

Christ can make us over. He is doing it every day, all round the globe, for hundreds and thousands of his disciples. We must stop fretting because those with whom we live



A Plain Statement.

and the circumstances of our lives, and the embarrassments and perplexities of our conditions, are arousing antagonism, and, simply, sweetly, like little children, we must take from the hand that was pierced for us its white gift of peace. "The kingdom of heaven is within you," said the Master long ago. If we believe this, and look to the right source for its serene establishment, we shall be from our "treacherous selves set free," and shall become lovely and blessed in our lives.

There are good people who continually do kind things in an unkind manner; they allow their good to be evil spoken of. There are honorable people who pay their debts to the uttermost farthing, yet who

Talks Between Times.

are crusty, brusque, and vindictive, easily affronted, and not easily appeased. They too need to look ever unto Jesus, that on their white robes as they walk through the earth there may be neither spot nor stain. When we show kindness, let us do it graciously. When we speak the truth, let us speak it in love. As we pass this way but once, our home lives, our companionship with others, our whole intercourse and contact in the world of men, should be brotherly, elevating and keyed to the love-notes of the gospel. Then, nobody would have opportunity to pity us, but we should go joyfully on the way, climbing higher and higher, growing more like Christ, and at last entering with acclamation into the halls where the unend-

A Plain Statement.

ing festival takes place in the presence of the King.

“Would you lose your load of sin?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Would you know God's peace within?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

“Would you have your cares grow light?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Would you songs have in the night?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

“Grieving, would you comfort know?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

See a light beyond the grave?

Fix your eyes on Jesus.”

A good man said to his wife, who was complaining that she was tried beyond bearing by some persons with whom she had relations in her daily life, “My dear, you are not taking the right view of this matter. You are forgetting that these people are giving you a great deal of help in developing the finer quali-

Talks Between Times.

ties of your character. You are sweeter, more self-restrained and nobler, through the exercise of tact, tenderness and unselfishness to them. You ought to thank God that He has given you just this discipline.”

This may not occur to us when we are in process of being moulded by what seem the blows of adversity, but it is nevertheless a fair presentation of the case. Only we must not let it drift in to complacency, nor plume ourselves on our superior deportment, our greater spirituality. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

Dearly beloved, let us love one another. Let us love the hateful till we vanquish their hate. Let us

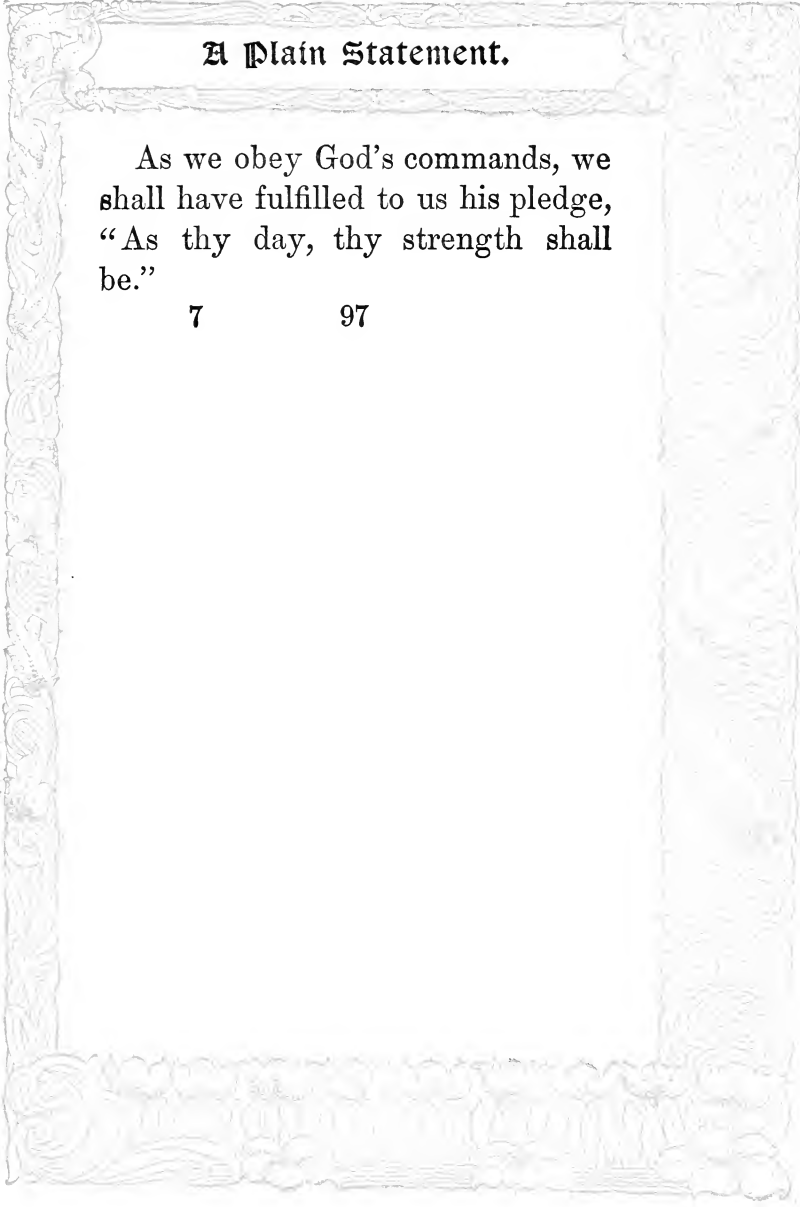
A Plain Statement.

love the unkind till they learn a better way. Let us imitate our Father in heaven, and treat with gracious consideration the unthankful and the evil.

Could we go to the beginning, we should discover that many of the people who are most unreasonable and annoying were originally badly started. They were not born into the sweetness of the kingdom. They must be converted, or they will never be sweet. One of the fullest joys of the future life and home of the saints will be in the companionship forever of men and women who have no meannesses, no crabbed tempers, no infirmities of will. They will have left all these behind them, and will then be always and only and continually Christ-like.

Talks Between Times.

The conscientious keeping of rest days, and especially of the Sabbath, will do much to assist nervous and easily irritated people from yielding to temptation. When the Lord made the provision for resting one day in the seven, he had in mind the needs of his creatures. To man and beast the Sabbath comes with a gift in its hand, a gift of healing and refreshment. In our day, there is to be deplored an increasing tendency to invade the Sabbath with secular work and secular amusements. As never before, society encroaches on the hallowed time, and Christian people yield to its demands. While this continues, nervous break-downs must be numerous, for the Sabbath rest is imperative for the physical as well as for the spiritual life.



A Plain Statement.

As we obey God's commands, we shall have fulfilled to us his pledge, "As thy day, thy strength shall be."

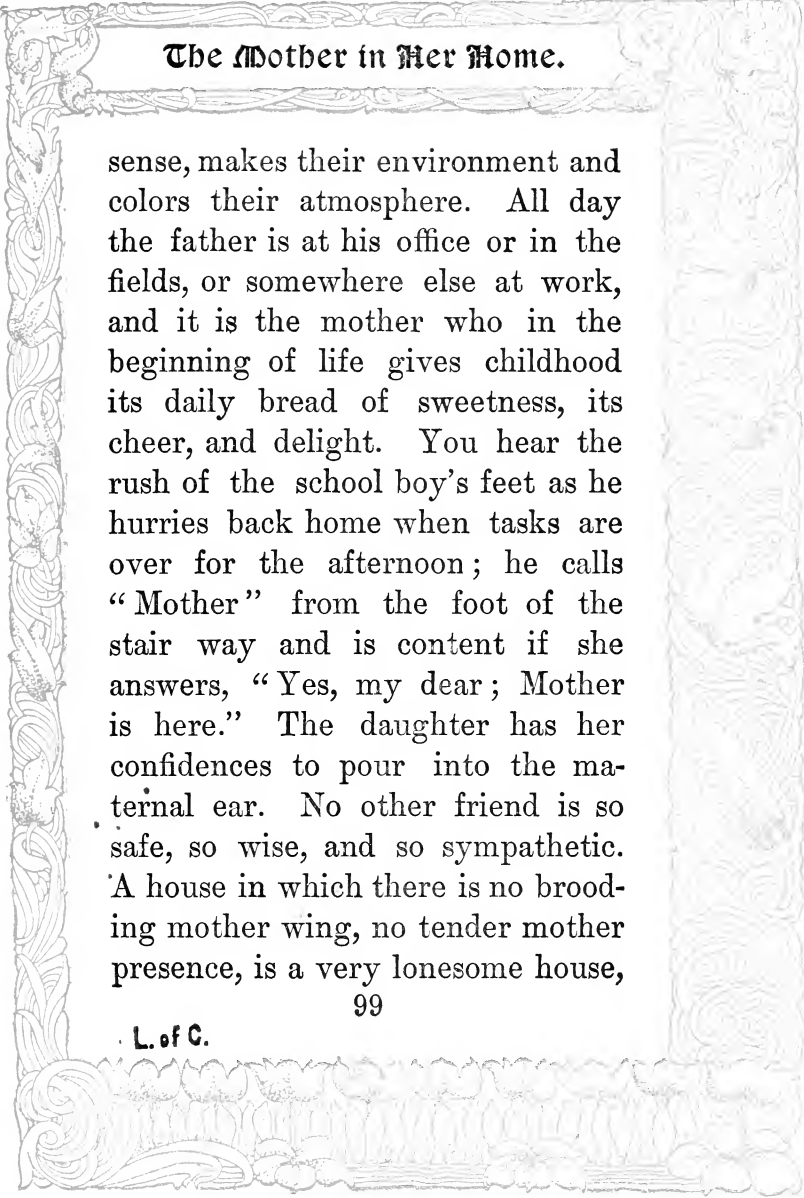
7

97

Talk Seventh

The Mother ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ in Her Home

QUOTE OTHERS have not the monopoly in child training. Fathers equally mould their sons and daughters; equally exert an influence on their upbringing. But the mother is in the home, is there when the children go to school and to play, welcomes them when they return from outdoor life to the shelter of the roof, and, in a



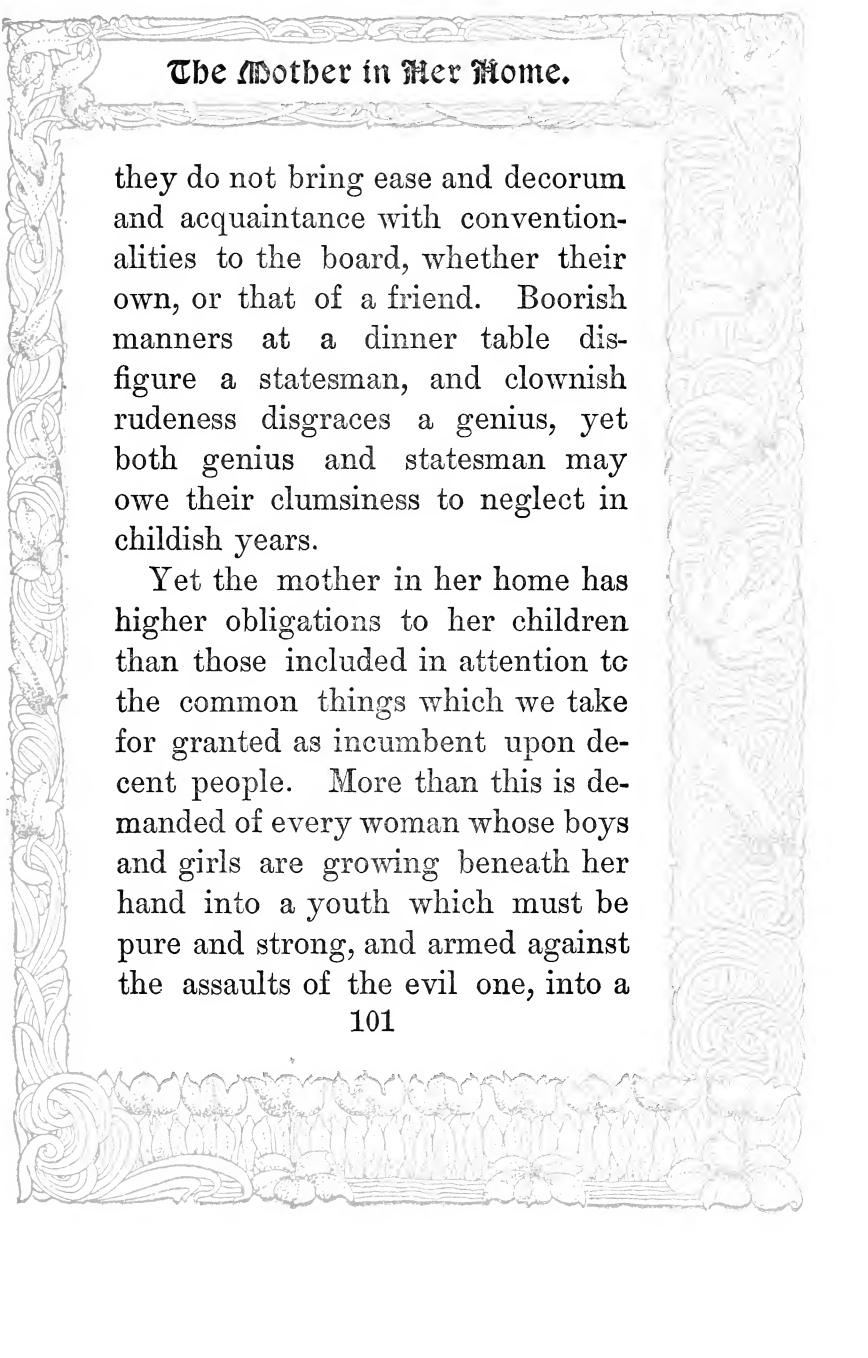
The Mother in Her Home.

sense, makes their environment and colors their atmosphere. All day the father is at his office or in the fields, or somewhere else at work, and it is the mother who in the beginning of life gives childhood its daily bread of sweetness, its cheer, and delight. You hear the rush of the school boy's feet as he hurries back home when tasks are over for the afternoon; he calls "Mother" from the foot of the stair way and is content if she answers, "Yes, my dear; Mother is here." The daughter has her confidences to pour into the maternal ear. No other friend is so safe, so wise, and so sympathetic. A house in which there is no brooding mother wing, no tender mother presence, is a very lonesome house,

Talks Between Times.

shadowed and chilly, and bereft of joy.

Mothers are not often derelict in performing the obvious duties which they owe to their children. The food is wholesome, abundant, and daintily served, the beds are soft and smooth, the clothing is neat and in good repair. By precept and example the mother inculcates polite manners, the grace of the pleasant salutation at morning and evening, the lifted hat when the lad meets a friend, the yielded chair to weakness or old age, and the many little courtesies which show the difference between the gently bred person and the boor. Table manners are not overlooked, for the mother is aware that all their lives her children will be handicapped if



The Mother in Her Home.

they do not bring ease and decorum and acquaintance with conventionalities to the board, whether their own, or that of a friend. Boorish manners at a dinner table disfigure a statesman, and clownish rudeness disgraces a genius, yet both genius and statesman may owe their clumsiness to neglect in childish years.

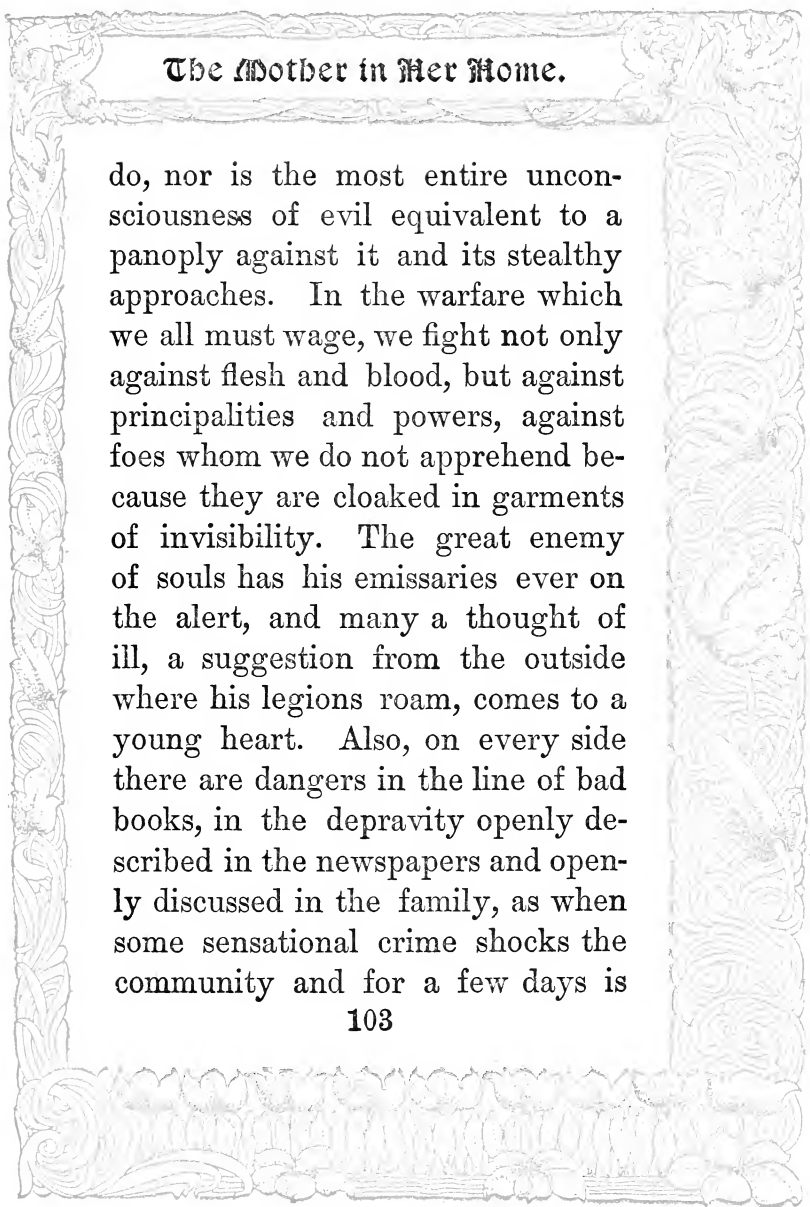
Yet the mother in her home has higher obligations to her children than those included in attention to the common things which we take for granted as incumbent upon decent people. More than this is demanded of every woman whose boys and girls are growing beneath her hand into a youth which must be pure and strong, and armed against the assaults of the evil one, into a



Talks Between Times.

maturity when the affairs of the race shall be in their care.

Many mothers shrink from acquainting their children with facts and perils which in the due order of their days may spring upon them, and either weakly ignore a whole set of possible conditions, or prefer for their young people the protection of ignorance to the protection of knowledge. If ignorance and innocence were synonymous terms, modesty and refinement a complete defence against curiosity and coarseness, and if the mother could surround her children as with a wall of fire, from association with those who might injure, and from contact with what might prove debasing, then silence on her part would be right and fitting. This she cannot

The page is framed by a decorative border of intricate floral and scrollwork patterns. The border is composed of repeating motifs of leaves, flowers, and swirling lines, creating a rich, textured frame around the central text.

The Mother in Her Home.

do, nor is the most entire unconsciousness of evil equivalent to a panoply against it and its stealthy approaches. In the warfare which we all must wage, we fight not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against foes whom we do not apprehend because they are cloaked in garments of invisibility. The great enemy of souls has his emissaries ever on the alert, and many a thought of ill, a suggestion from the outside where his legions roam, comes to a young heart. Also, on every side there are dangers in the line of bad books, in the depravity openly described in the newspapers and openly discussed in the family, as when some sensational crime shocks the community and for a few days is

Talks Between Times.

the staple of comment in the streets and in the home. The parent who blushes to converse in low tones and in privacy, and with prayer, about the duties of purity and faithfulness which a boy owes to himself, is often most heedless in talking over in the boy's presence the heartrending stories which frequently occupy large space in the daily press.

The truth is that we are much too apt to survey the characteristics of our physical nature from a wrong point of view. When the baby comes into the home, a gift from God, if there are there young people approaching adolescence, they should have been so taught and trained that their mother in their eyes, in her dignity of anticipation,

The Mother in Her Home.

should have been more than ever sacred. All the tenderness of girlhood, all the chivalry of boyhood, might be awakened, and would be, if the coming happiness were not often regarded as if it were a calamity to be huddled out of sight and not so much as suspected, till the little one's first cry breaks the spell.

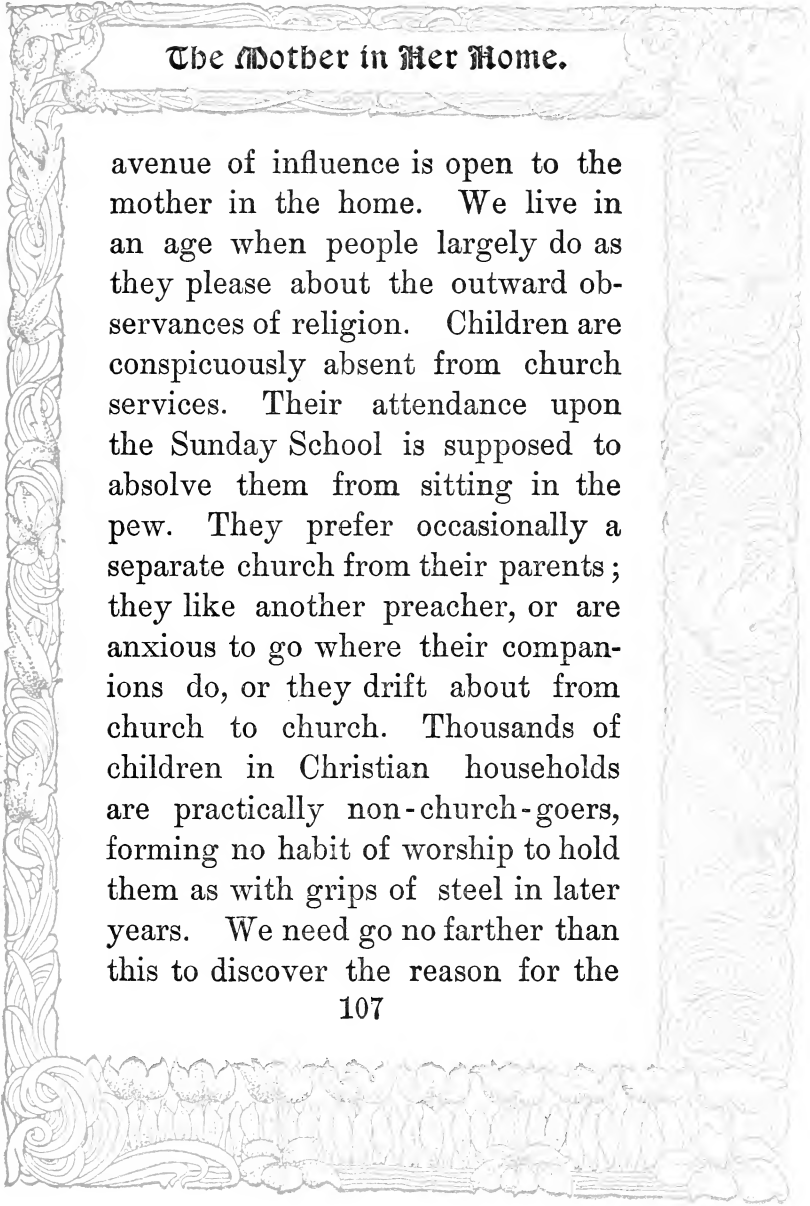
I am not pleading for, nor recommending on the part of parents, any dwelling upon a side of life which by common consent is not talked about openly in society. What I urge is that boys and girls alike shall be made acquainted with the laws of their own bodies, not by other boys and girls, or by prying and vulgar curiosity, but delicately, thoughtfully and once

Talks Between Times.

for all by their fathers and mothers. The time for revelations must vary according to circumstances, and be regulated by the development and the differing characters of children.

A mother should train her son as sternly in purity and warn him as earnestly against infractions of the moral law, as she trains and warns her daughter. The obligation is not more imperative in the one case than the other. Pure men are as essential to the common weal of human society as pure women. There cannot be one law for the youth and another for the maiden, and both, precisely as susceptible the one as the other, are given by God to the vigilance, the discretion, and the fidelity of parents.

Still another and a quite opposite



The Mother in Her Home.

avenue of influence is open to the mother in the home. We live in an age when people largely do as they please about the outward observances of religion. Children are conspicuously absent from church services. Their attendance upon the Sunday School is supposed to absolve them from sitting in the pew. They prefer occasionally a separate church from their parents; they like another preacher, or are anxious to go where their companions do, or they drift about from church to church. Thousands of children in Christian households are practically non-church-goers, forming no habit of worship to hold them as with grips of steel in later years. We need go no farther than this to discover the reason for the

Talks Between Times.

widespread and increasing desecration of the Sabbath, for the Sunday golf, tennis and tea-drinking in summer resorts and country homes, for the social use of Sunday as a day of visiting and receiving in town life, and for the opening of public expositions to paying visitors on Sunday. It is because we are degenerating in our homes, and leaving God out, and bringing up our children without much reference to Him, that Americans are losing their old character of a Sabbath-keeping people. The boys of to-day will be the men of to-morrow; the girls of to-day will be the women of the next generation.

The mother and father—for here they may walk hand in hand—who are as solicitous that their children



The Mother in Her Home.

shall be regularly in the pew as in their seats in the schoolroom, will so bring up their children that they may fear God and keep His commandments.

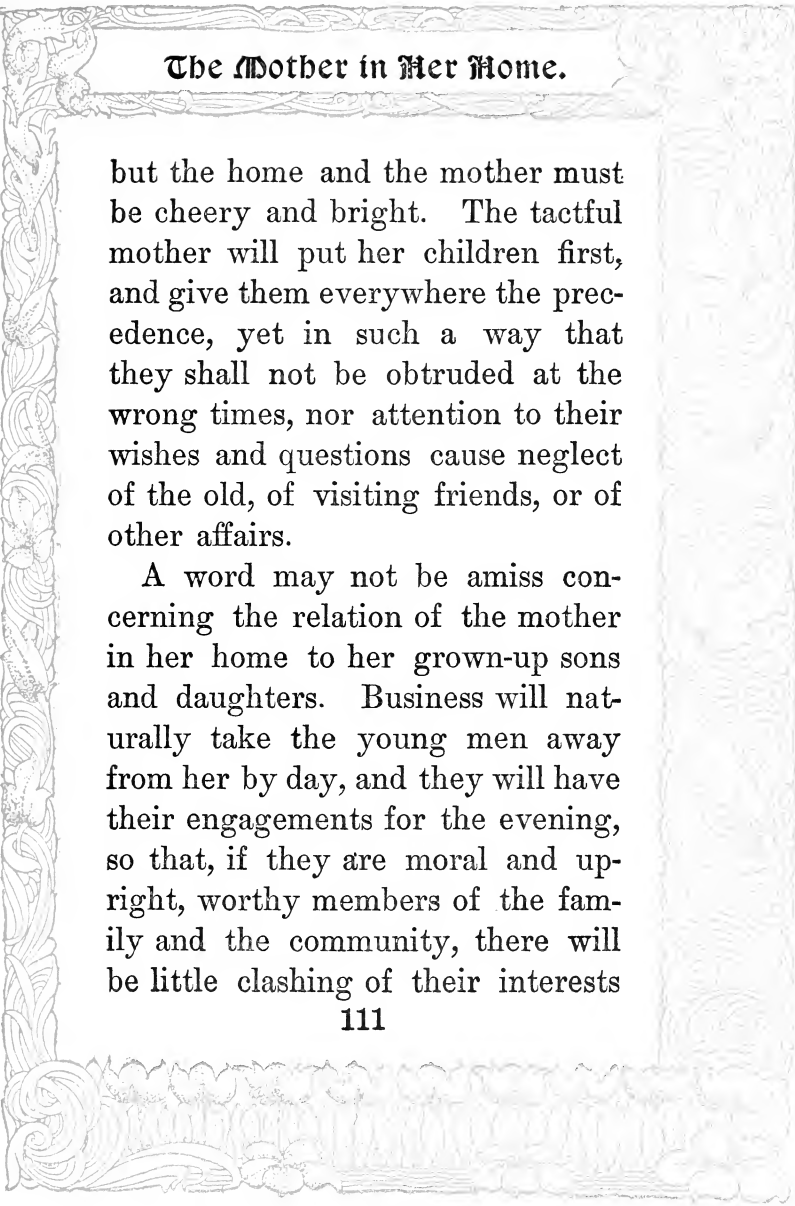
I commend to the mother in her home the keeping herself very close to her Saviour. If her whole soul is full of the sunlight of His presence, if she have the Christ-love and the Christ-life in her heart and in her face, she will certainly win her dear ones to the shelter and refuge which are so precious to her. It is the mother's highest duty and dearest privilege by example and precept and ceaseless prayer to lead her little flock into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Mothers, do not be chary of demonstration and petting to your big

Talks Between Times.

boys. It is not necessary to remind you to caress the babies ; you very likely do that to an extent detrimental to little beings who should be let alone, to grow, to be quiet, to be at peace. As the boy, reaching out of childhood's grace, pushes his awkward limbs into tallness, as his hands and feet grow big and in his way, he is very much in need of the confidence which his mother's company and her tenderness will give. Love never hurts boy or girl, though weak indulgence and foolish vacillation may.

Whatever else is crowded out, the mother must have time for her children, time to be their comrade, to be their confidante, their friend, and their guide. Frocks may be very simple, meals need not be elaborate,



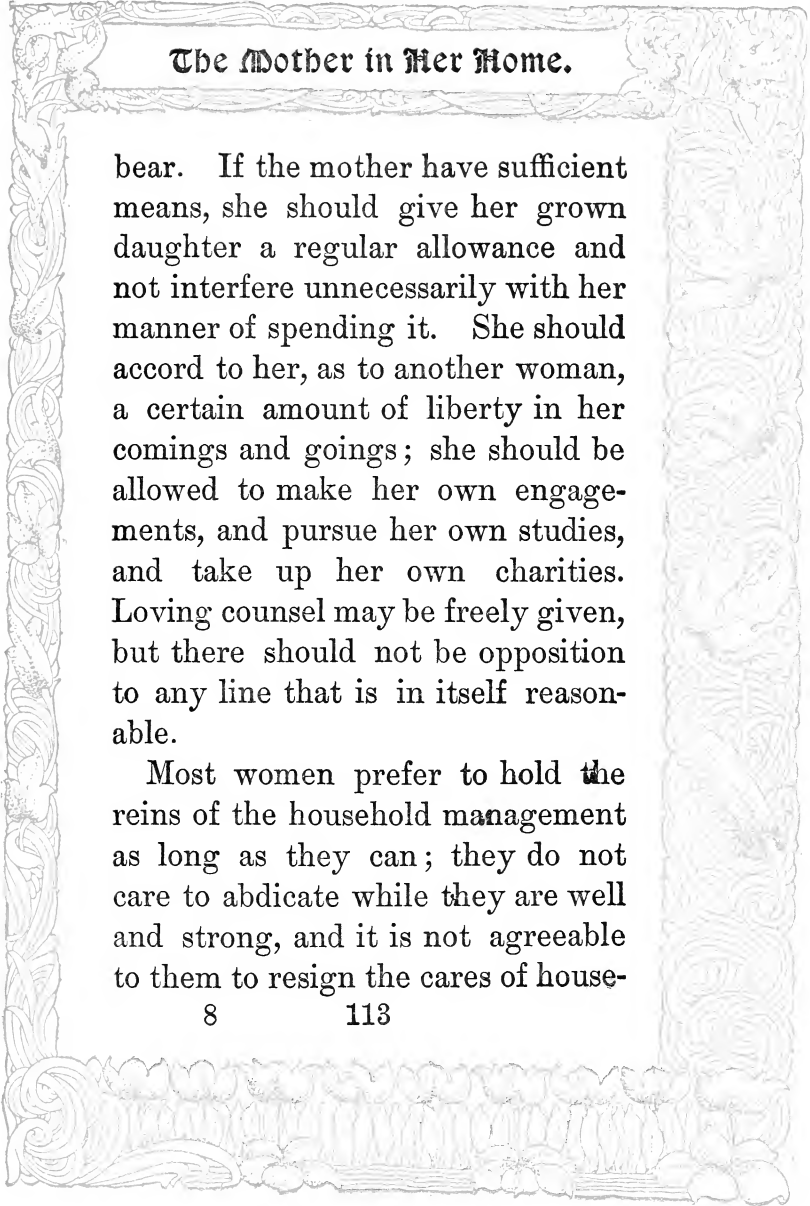
The Mother in Her Home.

but the home and the mother must be cheery and bright. The tactful mother will put her children first, and give them everywhere the precedence, yet in such a way that they shall not be obtruded at the wrong times, nor attention to their wishes and questions cause neglect of the old, of visiting friends, or of other affairs.

A word may not be amiss concerning the relation of the mother in her home to her grown-up sons and daughters. Business will naturally take the young men away from her by day, and they will have their engagements for the evening, so that, if they are moral and upright, worthy members of the family and the community, there will be little clashing of their interests

Talks Between Times.

in the household. The mother will slip into easy grooves of friendship with them, and they will defer to her, consult her, and do all they can to give her pleasure. Grown-up daughters, who are so situated that they remain at home and do not earn their own livelihood, sometimes suffer and cause their mother to suffer from the antagonism of wills, and from friction over petty annoyances. Mothers may be in the wrong in maintaining authority over grown-up daughters, who have passed the age of childhood and dependence. Girls may be forgetful of the respect and attention they owe their mother. The position is not an easy one, and there is room even in an ideal home for the use of the two old words, bear and for-



The Mother in Her Home.

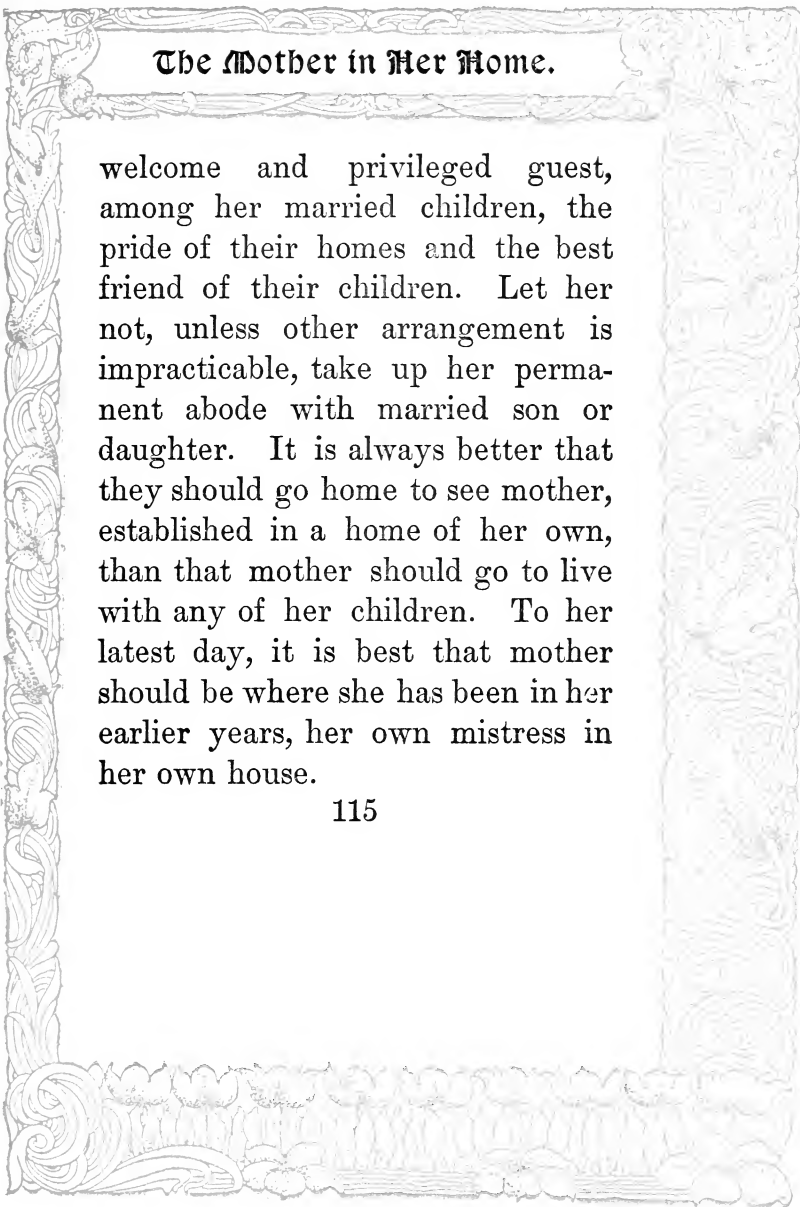
bear. If the mother have sufficient means, she should give her grown daughter a regular allowance and not interfere unnecessarily with her manner of spending it. She should accord to her, as to another woman, a certain amount of liberty in her comings and goings; she should be allowed to make her own engagements, and pursue her own studies, and take up her own charities. Loving counsel may be freely given, but there should not be opposition to any line that is in itself reasonable.

Most women prefer to hold the reins of the household management as long as they can; they do not care to abdicate while they are well and strong, and it is not agreeable to them to resign the cares of house-

Talks Between Times.

keeping to the younger hands of their daughters. Those hands seem to them inexperienced and incompetent. When a mother does determine to do this, she should give her daughter a clear field, and really leave the responsibilities with her, contented to take a place of luxurious restfulness. Now having done this, she may be a true empress dowager, with the honors, but without the burdens of earlier days. She may go about to different places, secure that her home will not need her presence. Her sphere of influence may be broadened, and an Indian Summer of repose add years to her life.

The very sweetest time of all comes to the mother, when she has silver hair, and may go about, a



The Mother in Her Home.

welcome and privileged guest, among her married children, the pride of their homes and the best friend of their children. Let her not, unless other arrangement is impracticable, take up her permanent abode with married son or daughter. It is always better that they should go home to see mother, established in a home of her own, than that mother should go to live with any of her children. To her latest day, it is best that mother should be where she has been in her earlier years, her own mistress in her own house.

Talk Eighth

❖ Our Children ❖

I ONCE knew a father, a man of high official position, wide culture and keen intellect, who, where his children were concerned, appeared to have left discretion behind him. At the table, guests were allowed to wait, while the children were helped first. The boys and girls were encouraged to converse freely with their parents and with



Our Children.

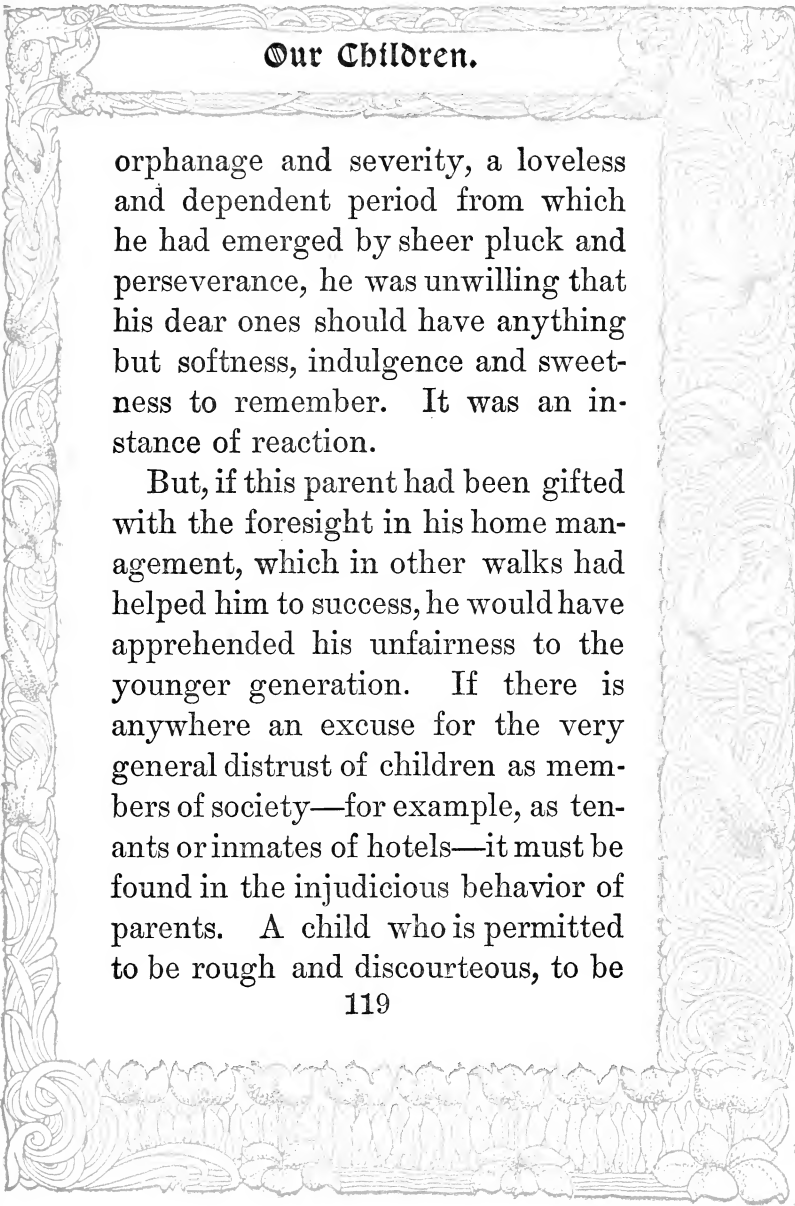
visitors ; but this, which was right, was not enough ; they were permitted to rush in and out of the drawing-room at will, noisily interrupting older people, asking questions and dinning their mother's ears with their comments, without the least reference to others. Thus they were given to understand by precept and example that the household existed for them and that theirs was the right of way. In consequence the half dozen sturdy little folk arrived at adolescence, rude, boorish, and undisciplined, as disagreeable a set of young people as could be found anywhere ; and before they could overcome the conspicuously mistaken course of their childhood and achieve the manners which ought to have been theirs by inheritance



Talks Between Times.

and training, life must have taught them many bitter lessons. Sharp are the buffets of experience, and humiliating is the position of those who must acquire with difficulty in maturity what may be learned with ease in childhood.

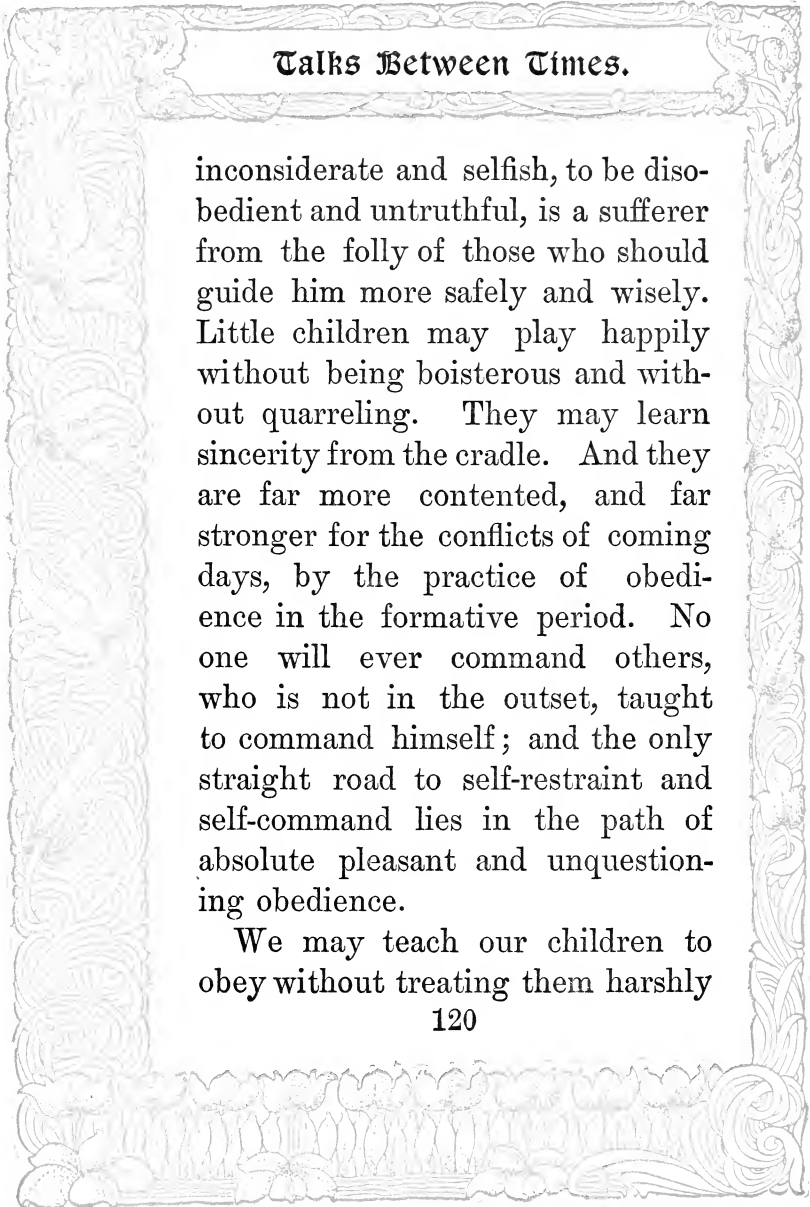
The father's point of view exaggerated not the real but the relative importance of childhood. Loving his children very tenderly, he yet did not love them wisely. He did not hesitate to say, "My life is spent in labor for my sons and daughters. My name revolves around them. They come first, and they shall have an unclouded childhood, if I can give it to them." As a farmer's lad in a sternly ordered Puritan household, this man had endured hardness, and, looking back on a dreary waste of



Our Children.

orphanage and severity, a loveless and dependent period from which he had emerged by sheer pluck and perseverance, he was unwilling that his dear ones should have anything but softness, indulgence and sweetness to remember. It was an instance of reaction.

But, if this parent had been gifted with the foresight in his home management, which in other walks had helped him to success, he would have apprehended his unfairness to the younger generation. If there is anywhere an excuse for the very general distrust of children as members of society—for example, as tenants or inmates of hotels—it must be found in the injudicious behavior of parents. A child who is permitted to be rough and discourteous, to be



Talks Between Times.

inconsiderate and selfish, to be disobedient and untruthful, is a sufferer from the folly of those who should guide him more safely and wisely. Little children may play happily without being boisterous and without quarreling. They may learn sincerity from the cradle. And they are far more contented, and far stronger for the conflicts of coming days, by the practice of obedience in the formative period. No one will ever command others, who is not in the outset, taught to command himself; and the only straight road to self-restraint and self-command lies in the path of absolute pleasant and unquestioning obedience.

We may teach our children to obey without treating them harshly



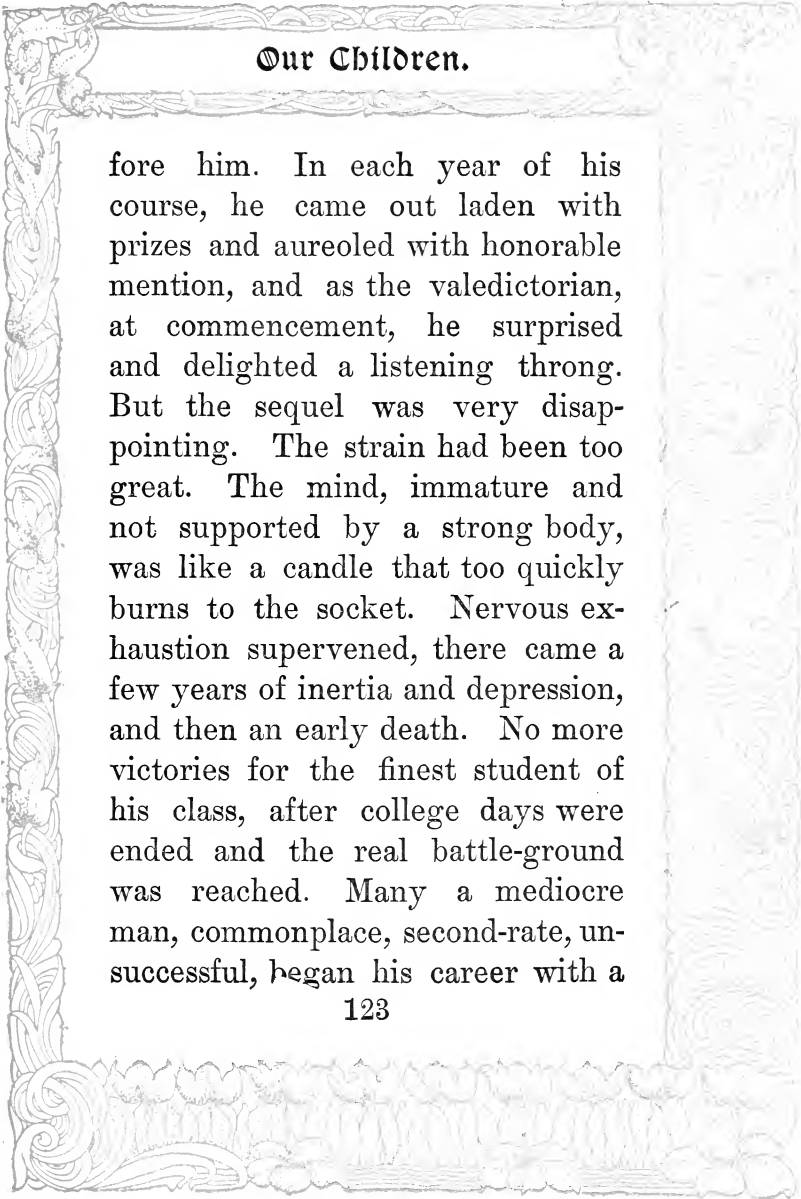
Our Children.

and without darkening their homes by scolding, fault-finding and punishment. Are we not the children of the Heavenly Father? If our lives are keyed to the melodies of heaven, there will be music without discord or jar in our households. Not because it is our will, but because it is God's will, we shall gently and yet firmly insist on obedience as the children's rule. We shall avoid threats and ill-temper, we shall think before we speak, and we shall put things in their right places. The child is our most precious earthly treasure, but the child is not ours only, he also belongs to God. To make of the child a despot, or to so train him that he is greedy, resentful, disobliging and indolent, is to be a poor an

Talks Between Times.

unfaithful steward in God's vineyard.

I sometimes fear that we are overzealous in our admiration of the clever and quickwitted child who reflects credit upon us and by whom our vanity is flattered, while we are unduly troubled about the slower child who has few triumphs in the school-room. Every child cannot attain to the hundred per cent of the school-room test, yet the child who studies faithfully, and does his best, may be as truly preparing for broad activities later on, as the other who is the pride and boast of his preceptors. Some years ago, in one of our Western colleges, a youth distinguished himself by a career of exceptional brilliance. He literally swept all be-



Our Children.

fore him. In each year of his course, he came out laden with prizes and aureoled with honorable mention, and as the valedictorian, at commencement, he surprised and delighted a listening throng. But the sequel was very disappointing. The strain had been too great. The mind, immature and not supported by a strong body, was like a candle that too quickly burns to the socket. Nervous exhaustion supervened, there came a few years of inertia and depression, and then an early death. No more victories for the finest student of his class, after college days were ended and the real battle-ground was reached. Many a mediocre man, commonplace, second-rate, unsuccessful, began his career with a

Talks Between Times.

great flourish of trumpets and was, as a child, and as a youth, of exceptional promise.

We need not exalt dullness, nor plume ourselves on the superior merits of the child who never does anything but fail. This is to whirl too far in the other direction. Our children should be held responsible for a certain amount of faithful endeavor, within the range of their powers; their aptitudes and special talents should be noted. When however they have tried and have not succeeded, we should not blame them, nor imagine that the delay is going to blight their lives.

“Oh, I love the little winner
With the medal and the mark;
He has gained the prize he sought for,
He is joyous as a lark.



Our Children.

Everyone will haste to praise him,
He is on the honor list;
I've a tender thought of pity
For the one who tried and missed."

Never let us fail to emphasize the motive in childlife. Never let us be slow to praise the honest wholehearted effort. And let there be in our hearts no despair of the dull child who is a plodder. The world's greatest edifices are built, stone upon stone. In the long run, the plodder often surpasses his neighbor whose progress at the outset is swifter, but who does not pause to let the power within him have full development.

In nothing do we need to exercise more discretion than in the training we impart to children in matters of finance. A tendency of some thoughtless parents is to un-

Talks Between Times.

duly praise the child who shows signs of thrift, or who, as a little trader, in the way of bargains and exchanges, always gets the better of his fellows.

“Frank sold his pet dog,” said a mother, not long ago, “to a lady who took a fancy to the little creature and he made a good thing of it. The dog is really worth nothing, except to a person who is fond of him, but Frank saw that Mrs. H. was willing to pay a good price, so he asked ten dollars. Poor Fido was so distressed to go away, but Frank looked at the ten dollars and was soon consoled for his loss.” In my opinion, in this transaction, the beast was nobler than the boy, and more capable of true friendship. Had Frank sold his



Our Children.

dog that a sick mother might have had relief from its barking or that a family in poverty might have been assisted, the deed would not have been ignoble. As it was, the sale being only a proof of the existence in the boy's heart of that evil plant, a *love* of money, it was a sign to deplore, not to exploit.

"I have taken a bad quarter-dollar," said Johnny, running into the room where his mother was chatting with a friend. "You have?" said the mother, in deep concern. "Well, you must either get rid of it, my son, or lose it from your allowance, to pay you for being so careless." The child, having thus been instructed in dishonesty by maternal lips, hurried away, crest-fallen but resolute. Ere long he

Talks Between Times.

returned with flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes. "I've passed it, Mother," he said. "I jumped on a street car, and the conductor gave me five nickles for it. Isn't that fortunate?" The mother smiled approval. Little did she dream that she was giving her child initiation into the great company of rogues and swindlers, that she had actually broken down for him an ethical standard, and paved the way for him hereafter to win money at any price. The person who passes a counterfeit coin knowingly, and with intention, cheats somebody, and somebody at the other end of the social chain will be a loser. The person who deliberately makes a good bargain, to the detriment of some one else,



Our Children.

may possess the commercial instinct, but morally he stands on the same plane with the midnight thief and is but little more respectable.

Our children should be early taught that money implies stewardship. An opportunity occurs to suggest this in the pennies or bits of silver which are dropped in the missionary box at the Sunday-school. Sometimes children have the impression that this money goes to their teachers; often they think little about it, and do not feel that it is *theirs*, because their only part is in carrying it and putting it in the plate or box. If a child has its own regular allowance, and from this, gives regularly to the poor, or to the church, or the mis-



Talks Between Times.

sionary cause, an indispensable part of Christian education is then begun.

Our children live in an age when the Sabbath is not strictly observed by many, and when even Christian people permit themselves larger license than formerly with reference to the Lord's day. Where once, no child felt that Sunday afternoon or evening could be taken to prepare Monday's school-work, now hosts of children and young people, as a matter of course, defer the study of the weekly lessons of geography, history and arithmetic to the holy time. You remonstrate, and are answered that Saturday is their only play-time. The change is significant of a lowering of tone in Christian practice, and



Our Children.

is sorrowful as prophetic of a further decline in the future.

Family life should be happy, yet if troubles and trials come, it is not always possible to exclude all knowledge of them from the children. Nor is it quite fair to older children to keep them in ignorance of straits which are taxing the family purse. They should be admitted to their parents' confidence. A son or daughter on the edge of grown-up life will not abuse such revelations, and if able only to assist by sympathy, the sympathy will be welcome. For daily happiness there is no recipe like plenty of home sunshine. Look ever on the bright side. Be frugal of complaint, but generous in caresses. Make the best of disappointment and hard-



Talks Between Times.

ship and form the habit of anticipating something pleasant just ahead.

Those who are childless are to be pitied when their feet are on the westering slope. For, if one be taken, the other will be left, and great must be the loneliness then. It would seem that they to whom God sends no children should adopt one or more, so that in the last days, their lives should be cheered by the courage and brightened by the kindness of those over whom they had tended in earlier times. Being possessed of a loving heart, any of us may mother the child who is orphaned ; and may succor the one who is unfriended and solitary.

Our Lord said "Suffer the little ones to come unto me, and forbid



Our Children.

them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." We sometimes forget that the place of the lambs is in the Good Shepherd's fold, and we do not consecrate them to Him and train them for him; nor are we ready to accept their early consecration as we might. Surely nowhere are children so safe and so well-placed for two worlds as in the Church of Christ.

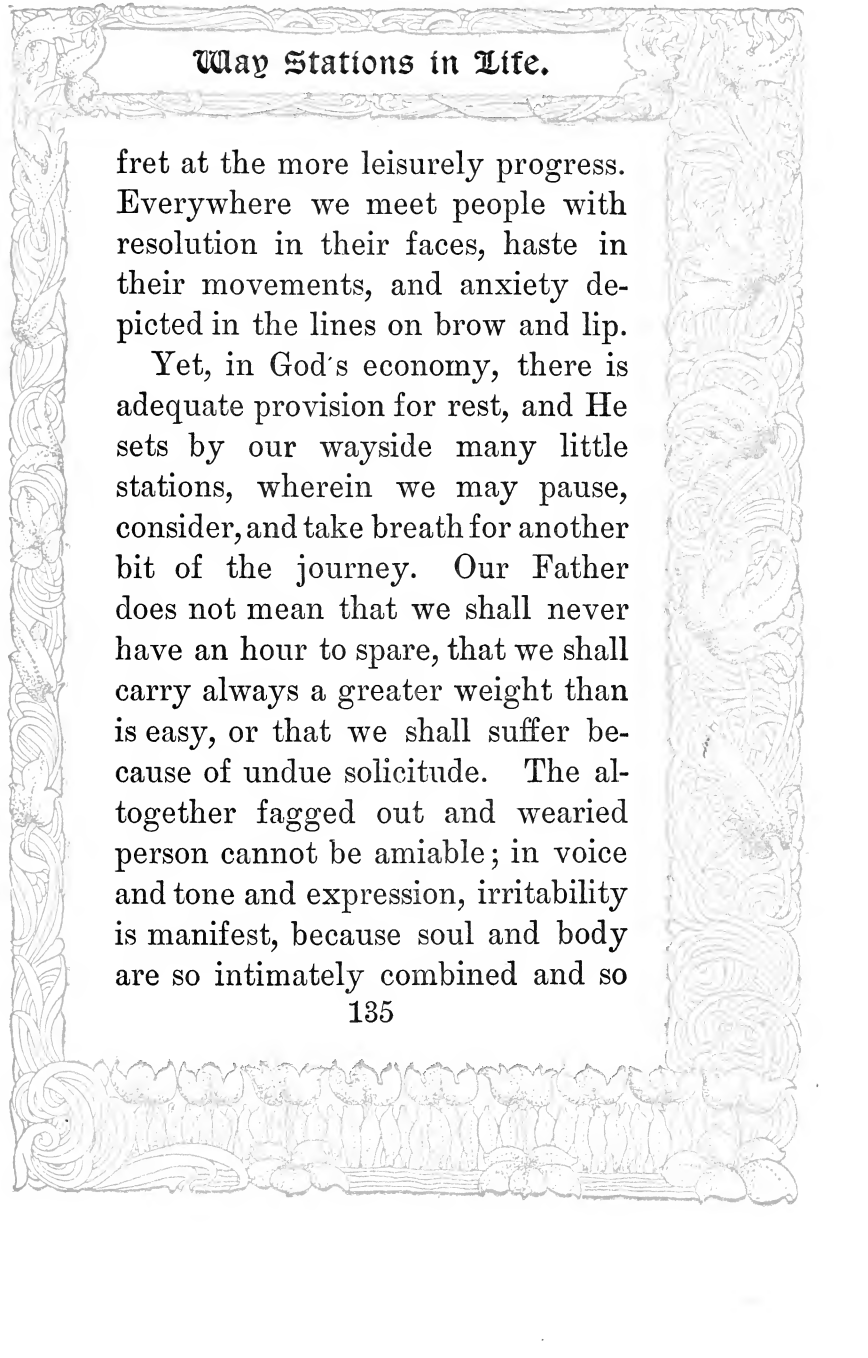


Talk Ninth



Way Stations ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ in Life

In our hurrying and complex activities we of this age are apt to be impatient of delays. When we take a train, we seek an express, which shall rush from outset to terminal with as few stops as are practicable. If by reason of circumstances we find ourselves obliged to travel on an accommodation train, we lament the necessity, and are disposed to



Way Stations in Life.

fret at the more leisurely progress. Everywhere we meet people with resolution in their faces, haste in their movements, and anxiety depicted in the lines on brow and lip.

Yet, in God's economy, there is adequate provision for rest, and He sets by our wayside many little stations, wherein we may pause, consider, and take breath for another bit of the journey. Our Father does not mean that we shall never have an hour to spare, that we shall carry always a greater weight than is easy, or that we shall suffer because of undue solicitude. The altogether fagged out and wearied person cannot be amiable; in voice and tone and expression, irritability is manifest, because soul and body are so intimately combined and so

Talks Between Times.

curiously interwoven, that the former cannot soar while the latter hangs upon it as a clog. The ethereal portion often lifts and stimulates the material, it is true, but, correspondingly, the grosser nature at times depresses and enervates the spiritual. Our Lord beholds this condition, inseparable from our humanity, and He often bids us retire to the desert silence and find peace in communion with him.

One of the little way stations we may make for ourselves wherever we happen to be. In the crowd, with strangers passing to and fro, in the kitchen with dinners to get and lowly tasks to pursue for the comfort of our loved ones, in the drawing-room among friends and acquaintances, it is possible now and

Way Stations in Life.

then, for a moment or two, to cultivate a habit of ejaculatory prayer. The petition may not be audibly worded. It may simply be spoken in the sanctuary of the heart; but for that instant, for the time it takes to send a thought heavenward, the world around us retires and we are alone with the Father, in whom is the perfection of tranquillity.

This is our briefest stopping-place. A station for longer waiting and more conscious enjoyment is that over which we write, **THE MORNING WATCH**, or **THE EVENING WATCH**.

A good man recently went home to stay forever in the immediate presence of the Master whom he had served for many years. Being busy and obliged to work for long

Talks Between Times.

hours of every day, beginning early and ending late, he said that he more than ever needed his quiet time with Christ; therefore he rose with the intention to secure his extra half hour in the dawn, and he did not go to bed until he had observed the same season at night. The Bible read and studied consecutively, the unhurried season of prayer, gave the disciple strength for every duty and life took on for him a great content.

Often we awaken in the morning with a sense of oppression, of bondage; there is so much before us. The daughter's frocks must be finished for her summer outing, or her graduation gown—white and shimmering, frilled and tucked and ruffled—is as burdensome in prospect

Way Stations in Life.

to a tired mother as if it were a mountain she had to climb. Some of us are cramped by limited means. We never lose the shadow and the cloud of poverty. Resources are not equal to the demands made upon them. The husband is out of work, or his position is precarious. Some business necessity has reduced the son's salary.

Here, dear friend, is one of the situations in which you need the comfort and the sustaining power of the morning watch. Stop at the station of the cross, and tell the patient Saviour how the work overwhelms and the worry distresses you. Stop long enough to pour out the whole story. He, who takes care of the robin and the bluebird and the swallow, whose hand holds

Talks Between Times.

the little nest safe on the topmost bough, and keeps the planets in their orbits, will take care of you, and will somehow guide you into a safe and smooth haven if you can but confidently trust your barque of life to him.

He may show you as you kneel that you are wasting and misdirecting your efforts; he may convince you that there is for you and for the children of the home a more excellent way. He can and will make sufficient for you the loaf and the cup; he can, in temporal matters, give you assistance, as in spiritual concerns. We are much too prone to limit our Lord in affairs of earthly need and requirement. He is able to help in small as in great things. No time is lost which is spent in

Way Stations in Life.

prayer, and nothing is poorer economy than to cut off the morning and evening watch that we may get to the worldly business, or the inviting social pleasure.

There is a way station arched and garlanded and inscribed in characters of living light, SONGS OF PRAISE. But oh! beloved, do we not all need a reminder of the blessedness of this home of the happy heart. It is well for us to prepare for enjoyment here, by committing to memory a store of hymns and psalms, so that when we have special occasion for gratitude the anthem of praise may spontaneously suggest itself to us; so, too, that when we would console and occupy ourselves on a sleepless night, the stanzas of melody may recur to us with silvery

Talks Between Times.

music. Gratitude is not a plant indigenous to the soil in human nature. Rather, is it an exotic of heavenly birth, the seeds dropped into the heart by the vigilant angels who are ever ministering spirits around our paths. Gratitude may be cultivated. The oftener we give God thanks, the more we shall find for which to thank him. Count the mercies, and recount them, and thus ascertain how far they outnumber the sorrows, pangs, and losses. And then, forget not that pangs and losses are often mercies too, for

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

The way-station labelled ILLNESS is less eagerly welcomed, less resignedly accepted than any other, for illness brings with it a forced

Way Stations in Life.

respite which we seldom want. Also in its train stalk fever, gaunt and cruel; weakness, drooping and dependent; pain, racking and poignant, clutched by the relentless hand of a severe illness. The statesman becomes as helpless as a child, the judge and the general are, physically, on a level with the prisoner at the bar and the raw recruit in the ranks. A hushed and narrow world is that of the sick chamber, where nurses move softly about, where the doctor comes with his cheerful, inscrutable countenance, where death and life meet and wage battle over the form of one who can do little except play the part of prostrate victim. Yet even here the unresisting, child-like, trusting attitude of the Christian often assists the nurse

Talks Between Times.

and physician, and aids in routing the morbid condition and building up vitality.

When we are set down at the way-station of CONVALESCENCE, we have new views of the beauty of earth, and a new comprehension of the compassionate tenderness of our friends and kindred. In the hurly-burly of robust health we may have been doubtful of the love of some of those nearest us, a love that was lacking in demonstration, a love that failed to make itself felt from day to day in a thousand little caressing ways and gentle amenities. But sickness touches a chord which vibrates and sets in motion many harmonies. The sight of the strong man laid low, of the energetic woman laid aside, is very touching



Way Stations in Life.

to those who have never associated anything but vigor and capability with these master spirits, and their pitying affection prompts them to make the situation bearable by every tender sign and token. Flowers and fruit, dainties and delicacies, are sent to alleviate the tedium and invite the appetite of the convalescent, and friends come in with cheering words and loving smiles. As one gains in health and gradually returns to the old routine, there is often a rebuilding of tissues and a large return of capacity, almost like a renewing of youth, due to the burning out of old and effete matter, and the renovation of the whole man.

The station to which we must all tend, the booth crowned with

Talks Between Times.

sheaves of wheat and green with branches of palm, is marked OLD AGE. Why some of us survey this so reluctantly, why we dread it and defer our arrival to it, would be puzzling and might baffle conjecture and solution, if it were not that we confound old age with senility. The one is ripe experience, robust maturity, and mellow toleration with the mistakes of youth. It is the full-blown rose, as beautiful as the folded bud, no petal loosened, no perfume lacking. The other is withered, ineffective and disintegrated life, and may well be regarded with something akin to repugnance. Age is, as Browning shows so beautifully in his magnificent lyric Rabbi Ben Ezra,

“The last of life, for which the first was made.”



Way Stations in Life.

People who continue to grow, who continue to take a vivid interest in the common days, and to serve their generation, need fear neither age nor decadence. To them the halting place of OLD AGE is an umpire's seat whence they may dispense favors and award prizes; or as a seat of dignity on the edge of the throng, where whoever has the right to occupation has the accompaniment of command and of power.

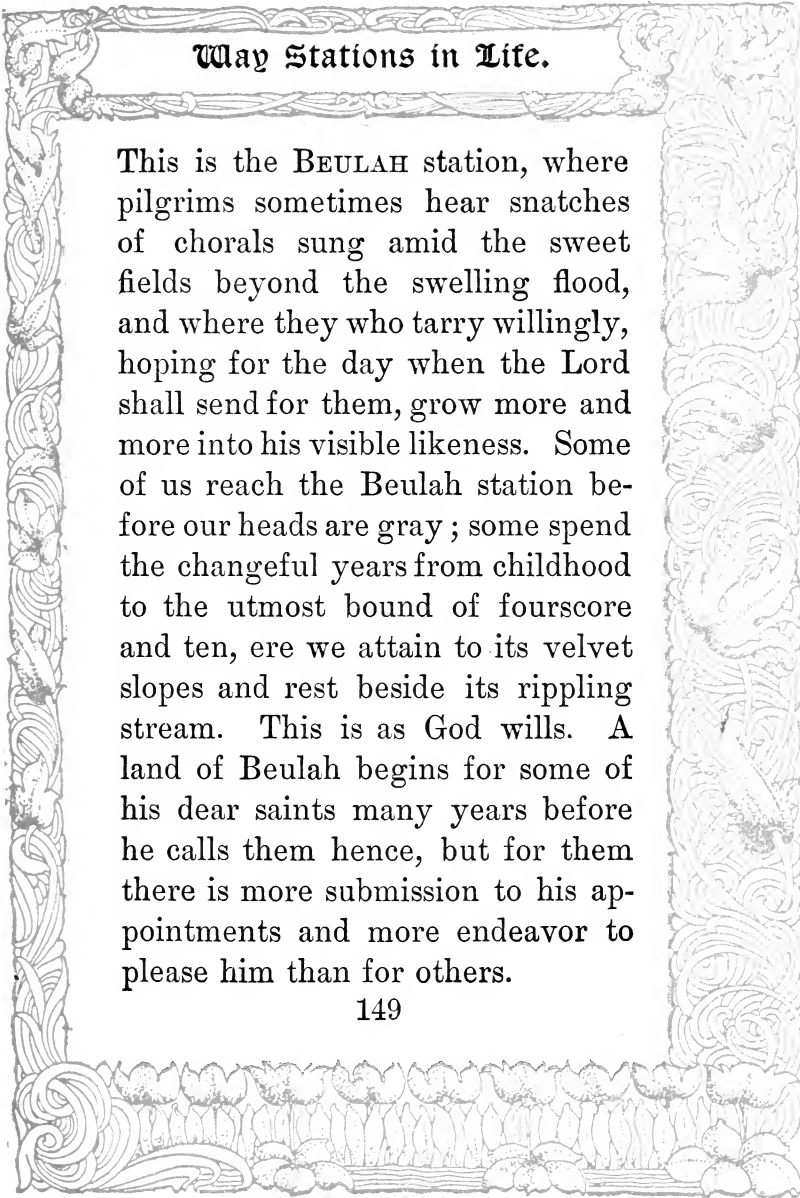
Every period of life has its own charms, and though age may have surrendered the soft coloring and pliant grace of an earlier day, its benignity and composure are of not inferior attractiveness. Could we but remember that we are moulding our faces, that from youth to mid-



Talks Between Times.

dle life, and thence to age, we are daily impressing upon our countenances the character of the inner life, so that every old face is both a revelation and a history, we should be more careful than we are about the dispositions we carry with us. Our exclamations of anger, our frowns, our provocation at trifles, all assist in forming the lineaments of our countenances. Wrinkles are not unbecoming, but the fretful lines and the puckered marks of contention, avarice and unkindness are disfiguring to the young, and almost ineradicable in the old.

We come to a beautiful waystation at the borderland where the air grows thin and clear, and on bright days we catch a glimpse of the shining ones over the river.



Way Stations in Life.

This is the BEULAH station, where pilgrims sometimes hear snatches of chorals sung amid the sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, and where they who tarry willingly, hoping for the day when the Lord shall send for them, grow more and more into his visible likeness. Some of us reach the Beulah station before our heads are gray ; some spend the changeful years from childhood to the utmost bound of fourscore and ten, ere we attain to its velvet slopes and rest beside its rippling stream. This is as God wills. A land of Beulah begins for some of his dear saints many years before he calls them hence, but for them there is more submission to his appointments and more endeavor to please him than for others.

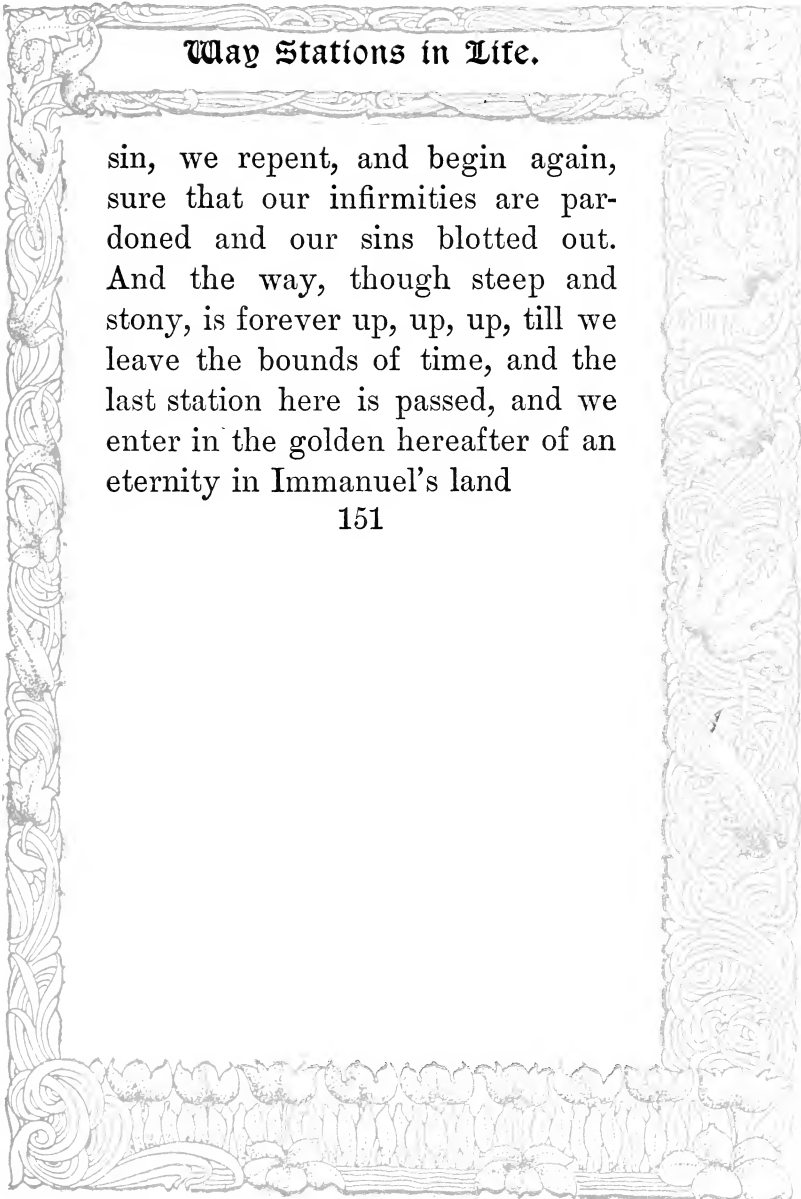


Talks Between Times.

“ Lord, when thou wilt, and as thou wilt,
Work thou thy will in me;
I trust in that atoning blood
Which was outpoured, a crimson flood
On awesome Calvary.”

For any of us can there be on the road of life a sweeter fruition than to learn God's will, and to dwell within it, as in a secure abode? Not to make exceptions, not to choose, not to murmur, not to strain at the leash, but to feel in every pore of being and in every conscious breath, that God's will is best, and that it is joy and gladness to be used as God pleases.

So living, we can never know defeat or disappointment. Failure on the earthly side may be success on the heavenly side. If we stumble, we are aware of a hand that was pierced swift to uplift us. If we



Way Stations in Life.

sin, we repent, and begin again,
sure that our infirmities are par-
doned and our sins blotted out.
And the way, though steep and
stony, is forever up, up, up, till we
leave the bounds of time, and the
last station here is passed, and we
enter in the golden hereafter of an
eternity in Immanuel's land

JUN 21 1902

OCT 11 1901

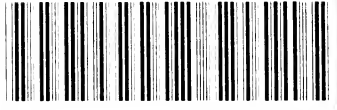
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BV
US

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 043 784 6

