

The Orphans' Friend.

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From the Companion.
IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN IT.

'O mother, Mary Craig is dead!
'What, not the young girl whose clothes you made sport of?'

'Yes. If I had only known it,' sobbed the young girl, 'I never would have spoken as I did!'

'You never should have spoken as you did without knowing it,' said Mrs. Ray, 'and I think you have cause for tears over your heartlessness towards that poor girl. I have no doubt her school-days were made wretched.'

'I did not mean to be heartless.'

'You certainly did not mean to be kind or noble. Think of happy girls taunting the unfortunate.'

'I did not know she was so poor, mother.'

'You certainly did not mistake the girl for one in comfortable circumstances?'

'I thought maybe her mother was only stingy, and made her dress poorly to save money.'

'Then the girl needed your pity all the more, if unnecessary meanness instead of real poverty forced her to appear so poorly clad among well-dressed girls.'

'O dear! why won't you help me to find some excuse for myself, mother?'

'Because there is none, my child. A young girl who had such a thirst for knowledge as to go to school through great difficulties, ought to have been helped and cheered on by others.'

'If I had only known it!' sobbed Helen Ray.

'There is always something we do not know in the circumstances as well as in the hearts of others, and therefore we should not judge them hastily or harshly.'

'Isn't there anything we can do now, mother, to atone for this? asked the weeping girl.'

'You cannot wake the dead, Helen.'

'No, but the poor mother is living.'

'Yes, you can go there and confess your meanness to her, and give her some money and words of comfort.'

'Why, mother, I wouldn't look in her eyes for the world and tell her my name. I know she hates and despises me!' sobbed Helen Ray.

'Then all I can do is to send her a little money without the name you are ashamed of. We can never atone for past unkindnesses, but we can learn lessons for the future. We can never repay any one for tears we have caused them to shed.'

'Will you go to Mrs. Craig's and see if she needs anything?'

'Yes, I will do all I can for her, but I must not tell her whose mother I am?'

'No.'

Mary Craig was the child of a mother who had been very gently reared, and who, till Mary was ten years old, had been surrounded by the ordinary comforts of life. But, her father being dead, she was left alone and poor at her husband's death.

She was one of those sorely-wronged women, whom injudicious love suffers to grow up in this world of change without any way to make their honest bread.

It had been regarded in her circle, and in her father's family, as not genteel to be efficient in ordinary work that every woman ought to be acquainted with; and so she was left at the mercy of evil winds, when the strong arm that had upheld her was taken away.

'I told you so!' said some one who had advised her to marry a rich man she did not love, instead of a poor one she did love.

'That comes of having one's own way, instead of taking advice from older and wiser folks,' said another.

'They should have said, 'That comes of being brought up like a butterfly, with no thought of a human being's responsibility for her own and others' good.'

But Mrs. Craig had a Christian principle. So she put her hand to the first thing she heard of, and trusted in the God of the widow.

A neighbor had taught her to finish pantaloons,—a business to beginners as nearly like doing nothing as anything well can be.

But she had struggled on, getting more and more expert, till, with Mary's help out of school, she had kept the sharp-toothed wolf, poverty, at bay for some time.

She had resolved, even though they should both be shabby, and she herself sometimes hungry, that Mary should have the best education the Boston schools could give, and rarely had she been forced to keep her a half-day from school.

The very poor have great advantages in mingling, as they do at school, with well-bred children from the higher walks of life. But their sky is not always rose-colored. Sometimes ill-bred, well-dressed girls gather in groups, whispering and looking over their shoulders at the faded dresses and well-worn shoes of their less fortunate schoolmates. Thus sensitive children sometimes suffer greatly in their feelings from the thoughtless, who in the end receive the greater wrong in their own hearts.

There are two classes of poor people, who in their attempt either to hide poverty or to sham gentility, are very apt to draw on them the ridicule of the heartless,—the refined, who struggle in vain to gratify their taste, and the vulgar, who make up in coarseness and gaudiness of attire what they lack in style.

Mary Craig belonged to the first class. Never a copper went from her poor store for ribbon, or lace, or mock jewelry; but if, in making a garment, she could get the 'cut' and the various little graces which every new season brings, but which have no name, she was sure to get them.

If she appeared in a new twenty-five-cent alpaca, the first impression was that she was well-dressed; but the eagle eyes of some school-girls soon unraveled the mystery which veiled the thin fabric. If Betsy Jones or Hannah Hodges appeared at school joyous in a new 'delaine,' redolent with cabbage roses and red morning-glories, with blue ribbon on their hair, and scarlet beads on their necks, such girls took their

revenge on vulgar poverty by getting sport out of them. They even brought offerings of cast-off finery, to the great delight of those happy and unconscious girls, and got fresh sport in seeing them worn with airs of pride, and with smiles of gratitude.

But such girls as Mary Craig, who never gazed at their fine clothes in either admiration or envy, afforded them 'fun' another way. They laughed at their dignified mien, and their satisfaction with all they owned; and they gave them significant names.

Mary Craig, who had never been seen at school in a bright dress, they styled the 'Countess Alpaca,' daughter of the 'Duchess de la Pants.'

This sarcasm was cutting as a knife, but she bore it very meekly, and bent herself with increasing energy to the work before her, cheered and encouraged by the sympathy and gentle courtesy of a large class of noble-hearted schoolmates.

Helen Ray was a boisterous little hoyden, who often forgot in her glee the lessons of love and pity she daily received from her mother. She was not a cruel girl; indeed, she was kind-hearted, in a certain sense. If she knew that any one near her was cold or hungry, she could not sleep till she had relieved them; and she was always ready to do a favor to any one in the family or the neighborhood. But if there was 'a chance for fun,' everything else was lost sight of.

Mary Craig was a tall, frail girl, with sad, gray eyes, and cheeks tinged with a feverish red. She was full of energy, and never rested an hour from sunrise till ten or eleven o'clock at night; and no matter how sick or weary she might be, she never complained.

Just before the time of which we are writing, Mary had been ill for some days. When she returned to school, she had on a new alpaca dress, prettily made. Of course, the conclusion of some heartless girls was that she had shammed sickness for the sake of making a dress she could not otherwise have found time to make.

At recess Helen Ray joined Mary, and said, with a sly glance at her companions, 'What a lovely dress this is! You always have such rich alpacas. They are of the brand 'Everlasting,' I think.'

Mary Craig looked into the young girl's eyes as if to read her thoughts, and then burst into tears, exclaiming, 'O don't! I'm so tired and so sick; I can't endure it to-day.'

Helen's cheeks turned scarlet, and some one said, 'Aren't you ashamed, Helen?' She walked away, resolving in her heart that as soon as she could see Mary Craig alone, she would tell her that she meant no unkindness, but was 'only in fun!'

But she did not see her alone that day. The next ten days she was absent, and then came the news that she was dead!

On the evening of that never-to-be-forgotten day on which she had so cruelly wounded the poor girl's feelings, Helen Ray was so troubled that she confessed her

cruelty to her mother. The only comfort she got from her was a plain rebuke, and a charge to confess the wrong, and ask pardon the first time she saw Mary Craig.

They never met again. All the atonement Helen could ever make was to urge her mother to visit Mrs. Craig and offer her sympathy and aid, and to apologize, if possible, for her meanness to the dead.

Her regrets were only deepened, by learning that the sensitive girl had spared her mother the pain of knowing what she had endured from her heartless schoolmates, but had only told her of the kindness she had received from other scholars. Helen would have given all she had for the praises in which the widow spoke of a few young girls who had cast sunbeams on the dark pathway of her child. But it was too late now to recall the past, utterly unavailing to repeat, as she did again and again, 'If I had only known how poor and how sick she was, I would have done anything for her. I would not have grieved her for the world!'

We really 'know' very little of what is buried in the homes and the hearts around us; and if we would spare suffering to others, and save ourselves from sin and regret, we must always bear this in mind; and the surest way to do this is to obey the commands of God by loving our neighbor as ourselves.

A Story for the Girls.

Sit down on the porch children, and let me tell you about aunt Rachel, and the story she once told me. One day when I was about twelve years old, I planned to go after strawberries, but aunt Rachel said to me: 'A girl of your age should begin to learn how to do house work. Take off your hat, roll up your sleeves, and help me do the baking.'

I pouted and sighed, and shed tears, but was encouraged by the promise that I might go after the baking. Under good aunt Rachel's direction I mixed a big loaf of bread, placed it on a tin as bright as a new dollar, and was rubbing the flour off my hands when she called out, 'This will never, never do, child—you haven't scraped your bread bowl clean.'

I shall never forget the picture she made standing there, her eyes regarding me sternly, one hand resting on her hip, while in the other she held the untidy bowl.

'It will never do, child,' she went on, 'it is not only untidy, but it makes two much waste; to be a good housekeeper, you must learn to be economical. You have heard the story of the young man who wanted an economical wife?'

'No,' I answered, and I might have added that I didn't wish to hear it either.

'Well,' she continued, 'he was a very likely young man and he wanted a careful wife, so he thought of a way he could find out. One morning he went to call upon the different girls of his acquaintance and asked them each for the scrapings of their bread bowls to feed his horses. You see they all wanted him, so

they got all they could for him. Finally, he found a girl who hadn't any, so he asked her to be his wife, because he thought she must be economical. "Now," said aunt Rachel, triumphantly, 'suppose a young man should ask you for the scrapings of your bread-bowl, what could you say?'

'What could I say?' I repeated scornfully. 'Why, I'd tell him if he couldn't afford to buy oats for his horses they might starve. I wouldn't rob the pig to feed them.'

I suppose aunt Rachel thought that lesson lost on me; but as true as you live, I never knead the bread to this day without thinking of her lesson in economy.—*Detroit Free Press.*

A Mother's Counsel.

Mary Clarke, wife of the learned Adam Clarke, was the mother of six sons and six daughters, and the love she bore them would astonish many in these days. To one of her sons she wrote the following words;

'Do nothing carelessly, and then, I venture to say, that, with the ability you have, you will do most things well. Be exact in all you do, nor let the least matter go unexamined. In your reading, too, investigate your subject, and be not satisfied with skimming on the surface of things, nor make an attempt to grasp the whole without attending to every part in order. Paying attention to particulars, as well as to generalities, will, by degrees, give you a habit of mental observation, while at the same time it will deepen your knowledge. Do not forget to bare your head and your heart in private before God, that he may grant you his grace and direct all your future path in life.'

NORTH CAROLINA.—It is said "that the first Anglo-Saxon anchor which rested upon the Atlantic coast was in 1557, on the sandy beach of North Carolina; that the first American manifesto against the encroachments of power was made in 1678, in North Carolina; that the first battle which was fought in defence of American liberty was on the 16th of May, 1771, in North Carolina; that the first declaration of independence in any one of the American colonies was made on the 20th of May, 1775, by the patriots of Mecklenburg, in North Carolina; that the first instructions given to delegates to declare for independence in the Continental Congress were given on the 12th of April, 1776, to delegates from North Carolina; that the first blow which turned the tide of disaster and stamped the seal of independence, was mainly struck by North Carolina; and that upon the soil of North Carolina, and partly by her own sons, the blow was struck which put the capture of Yorktown into the hands of Washington, and thus ended this struggle in a blaze of glory."—*Mary'sboro Enquirer.*

An editor in Michigan, talking of corn professes to have a couple of ears fifteen inches long. Some folks are remarkable for the length of their ears.