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The Mystic Thread of Life.

There is a mystic thread of life
So dearly wreath'd with mine alone,
That destiny's relentless knife
At once must sever both or none.

There is a form on which these eyes
Have often gazed with fond delight;
By day that form their joys supplies,
And dreams restore it through the night.

There is a voice whose tones inspire
Such thrills of rapture through my breast;
I would not hear a seraph choir
Unless that voice could join the rest.

There is a face whose blushes tell
Affection's tale upon the cheek;
But, pallid at one fond farewell,
Proclaims more love than words can speak.

There is a lip which mine hath pressed,
And none had ever pressed before,
It vow'd to make me sweetly blest,
And mine—mine only—pressed it more.

There is a bosom—all my own—
Hath pillowed oft this aching
A mouth which smiles on me alone,
An eye whose tears will mine are shed.

There are two hearts whose movements thrill
In unison so closely sweet!
That, pulse to pulse responsive still,
They both must heave—or cease to beat.

There are two souls whose equal flow
In gentle streams so calmly run,
That when they part—they part!—ah, no!
They cannot part—those souls are one.

BRADY.

An Easter Story.

BY MRS. M. F. BUTTS.

Aunt Grace always makes great account of Easter Sunday. For weeks before this day of days, quiet, careful preparation is made, and nothing is allowed to mar its joy and serenity.

"Aunty," said I, one brisk March morning, "why is it that you celebrate Easter in such a peculiar way? One would think it was a birthday, wedding-day, and all other days put together."

"So it is, dear, so it is," she replied, looking dreamily out at the dull landscape; "I was truly born, and truly married, and, I may say, I truly died, one blessed Easter day."

"Born, married, and died—all on the same day! Well, I should call that an experience. Suppose you tell me all about it," and I drew Aunt Grace to an immense easy-chair, in front of a cheerful grate fire, and seated myself at her feet.

"Well, child," she replied, "bring me your uncle's shirt from my work-basket. I like to have something in my hand while I am talking."

"I don't, if the talk is worth anything," I said, bringing the shirt, basket and all.

"You belong to a generation that doesn't like to work with its hands," said aunty, smiling, and beginning to stitch rapidly.

"That is, because we work so much with our heads. But please begin your story; somebody will interrupt us within ten minutes."

"I am going to tell you of an experience," said aunt Grace, "that I rarely ever speak of in these happy days; and I could not bring myself to the task of unveiling it to you, did I not think it would be of value. In three months you will be a wife, and will enter upon the same path where I stumbled and came near falling utterly."

"You, aunty?" I exclaimed, opening my eyes, and concentrating my attention. But she was already in the past, and did not notice my surprise.

"Your uncle John and I," she said, "were what people called madly in love with each other. We were direct opposites, and found a world of fresh and vivid interest in each other's society:—We were absolutely unhappy together, and could not imagine that any change could ever come. It seemed perfectly logical to conclude that marriage would only increase our joy, and never did a man and woman take upon themselves the vows of eternal fidelity more willingly than John and I."

Aunty paused for a minute, let her hands fall idly in her lap, and gazed into the fire. Presently she said: "Annie" (that's my name), "don't forget this: The more chance there is for happiness, the more chance for misery. The most exquisite flowers need the most careful training. This rare blossom of love had opened for us, but were we wise enough to preserve its purity and beauty?

"To begin with, we knew nothing of our own real natures, and nothing of each other. John was gay, jovial, fond of society, susceptible; he required beauty, and warmth, and brightness in his heart-world. I was imaginative, dreamy, reflective; inclined to solitude at times; willing to make every sacrifice for those I loved, but averse to sharing my treasures with the outward world.—Before we were engaged, John had always had a troop of young men about him; he was their leader and oracle; their friend and brother. He supplied the impecunious one with money, and the dull ones with brains; he let the lazy ones hang upon him, and never could find courage to set a fellow adrift. His heart was so tender, that it could not resist an appeal to its kindness.

"You can easily see the attraction that we had for each other. He represented sunshine, music, jollity, society, into which I could step at will from my own still, thoughtful sphere. I represented a quiet, peaceful retreat, where he could retire and rest fully from the dazzle and noise that attended his life. Because each was so intense in certain qualities, so lacking in others, our relations became the more intimate. I believe this fitting of qualities to be the harmony that makes love; but if these opposite qualities clash, heaven is turned into hell.

"The first coldness between John and myself was occasioned by his friendship for a young man whom I considered coarse and unworthy. His name was Harry French, and he was always after John; always running in after tea to invite him out for a stroll; or stopping of a Saturday afternoon, with his fast horse, to take John to drive; or loitering and chatting Sunday evenings.

"And right here, Annie, I want to impress upon you this truth: If you wish to break another's influence over your husband, do it by strengthening your own. Make yours if more winning, more sweet, more attractive in your dress; brighten your home in every possible way. Did I try to get rid of Harry French so? Alas! I didn't know enough. In all that related to my heart I was a willful, wayward sensitive child.

"One Saturday I was especially longing for John's society. I had been alone a good deal during the week, and had enjoyed my solitude, too; but was ready at last for the delicious refreshment of my darling's presence. We had had a happy dinner together, and were walking up and down the parlors, with our arms around each other, laughing and frolicking like two children, when Harry drove up to the door.

"'Oh there's French!' I exclaimed; 'you won't go with him this time, will you, John? I want you so much tonight."

"'Don't be so serious, pet,' said John; 'I must go, for I promised Harry to try his new horse; but I won't be gone more than an hour'

"I grew instantly angry. I tell you the truth, Annie, I could have seen the house burn down with more calmness than I could bear that little rebuff from John. My heart was set on him, and I couldn't bear the least disappointment or refusal from him. All the tropical warmth turned suddenly to coldness, and giving my husband a violent push, I said, 'You can stay as long as you like; I can do very well without you.'

"I shall never forget the grieved, astonished look that came into John's face, but it soon gave way to a coldness equal to my own, for he was not a man to bear unprovoked insult. He hesitated a moment, then turned suddenly, and went out. I watched him through the lace curtains, as he joined his friend, and heard with a maddened heart their cheery voices and gay laughter, as they drove off.

"Let me say, in passing, that I had no excuse for this behaviour. Harry was not a bad man; he did not suit me, that was all; and I wanted John to myself whenever I chose to have him. But this I did not see at the time. I did not reason, I only felt; and strong feeling, without proportionate reason, is a most dangerous quality.

"Of course my first resource was tears. I wept passionately for a while then I dressed myself and went to visit a friend I stayed all the evening, with the distinct purpose of making John anxious. He should learn, I said, to regard my wishes as some consequence.

"We went on for days, trying to act as if nothing was the matter, but feeling at our hearts that all the perfection of our life was spoiled. We, who would have suffered agonies at the thought of even a short separation, met and parted with cool politeness. John went out more than ever with Harry French, and I tried to believe that I didn't care. But all the first quarrels soon come to an end; the heart is too tender to hold out long. At the end of a week I gave up, and throwing myself into John's arms, begged his pardon and promised to let him do just as he pleased, if he would only love me. He called me his foolish little wife, and assured me that he did not want to do as he pleased, but only wanted to please me. He scolded me tenderly for my haughtiness, and my heart glowed again with the olden joy.

"But one lesson was not enough; nor two, nor a dozen. So opposite that we passionately loved each other, we were too opposite to understand each other, without an experience of suffering. I, constantly hurt by John's apparent disregard of my wishes took refuge behind an armor of ice, he, repelled by my coldness, went where he could find the necessary of his life—sunshine We were two children, throwing away with reckless hands the very food that our hearts sobs stood upon.

"This state of affairs, with more or less variety, lasted for three years. In the meantime my baby was born. No words of mine can tell you how beautiful he was, nor how we both loved him. He was his father's child, as people expressed it, and a thousand times dearer to me for the wonderful likeness. My intense love-force was now divided; or rather, had another object upon which to expend itself. John was kept more at home by his newly-awakened tenderness for me and his pleasure in the child, and our life was for a while as happy as in the dear old times.

"But I was not yet a woman, though I was a mother. And, Annie, we women, especially the real ones among us, never reach our womanhood till we give self, husband, and children up to God. Our hearts are tender and impetuous: it is our nature to risk all for love, to have no reserve, no resource but in the objects of love; therefore our affections should be set first on the highest Love, that they may be chastened and purified, and taught patience and heavenly philosophy. I was never completely happy in my husband till I contented myself with giving and ceased demanding; and we only learn that lesson at the feet of the divine Giver.

"The period of renewed happiness that began with baby did not last long. John's nature asserted itself. He was too much of a jolly good fellow, too much sought for on every side, (the very qualities that made him so dear to me,) to be contented to stay at home always.—He had too many points of contact with the outside world, with busy, actual life, to live in a dream with me and my baby. I expected an impossibility; but none the less had I set my heart upon it; none the less did I consider myself injured because my ideal was refused me.

"When a woman thinks herself injured, she is sure to make herself unattractive. I brooded, regretted, fretted, lost my taste for society, and neglected my dress. All the brightness, the freshness, the sweetness that won John's love in the beginning, was hidden, and seemed lost. What was the consequence? The poor fellow was so thoroughly uncomfortable at home, that he stayed away as much as possible. He worked harder than ever, and provided us with every comfort; but the light in his merry eyes, his ringing laugh, his joyousness of nature, were all given to outsiders. I was angry that he did not brood alone, as I did. Still unmindful of the differences of nature, I required my husband to enjoy in my way, to suffer in my way on pain of losing my love.

"Well, things went on from bad to worse, till at last we lived almost wholly apart. I gave myself wholly to baby, pluming myself upon my mother's devotion. But I think if the darling could have chosen for himself, he would have preferred a less tearful face, would have begged for smiles and gaiety, instead of my stern, unyielding hardness I think any sunny, light-hearted nurse would have pleased him better than his gloomy mother.

"At this stage of affairs, baby was taken ill. I was not seriously alarmed, for the sickness seemed to be but a childish attack, incident to the season. However, I felt anxious, and longed for help and sympathy. When John came home my heart turned toward him with a glad bound.

"If I had put my arms around his neck, and asked him to stay with me that evening, how differently it all would have ended! But my ill-humor had become chronic. When my husband came into the room, I said, 'I suppose you are going out to-night as usual.'

"'I don't see anything to stay at home for,' he retorted.

"'I think you ought to care something about your child, if your wife is nothing to you,' I replied, the tears coming into my eyes, and my voice trembling.

"A look of absolute disgust flashed into John's face.

"'You do your best to make yourself nothing to me,' he said, and went suddenly out, and down the street.

"I shall never forget the feeling of desolation that came over me as I listened to the ring of his footsteps. The night came on, and baby grew worse. I had nobody to send for the doctor, as Bridget was out, and I was entirely alone. The hours were away—hours of grief, of terror, and of longing—to agonizing to describe. Towards midnight, the baby grew so much worse that I was dreadfully alarmed. Symptoms of croup were developing rapidly. What could I do? There seemed but one way—to leave him alone, and go for a doctor myself. Almost crazy, I threw a shawl over my head, and started. At the door I met John.

"'Where are you going?' he asked.

"'After the doctor. The baby is sick,' I replied. "'Go back!' he said sternly; 'I will bring him.'

"In ten minutes the doctor was there. He looked at the boy, examined him carefully, then turning to me said, 'Why was I not sent for sooner? I will do all that can be done, but I tell you frankly that I have little hope of saving your child.'

"Then John came up to me with an awful look in his eyes. 'Was he sick when I was at home this afternoon,' he asked.

"'Yes,' I said, mechanically.

"'And you did not tell me?' grasping my arm, fiercely; 'if the boy dies, you are his murderer.'

"This was too much for my overwrought condition, exhausted as I was by long watching. I uttered an insane shriek, as the word 'murder' fell upon my ears, and losing all control of myself, I went into violent hysterics, and was taken out of the room. Before I regained my senses, my baby was dead!"

Here Aunt Grace paused again, and I, looking into her calm, sweet face wondered that such an experience could have been hers; wondered at that marvelous spirit-world within us, that nobody can understand or govern, but God, its Maker.

"After hearing that dreadful news," she continued, "I did not leave my room for a month. My life was despaired of. My nerves were so shaken that it did not seem possible for me ever to return again to the world of the living and sane. John's dreadful words rung in my ears continually. I felt that I had lost husband and child, and with them, myself.

"John was incessant in his care; his tenderness was equal to a mother's. But nothing that he did or said touched my heart. Always this thought, like a stab, 'He does not love me; he can never love me again, for he thinks that I murdered our child.'

"At last, Annie, I despaired. With some natures, despair is the point at which salvation is found. It was so with me. Having nothing earthly to hope for, I threw myself upon God's mercy. In an indescribable hour of submission to the will of our Father, I found what I thought was dying peace.

"In that same hour, I saw my past in its true light—saw the injustice, the tyranny of my selfish love—I called John to me, and with my arms around him, made full confession. I told him that I could not blame him for taking away his love from me; that I was going to die and leave him free, and that God had enabled me to hope that some better women would yet make him happy. This, and much more, without tears or sobs, but with the calmness of one who thinks herself past all earthly feeling.

"It was John's turn, then, to break into such weeping as men rarely give way to in a lifetime. Lying upon his breast, it felt as if it rested upon the billows of a fathomless grief.

"'O my darling!' he said at last; 'is it possible that you thought I than stopped loving you? I have loved you all the time. I have longed for the old days, but I didn't know how to find your real self; it seemed to me that you had gone away. I made up my mind that I could not make you happy, and I tried to bear the change as well as I could. But, Grace, my little darling, I am so glad to have you back; and now you shall not die if love can save you.'

"Oh, no, I could not die then! I must live to prove to John how sorry I was for the past; and as I lay there in the peaceful haven of his love, I resolved never to forget that I had found my love in losing myself.

"'Do you know what day this is?' said John at last. 'It is Easter Sunday—a real Easter to us, for love and peace have arisen from the tomb.'

"Well, I recovered very rapidly. The storm was spent, and the sun shone again. It was not the same sun that gladdened the first day of our marriage: we never could forget it shone upon a little grave; but the light, if tempered, was better for our human eyes; better for showing the path of duty than the early dazzling radiance.

"When I took my place again as mistress of my home, I was a different woman; or, perhaps, I should say, I had changed from a child to a woman. In the depths of sorrow, I had found the key to joy. I made it my business to study my husband's temperament, his needs, his sources of pleasure; I made every innocent joy accessible to him as far as possible. I tried to win him from the faults of his nature by making myself so attractive to him that he would forego any indulgence rather than grieve me."

"And you have succeeded," I said, mindful of the devotion with which my uncle always treated his wife. "Who would have thought that you and Uncle John ever passed through such a fiery furnace? Thank you for telling me the story, dear aunty. I have already selected a motto from it—'To lose one's self is to find happiness.'"

"If you fashion your character by that sentiment," replied aunty, "your life will be crowned with the Easter lillies of triumphant love."

[From the Home Companion.]

Old People versus Young.

BY LIZZIE DEAN.

While we like to see young people enjoying life and making the most of it as it passes, we wish to speak a passing word for the aged. We see many whose silvery hair and feeble step proclaim that their journey on earth is nearly finished, and soon they will tread the shores of the "far beyond."

They look peacefully back on the past, with its trials and sunny memories, and gaze into the future with hope and trust in their Heavenly Father's care lovingly, perhaps, when thinking of the companions of their early youth, who wait them on the other shore; and their hearts thrill with pleasure at the thought of that happy meeting. A serene old age is beautiful to contemplate. We meet some who are truly lovely, whose hearts are warm with affection to God and man, and will never grow old with passing years. They have not forgotten their own happy youth, and live over again their own happy days in the sports and joys of the younger ones around them.

Happy is the aged pilgrim, on whose brow rests the snows of four-score winters, surrounded by dutiful children and grand children who vie with each other in making his last days peaceful and happy, and who deem no care too great that contributes to his comfort.

But, this, we are sorry to say, is not always the case; too often, the deepest of mourning conceals a feeling of gladness, that the aged one needs more care, and that they can spend his property as they please.

"Mother has outlived her usefulness," said one, recently bereaved. Outlived her usefulness! When her daily life was the sweetest possible illustration of a life well spent and a mind at peace with all the world. True, she could no longer labor for them; but her sweet disposition and living counsel were above all price; yes, much I fear that when they carried her to her last resting place their minds were somewhat diverted from their loss by thoughts of the property she had left, and if invited to give up their few thousands, one condition that she came back to enjoy it, the answer, mentally, if not audibly, would have been a negative.

It is sad to think that so many can plainly see in the conduct of their children, if not in their cruel words and harsh neglect, that they are not wanted. When we are growing old, we shall need friends: but how many pass from earth with the bitter assurance that they were burdensome, to those to whom their care and support should have been the greatest of earthly pleasures.

Many parents have given their property to a son or daughter, expecting a pleasant home in their old, and instead have found harsh words and neglect, and comforts grudgingly given or wholly withheld. In after years, when THEY become old, will they not remember this?

On the other hand, old people should remember that they were young once, and be willing the younger members of the household should share pursuits and enjoyments of a pleasant and well directed youth. One of the first lessons of life should be that "the young should remember that they will sometime be old, and old people ought to remember that they were once young."

This is worthy to be printed in letters of gold and placed behind the pulpit where all may read it instead of falling asleep during the sermon; and in the school-room and at home it should always be kept in mind and obeyed.

Nothing is more disgusting than the prevailing disregard of the aged, which seems to be the rule rather than the exception.

Bad Air.

At the present moment thousands of people are taking the most scrupulous care to exclude as much as possible of the enlivening and invigorating atmosphere of winter out-of-doors. In other words, to tell the truth plainly, they are doing their best to smother themselves to death Dr. Hall, a writer who said and wrote a great many excellent things, claimed that "it is safer to sleep in bad air all night with a temperature over fifty, than in pure air with a temperature under forty." Experience teaches us that this is a grave error. The system can readily supply a deficiency of heat from its own resource, but it cannot in any way make up for a deficiency of pure air. Ample ventilation is needed at all hours; but especial attention should be paid to ventilation during sleep. There is no danger in having a sleeping apartment well ventilated, provided one sleeps warm, being well protected by an abundance of blankets.—*Health Reformer.*

The learned pig makes his calculations by square root rule.

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

GEMS.

He that helpeth an evil man, hurteth him that is good.

True self-denial is hard at the beginning, easy in the middle, and most sweet in the end.

Truth of word, meekness, courtesy, mercy and liberty, stir up affection.

He will find himself far from perfection who does not find God in everything.

He that intendeth to do good should refrain from doing evil; but it is counted evil if we refrain to do good.

He that presumeth to understand everything, is thought to be ignorant in all things.

What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise.

The power of God, and not the devil, is to be feared.

He that is desperately inclined to his own will, is ever most near to the wrath of God.

It is an evidence of great hardness to be more concerned about our sufferings than our sins.

He that hath God, hath all things; and he that hath him not, hath nothing.

Constancy is a virtue, but obstinacy is not.

Modesty and humility make up the brightest crown of great performances.

A great deal of sin comes in at the eye.

Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.

Love reposes at the bottom of pure souls, like a drop of dew in the chalice of a flower.

If God were not mindful of his promises than we are of his precepts, we were undone.

Wit and Humor.

Although a woman's age is undeniably her own she never owns it.

"Change cars!" is what a boot-black said to a countryman the other day, when he had finished one of his brogans.

Among the items in a plumber's bill are: to searching gas leakage, fifty cents; to having found it, one dollar.

"I have never known but two woman who were really perfect," said a lady to another." "Who was the other?" asked her companion.

A farmer on the fever and ague marshes of New Jersey has named his daughter 'Malaria.' She will doubtless be great shakes of a girl."

Professor—"In one evening I counted twenty seven meteors sitting on my piazza." Class expresses great astonishment at the sociable character of the heavenly bodies.

There is nothing more bewilderingly embarrassing than after a formal call to open a closet door for exit and walk into a row of dresses before you know where you are.

A man had just said to a friend, "Let's take another—" when his wife turned the corner, but his duty to his wife was not forgotten. "View of the political situation," he added.

JOSH BILLINGS ON BIRDS.—The quail iz a game bird, about one size larger than the robbin, and so sudden that they hum when they fly. They have no song, but whistle for music; the tone iz solitary and sad. They are shot on the wing, and a man may be good in arrithmatic, fust-rate at parsing, and exen be able to preach acceptably, but if he ain't studied quail on the wing, he might as well shoot at a streak of lightning in the sky as at a quail on the go. Briled quail, properly supported with jelleys and a Champagne Charlie, iz just the most difficult thing, in my humble opinion, tow beat in the whole history ov vittles and something to drink. I am no gourmand, for I kan eat bread and milk five days out of seven, and smak my lips after I get thru, but if I am asked to eat briled quail by a friend, with judishous accompanyment, I blush at fust, then bow my head, and then smile sweet acquiesence—in other words, I always quail before such a request.

They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.

Characters never change; opinions alter, characters are only developed.

PRECIOUS NEWS.

[From the Earnest Worker.]

Illustrative.

I. JOINING WITH THE UNGODLY.—Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daughters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda,—"dear father, you must think us very childish if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took in silence a dead coal from the hearth, and reached it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child; take it." Eulalia did so, and behold her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened; and, as it chanced, her white dress also. "We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia in vexation. "Yes, truly," said the father. "You see, my child, the coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."—*From the German.*

II. LOVE WHAT THE LORD HATES.—Go yonder into Greenland with Dr. Ranke, and you will find a story among the men of the lonely North, to the effect that if a sorcerer will make a stirrup out of a strip of sealskin, and wind it around his limbs, three times about his heart, and thrice about his neck, and seven times about his forehead, and then knot it before his eyes, that sorcerer, when the lamps are put out at night, may rise into space and fly whither-soever his leading passion dictates. So we put ourselves into the stirrup of predominant love of what God hates, and predominant hate of what God loves; and we coil the strands about our souls. They are thrice wound about our heart, three times about the neck, seven times around our forehead; and knotted before our eyes. If the poor savage yonder, where the stars look down four months of the year without interruption, are right in their sublime theory as to the solemnities of the universe we too, when the lamps are out, shall rise into the Unseen Holy, and fly whithersoever our leading passion dictates. Greenland says that hunters once went out and found a revolving mountain, and that, attempting to cross the chasm between it and the firm land, some of those men were crushed as the mountain revolved. But they finally noticed that the knarled, wheeling mass had a red side and a white side. They waited till the white side came opposite them; and then, ascending the mountain, found that a king lived on its summit; made themselves loyal to him; surrendered themselves to him, affectionately and irreversibly; and afterwards found themselves able to go and come safely. But the mountain had a red side, and it turned and turned; and there was no safety on it except on the white side and in loyalty to the king at the summit in the clouds.—*Joseph Cook.*

III. IMPORTANCE OF JUSTICE.—Justice is the greatest interest of man on earth. It is a ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together. Wherever her temple stands, and so long as it is duly honoured, there is a foundation for social security and general happiness, and the improvement and progress of the race. And whoever labours on this edifice with usefulness and distinction, whoever clears its foundations, strengthens its pillars, adorns its entablatures, or contributes to raise its august dome still higher in the skies, connects himself, in name and fame and character, with that which is and must be as durable as the frame of human society.—*Daniel Webster.*

Every Christian must work as well as worship. The duties of every day are greater than the creed of any Discipline. Men can not be religious, in a Gospel sense, by mere assent to certain formularies, nor by stoutly contending for opinions, however sound. The lips do more than their share. Talk is cheap and easy. Amens resound in ringing accents where seldom the jingle of one dime against another is heard in behalf of Christ's cause. Until professors get forward into practice, and words ripen into works, the Church of Christ will have but a name to live.