

The Home Circle.

THE LARGEST LIFE.*

I lie upon my bed and hear and see,
The moon is rising through the glistening trees;
And momentary a great and sombre breeze,
With a vast voice returning fitfully,
Comes like a deep-toned grief, and stirs in me,
Somehow, by some inexplicable art,
A sense of my soul's strangeness and its part
In the dark march of human destiny.
What am I, then, and what are they that pass
Yonder, and love and laugh, and mourn and weep?
What shall they know of me, or I, alas!
Of them? Little. At times, as if from sleep,
We waken to this yearning, passionate mood,
And tremble at our spiritual solitude.

Nay, never once to feel we are alone,
While the great human heart around us lies;
To make the smile on other lips our own,
To live upon the light in others' eyes;
To breathe without a doubt the limpid air
Of that most perfect love that knows no pain;
To say, I love you, only, and not care
Whether the love come back to us again,—
Divinest self-forgetfulness, at first
A task, and then a tonic, then a need;
To greet with open hands the best and worst,
And only for another's wound to bleed:
This is to see the beauty that God meant,
Wrapped round with life, ineffably content.

There is a beauty at the goal of life,
A beauty growing since the world began,
Through every age and race, through lapse and strife,
Till the great human soul complete her span,
Beneath the waves of storm that lash and burn,
The currents of blind passion that appall,
To listen and keep watch till we discern
The tide of sovereign truth that guides it all;
So to address our spirits to the height,
And so attune them to the valiant whole,
That the great light be clearer for our light,
And the great soul the stronger for our soul:
To have done this is to have lived, though Fame
Remember us with no familiar name.

—Archibald Lampman.

SOME DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

There is no doubt that nine-tenths of the unhappiness of married life is due to the thoughtlessness with which young men and women enter into the marriage state, without seriously considering how much of happiness or misery depends upon the wise selection of a life companion; and a misunderstanding of the responsibilities which marriage entails. To the other tenth, which goes to the making of the sum total of human unhappiness we may set down a misconception of the true relations of husband and wife, and the failure to understand that they cannot with honor, enter into the privileges of the marriage state without also assuming its responsibilities.

A handsome face and form and fashionable attire and a certain amount of style are no guarantee of integrity of character or of those qualities which go to the making of an agreeable and congenial husband. And protestations of love and affection are not a surety for a comfortable home or even for the necessities of life. Neither is wit and beauty, showy accomplishments and social graces an assurance of a temperament or disposition capable of maintaining a home in the highest sense of the word, or a caring for the physical, mental and moral well-being of a family. And as the comfort and happiness of married life depend quite as much upon the practical and real as upon the spiritual and ideal, it is the part of wisdom, on the part of young men and women, to consider these questions seriously in choosing their yoke fellows.

A refined and educated wife can never expect to be happy with a coarse, illbred or illiterate husband, however handsome or well-to-do he may be. And a quiet, home loving man will not find his greatest happiness with a wife whose tastes and inclinations lead her to place society and social position before her home life and the welfare of her family. And, too, the man who furnishes a comfortable home and provides well for his family, and then swears at his wife and uses coarse, vulgar language before his children, is no better than the man who has some regard for the proprieties of life, and yet fails in some other respect to do his duty as a husband and father. These truths only go to show how essential to future happiness it is for young people to consider well the wisdom of their choice before entering into a bond which reads, "Till death do us part," for true it is that many a smiling face conceals an aching heart because of a lack of the proper consideration of these prime factors of matrimonial felicity.

When a man elects to take to himself a wife, he should expect to assume the responsibility of the maintenance of a home and a family. He should have some visible means of support and the disposition to provide those dependent upon him with all of the comforts, and as many of the luxuries of life, as his means will allow; and he should do this willingly and gladly, instead of considering it a hardship to discharge the obligations which he voluntarily has assumed. The ideal husband is the one who takes a certain kind of pride in being the head of a family and seeing to it that the family income is fairly divided, and that his wife has her rightful share, and his family are reared in comfort and respectability, even if he cannot provide them with luxuries.

When a woman marries she should expect to accept the natural restrictions of domestic life, and the possibilities and probable contingencies of maternity, and she certainly has no right to complain of the obligations it may entail. And even when the means are limited, and the work sometimes wearisome or seemingly unappreciated, under favorable conditions she need not develop into an automatic machine which runs in ruts and grooves and goes to pieces at the least disturbance of the usual routine.

The ideal husband will see to it that his wife shall have all the rights and privileges which belong to her, not only as his wife, but as a woman. And that marriage imposes no more restrictions or obligations upon her than it does upon himself. He will treat her as his equal, his companion and as his friend, and he will make his personal life and conversation as clean and pure as he desires hers to be. The wife should respect the individuality of the husband, and the husband should remember that his wife did not lose her identity when she took his name and became his wife. And when differences of opinion shall arise, each should be willing to discuss the matter calmly and kindly with the other without rancor or recrimination, for be it remembered, that whenever there is difference between husband and wife, the trouble must fall most heavily upon the wife, from the very fact that the husband is free to go abroad, and among his friends or casual acquaintances, to live down or forget the irritating domestic disturbance, while the wife must stay at home and brood over the sullen until mole hills become mountains and clouds of disensions obscure the sun of domestic happiness. The joys and the sorrows, the privileges and the obligations, the benefits and the burden-bearing should be mutual, in order that marriage may bring the happiness and contentment which was designed by the Creator when he saw that it was not good for man to be alone.—Mrs. Clarke-Hardy, in Farmers' Voice.

Life is too short for mean anxieties.
—C. Kingsley.

PARTNERS.

Mrs. Lovell's favorite niece was getting ready to marry. Mrs. Lovell had quietly rejoiced over the engagement, and she spent much time and money preparing for the wedding and the new life to follow. But she was a strong, self-contained woman, who seldom made an exhibition of feeling, and the young man in the case, being a little afraid of her, hardly knew whether to regard her as a friend or as an enemy when she suddenly "opened on him" one day.

"Well, Joe," she said, "what's Nettie going to be—a beggar, a hired girl, or a partner?"

"Why, Mrs. Lovell!" the young man gasped, "I don't understand!"

"Will she have to come to you for two cents every time she wants to buy a postage-stamp, or shall you make her an allowance every week, pay her wages, as you do the hired man, or take her into partnership, and let her help spend money as well as help earn it?"

"Honestly, I hadn't thought about money, or much of anything but Nettie herself," the young man answered.

"Time to begin!" said Mrs. Lovell, briskly. "It's because young married folks don't think that they get to falling apart sometimes. You don't want Nettie to lose her self-reliance and turn into a woman like Mrs. Col labor, drooping and dependent and afraid to say her soul's her own?"

"Of course not!"

"Better to make her a weekly allowance than to break her spirit by having her beg for every penny, you think? Yes. The allowance system is correct in principle; it's a recognition of the fact that the woman earns money as well as the man. The trouble is, the man may fall into the notion that his duty ends when he pays, and a woman is liable to think her responsibility ceases when she spends the allowance wisely. Then sentiment revolts at the notion of putting your wife on wages, don't you think? In fact, considering that Nettie is a good business woman, it seems to me your wisest course is to make her a partner."

"Tell me how."

"Have a common purse, that she shall feel as free to go to as you are. Talk over your affairs with her. Let her have a voice in deciding how to invest a little surplus, whether in a new range or another cow. Trust her to help you save for the tax bill. She won't go out and buy caramels at a time when she knows you need money—if she knows, mind. But if you keep her in the dark about things, how can you blame her for wastefulness?"

"Of course if a woman is a spendthrift or a fool, my system won't apply. But there are not so many spendthrifts of my sex as there are skinflints of yours. The average woman can do more with a dollar than the average man can, and if she feels that she has an equal interest in the firm, so as to speak, she'll do wonders in spending and saving, both. Take your wife into your confidence, Joe! It's a sure way to get ahead—and be happy."—The Youth's Companion.

OUR TERRIBLE ENGLISH.

"The other day," writes Eli Perkins, I met a French gentleman at Saratoga, who thought he had mastered the English language.

"How do you do?" I said, on accosting him.

"Do vat?" he asked, in a puzzled manner.

"I mean, how do you find yourself?"

"Saire, I never lose myself!"

"You don't understand me; I mean, how do you feel?"

"How I feels? Oh, I feel smooth; you shust feel me."

ONE ON ROBSON.

The Chicago Journal tells this story:

"Robson, do you know why you are like a donkey?"

"Like a donkey?" echoed Robson, opening his eyes wide. "I don't."

"Because your better half is stubbornness itself."

The jest pleased Robson immensely, for he at once saw the opportunity of a glorious dig at his wife. So, when he got home he said:

"Mrs. Robson, do you know why I am like a donkey?" He waited a moment expecting his wife to give it up. But she didn't. She looked at him somewhat pityingly, as she answered, "I suppose it's because you were born so."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

SHAKESPEARE IS AN EDUCATION.

Mr. Mabie Says to Know the Great Dramatist is to Gain a Fine Conception of Life.

Every one ought to know his Shakespeare; for the plays constitute, on the whole, the foremost text-book which our race has given to the world. The matter of supreme importance is his conception of life and the noble art in which it is embodied. To live with the poet in familiar intercourse, by constant reading with an open mind and heart, responsive to the power and sensitive to the beauty which penetrate and inform the plays, is to receive from him the most searching influence and the deepest pleasure. The end of art is to deepen and intensify the sense of life and this end is missed when one becomes absorbed in the study of language, form, conditions and circumstances. Some knowledge of these things is essential, but the emphasis of interest and of study ought to rest on the invisible soul and body of a work of art.—Hamilton W. Mabie, in the April Ladies' Home Journal.

Some men deal in facts, and call Bill Jones a liar. They get knocked down. Some men deal in subtleties, and say that Bill Jones' father was a kettle rendered liar, and that his mother's name was Sapphira, and that any one who believes in the Darwinian theory should pity rather than blame their son. They get disliked. But your tactful man says that since Baron Munchausen no one has been so chock full of bully reminiscences as Bill Jones; and when that comes back to Bill he is half-tied to death, because he doesn't know that the higher criticism has hurt the Baron's reputation. That man gets the trade.—"John Graham's Letters."

THE DECORATIVE POSSIBILITIES IN VINES.

Vines, indeed, may cover a multitude of sins—foundations, bare walls, unsightly board fences, often covered with signs, and unpainted sheds; vines may serve as a screen, and give privacy to the yard; vines may give a shady nook in the little corner that has so often worried us to care for. But above all, vines may make our homes homes indeed, adding grace and beauty to even the staidest mansion. There is such an endless variety of vines, and most of them are so easily cultivated that they appeal to the veriest novice or the busiest housewife. In planting you man have all of one kind or choose many varieties. For quick effects over balconies, fence or screen the morning glory, moon-flowers, nasturtiums, Cobaea scandens and cypress-vine give most pleasing effects. For slower and more permanent results are the ivies, wood-bines, honeysuckles and their kind.—E. L. Shney, in the April Women's Home Companion.

LIKELY TO BE MISCONSTRUED.

A writer in an eastern periodical, after recounting General Brooke's experiences as a soldier—and many of them were thrilling—says:

"The general has been twice married. It will thus be seen that his war record is a distinguished one."

We have no wish to be hypercritical, but it does seem as if the sentences quoted ought to have been kept a little further apart.—Cleveland Leader.

AN EFFECTIVE PERORATION.

Sheridan was one day much annoyed by a fellow-member of the House of Commons, who kept crying out every few minutes, "Hear! hear!" During the debate he took occasion to describe a political contemporary that wished to play rogue, but had only sense enough to act fool. "Where," exclaimed he, with great emphasis, "where shall we find a more foolish knave or a more knavish fool than he?" "Hear! hear!" was shouted by the troublesome member. Sheridan turned round, and, thanking him for the prompt information, sat down amid a general roar of laughter.

A RAILROAD MAN.

This is the way the railroad man heard the conundrum:
"At what time shortly before noon is it three o'clock? At a quarter of twelve, because a quarter of twelve is three."
And this is the way he worked it off on his friends:
"At what time shortly before noon is it three o'clock? At eleven forty-five, because eleven forty-five is three. It doesn't sound right, either, blame it, but that's the way I heard it."—Chicago Tribune.

Our Social Chat.

* EDITED BY AUNT JENNIE, RALEIGH, N. C. *

AS CONTRIBUTORS to this department of The Progressive Farmer, we have some of the most wide-awake and progressive young ladies and young men and some of the most entertaining writers among the older people of this and other States, the ages of the members ranging from sixteen to more than sixty.

YOU ARE REQUESTED to join by sending us a letter on some subject of general interest, and writing thereafter as often as possible.

WHEN WRITING, give full name and post-office address for Aunt Jennie's information. If you do not wish your real name to appear in print, give name by which you wish to be known as a Chatterer.

TWO WEEKS OR MORE must, as a rule, elapse between the time a letter is written and the date of its publication.

ADDRESS all letters to Aunt Jennie, care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

AUNT JENNIE'S LETTER.

There is no part of our country so forlorn or poverty-stricken but Mother Nature has endowed with beauties incomparable, if indolent man only can be induced to aid her efforts.

A house set on a bare hill with no trees surrounding it and no lawn, no flowers, but just the weeds or perhaps a cotton patch within a few feet of the door steps, is no home for a woman whose very soul longs for beauty.

Have you ever thought how much you, individually, could do to make the house and surroundings attractive? Even if you have no money to spend for flower seed the yard could be made pretty with grass. Despised grass that troubles you so much while you are cultivating your crop, is a thing of beauty when it is allowed to cover nature's scars near the home. Grass and flowers in the yard seem really congenial companions. One is incomplete without the other. The deep dark green is a fit setting for the brilliance of the flowers and many colored foliage.

One yard that I thought especially pretty had the green lawn broken only by two circles of oleas, one on each side of the front entrance.

All of us may have ferneries; and what is daintier or prettier than a fern? The trouble of uprooting and planing them is all they cost us, and any shady nook about the yard will constitute an ideal home for them, provided you place a few rocks for them to cool their roots under.

Did you know that the lovely little forget-me-nots grow wild in some parts of our State? Look and see if you can find any, and be sure to plant a few pieces with the ferns.

Another shady spot can be filled with nasturtiums; indeed they grow vigorously and bloom profusely all summer in almost any place if you allow them good soil. I am almost ready to say that there is more satisfaction in one paper of nasturtium seed than in any half dozen other less known varieties of flowers.

There is nothing prettier than the old fashioned pink, unless we except the magnificent new ones of the same family; and they all delight in the sunshine.

Roses are pretty, but unless they are properly pruned and mulched the finest varieties will deteriorate until you will emphatically declare that the rose you see in your yard is not the one you thought that you bought.

Zinnias will pay you for the space they occupy, and are almost all colors save blue and purple. These tints the asters will supply, indeed there are no flowers that I admire more than the aster family.

For an old stump or tree which often may well remain where it is, plant Japan Ivy and Virginia creeper. The creeper is especially good for a brick or stone surface, as it needs no tying and very little training.

For verandas, porches, fences, etc., set woodbine, wisteria, clematis, hardy hop, climbing roses or honeysuckle.

Let us have a flower garden for flowers to look at, to work in, and enjoy and to supply our homes and friends. Just here let me suggest that each child be allowed a space at least a yard square in which to plant and cultivate his or her favorite flowers. You will be astonished at the interest they will manifest and the success that will crown their efforts; besides it will awaken a love for nature study which may in after years avail them much and lessen your anxiety. Those who have not sown or lovingly tended a flower garden have missed a rich feast of real rest and enjoyment.

I regret that there are not a larger number of contributors this week. Mrs. Z. B. P. has a good letter on "Contentment," and Maybelle talks interestingly of personal influence.

The competition for the book offered as a prize by the Editor of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER expires to-day, and in next week's paper I hope to be able to give the name of the successful competitor.
AUNT JENNIE.

CONTENTMENT.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—I see that Editor Poe has offered a book for the best letter on Social Chat written in February or March. I do not know where he has given us any special subject to write on, so I guess we may choose our own subjects and write as we please.

I would like to give the Chat a few thoughts on "Contentment," which is in my estimation "rather to be desired than gold and silver." For gold and silver cannot and do not bring contentment, neither does it bring the happiness that contentment does. I do not mean the contentment that is born of laziness, or settle down with anything or nothing and not try to do any better; but the contentment that is born of God that does the very best it can for itself and friends, and then is contented with the results, be it little or much, good or bad; that profits by mistakes instead of worrying and fretting over them.

When misfortunes come do not give up and say we were born for bad luck. I for one do not believe in bad luck. But remember we have a loving Father who loved us sufficiently to give His Son for us, who grants our destiny; and if he chasens us is for our good here and hereafter. We should try to get the lessons he wishes us to learn out of each trial and testing. Then give it all to Him and trust Him to help us and be content. Instead of worrying over our poor crops and misfortunes last year and giving up in despair and grumbling, let us count our blessings and see if we did not get more than we deserved. Then thanking God that we have as much as we have, let us go to work with renewed energy and faith, and ask God to give us the proper rain and sunshine for our crops this year.

Instead of worrying and fretting over our positions in life, and desiring some one else's chance and means, let us remember we are in our place and should endeavor to make it bright and happy. When we see some one else prettier or better dressed than we are, instead of coveting their beauty or dress, let us remember that we would be a misfit in her place, but we have our place; and by doing the best we can and being content, we can not only make ourselves happy, but those around us.

One of the greatest men the world has known had found true happiness when he said, "Be content with such things as ye have for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5. "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Tim. 6:8. "Godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. 6:6. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. 4:11.

Mrs. Z. B. P.

McDowell County, N. C.

POWER OF INFLUENCE.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—I have been a silent reader of the Social Chat for sometime and I am now going to ask permission to join.

The subject I have chosen is a very broad one for an inexperienced writer. But it is one which I think should be impressed upon our minds.

No doubt many of us go from day to day and never once stop to think that our influence either for good or evil, is being felt by all around us. No matter how poor we may be, or what may be our station in life, that wonderful power of influence will still be felt by some one. Therefore we should be very careful what we do and say. Some times we feel that our lives are of very little importance and that what we do and say will affect no one but ourselves. This is a mistake. We should remember that our influence will live long after we have passed away. Little deeds often exert great influence, and we should never let an opportunity pass to speak a kind word or do a kind deed, thereby making our own lives happier, and perhaps causing some one else to follow our example.

Much love to Aunt Jennie and all the Chatterers.
MAYBELLE.

KEEPING HIS PLACE.

Irate Mamma—"Why didn't you get the things I sent you to the store for?"

Son—"I had to wait so long I forgot what you wanted."

Mamma—"Then why didn't you come back and find out?"

Son—"I was afraid, you know, if I left to come back I would lose my turn."