

## THE HOME CIRCLE

### A Good Fire.

Now for the blazing hearth!  
Now for the chimney nook!  
Now for sage talk and jest and mirth  
And the old love story-book!

For when the winter shuts us in  
And the dark crowds up outside,  
In some old tale of love and sin  
We'll wander far and wide;

With many a lassie and her lad  
Who moved with sorrow's feet,  
Shall grieve that love is ever sad  
And sin so falsely sweet.

Old sorrow and old vain desire  
That long ago have died—  
Ah, that's the thing for a rousing fire  
And a screaming wind outside.  
—J. C. McNeill, in Charlotte Observer.

## THE LONG WINTER EVENINGS.

Now is the Time to Plan the Most Profitable Ways of Spending Them.

There is, no doubt, a great charm in the coziness of the winter evening! Outside the curtained window the storm may beat, the door into the street may be encrusted with snow, the shortened days may denote that nature has become drowsy and seeks long repose, but the mind is never so alert, our fancy never keener, than when, our evening meal being over, we turn into our den, and settle down for the rest of the evening.

How well I remember those evenings which I spent in my bed-room years ago, just after tea; and while it may have seemed a little unsocial to withdraw from the rest of the family, yet I owe to those evenings of my business life, and after the day's work in the city was done, my acquaintance with the masterpieces of our English tongue. What with the opportunity of reading afforded by thirty-five minutes in the train to the city and thirty-five minutes back, added to the two or three hours at night, it gave me a respectable amount of time for general reading.

Nothing is more suicidal than for a young man to spend in pleasure and amusement the opportunities for self-improvement afforded by the winter evenings. To be always hastening home from the city, or the daily toil, with the idea of spending the time in recreation, is as foolish as to squander some little capital which has come down to you from your family, and which, if properly invested, might be the nucleus of a competence in after years.

I am going to give you my ideal. First, I was always accustomed to spend some little time with my Bible and some spiritual book or biography. It seemed to refresh the mind and to be a worthy prelude for whatever followed. Then other books. It is wise to have two or three in hand at the same time, because one's mind after a long day's work may be too weary for protracted study, but will be quite capable of alertness if allowed to turn from one subject to another, giving perhaps an hour to each. For instance, it is well to have always on hand a book of history, and another of poetry, and one of philosophy, of science, of essays, of general information or criticism. To have two or three books of this sort in reading will save time and coax the jaded mind, and you will do better to read three books for three hours than to read one for the same time. Mind that the lighter story-book always comes at the end of the evening, with the strong determination that the reading shall be limited to a certain definite portion of time, and shall not run into hours which should be spent in bed.

Happy is the man who has a hobby—who wishes to arrange the specimens of natural history or geography which he has acquired during his summer rambles, or is able to use the lathe, the fret-saw, the telescope or

microscope. An hour or so spent on this will divert the nervous energy into an altogether new compartment of the brain, and this is the true secret of getting as much as possible out of one's time. It is a mistake to think we rest by doing nothing. The most intense rest comes by striking other chords than the one or two which show signs of being wearied to breaking.

Happier still is he who has a taste for music, and who has mastered the initial difficulties of the violin, the piano, the organ, or the cornet! Nothing is so refreshing as to be able to soothe one's self with music, or to turn to the rough sketches we have made on summer excursions with a view to completing them. An hour spent in perfecting one's self in any branch of art is well employed, and the winter evenings afford opportunities of becoming really proficient in some pursuit which brings one in contact with the beauties of the world and quickens the imagination. In your young life you may lay foundations of great excellence in regard to some study or accomplishment which will stand you in good stead in later years.

Perhaps it will be wise to vary your program evening by evening. If you give four of the six evenings to pursuits like these, you may well give one to Christian work, and another to social enjoyment; and as you work when you work, you must abandon yourself for one night a week at least to play with all your powers of play, and if you can get to a gymnasium, so much the better. Nothing is finer than to have an evening of such exertion as will open all the pores like a Turkish bath, and compel the blood to go rushing through every vessel of the body.

How much there is for each of us to do! The difficulty arises as to what to do first. But we must have a general notion and program laid out, or else we become dissipated amid a crowd of little things, and while we are busy here and there our opportunity is gone.

We must, of course, take care not to be self-absorbed, or to make a plan of such cast-iron strength that we cannot easily turn aside from it at the call of those who love or need us. One of the noblest young fellows I know, who is very anxious to pass his examination, and whose parents cannot afford to keep a servant, spends a certain time each day in doing little jobs of household duty from which his manly soul naturally revolts, but which, for his mother's sake, he cheerfully performs. Then, there are sisters who want you to join in their innocent amusements, and you must be prepared to do your part in bringing other girls' brothers into the home, that they may have the chance of knowing your fellows. Your minister may need your help now and again for some special

meetings; and you may see fit to take part in a debating society, where you will learn the art of expressing your thoughts and giving out what you have acquired. But, on the whole, follow out your plan of study, and do not let it be interfered with unduly, because the acquisitions of these formative years will be yours as long as you can think.

Remember, young brother, that all the faculties of your nature have been given you by God that each may be made the most of for him. See that every acre of your estate be brought under cultivation for Jesus Christ, and seek His blessings as you anticipate the leisure and opportunity of the evenings of the coming winter.—Rev. F. B. Meyer, in Northwestern Christian Advocate.

### A Typical Southern Grand Dame.

Among the incidents of the President's Southern trip, the dispatches tell the following:

Calling him Theodore and patting him on the shoulder, Mrs. W. E. Baker, a dame of old Southern regime, received President Roosevelt last Friday in Barrington Hall, her home, at Roswell.

Mrs. Baker was bridesmaid when the President's mother was married. She had been invited to the reception at the old Bulloch home, but said the President must come to her.

Secretary Loeb said this could not be, as it was contrary to all precedent for the President to visit private homes during an itinerary.

The President missed Mrs. Baker at the Bulloch home and asked for her. Secretary Loeb told of her refusal to attend a public reception and the President said he must see his mother's bridesmaid. So he decided to cut out established precedents that he might meet and chat with the girlhood friend of his mother, and at his suggestion Barrington Hall was included in the itinerary.

When President Roosevelt entered the old home with Mrs. Roosevelt he found Mrs. Baker seated, dressed in black, trimmed with white lace about the collar and cuffs. She wore a lace cap and was the picture of contentment.

"And this is Theodore," she said, extending her hand. "I am so glad to see you, Theodore." Then patting the President on the shoulder, she told him how his mother looked when she was married.

No American who values and admires exalted womanhood will fail to rejoice and take pride in the gentle dignity of this gracious old lady. The President, the son of her old friend, and to her he is little more than a boy, and that she, occupying no official position which compelled her to do so, should go into a public reception to see her old friend's son was contrary to her ideas and the theory of her training. When Mrs. Baker told Secretary Loeb that if the President desired to see her he must come to see her, it caused the Secretary a distinct "jar." He could not find any precedent for such an extraordinary thing in all the annals of the Circumlocution Office. Such an ignoring of precedent, not to say red-tapery, shocked Secretary had never conceived.

But the President did not view it that way. He has an independent way of making precedents as well as following them, and so he put his hat on his head and took his wife on his arm and stalked off to see his mother's old friend. It was the act of a gentleman, and that is all there is to be said about it. He found the old lady sitting enthroned like a queen in her ancestral home, and he and Mrs. Roosevelt got such a reception as must have delighted their

hearts. It was not the President to whom she gave her hand. It was "Theodore," the son of the dear friend of her youth, about whom she had doubtless received many letters from that friend of long ago. "And this is Theodore," she said—not "Mr. President"—and doubtless Theodore was delighted. He might search in every land without finding the superior of the dignified, gracious and pious Southern woman of which this lady is a true type.—Baltimore Sun.

### A Tilt of Wits.

In connection with lawyers trying to confuse experts in the witness box in murder trials, a case is recalled by the Kansas City Independent where a lawyer looked quizzically at the doctor, who was testifying, and said:

"Doctors sometimes make mistakes, don't they?"

"The same as lawyers," was the reply.

"But doctors' mistakes are buried six feet underground," said the lawyer.

"Yes," said the doctor, "and lawyers' mistakes sometimes swing in the air."

### Kind of Him.

A party of Hamilton College students had been celebrating a varsity victory in the manner usual to enthusiastic collegians, and while en route to their train about 2 a. m., had occasion to pass the office of a crabbed old doctor who was known as one of the greatest cranks in the town. One of the lads sighting the button which connected with the doctor's night bell, halted the group and "pressed the button." Almost instantly a window above their heads was raised, the medico's benighted-capped head was thrust forth as he snapped in a querulous voice, "What's wanted?"

"One of your windows is open, doctor," replied the leader of the gang.

"Thank you very much," answered the doctor; "which one?"

"The one you have your head out of," said the student.—New York World.

### The Loss of Strength.

There is no greater leak in house-keeping than the unnecessary loss of the strength and energy of the housekeeper. Vegetables and fruits are gathered in the heat of the day, when early morning and evening would do just as well. The same rule applies to heavy tasks indoors. Work done in intense heat lessens the vital force. Most women think they must cook three piping-hot meals a day, when a lunch or supper may be made of cold foods, which are more appetizing and more easily digested.

Again, no woman should work until she is exhausted. Whether engaged at something that really needs doing or something that she "just wants to get done," there is loss instead of gain if she sticks to it until body and brain are too tired to work properly. A bit of quiet rest or a little nap will send her back refreshed, so that she will do the work better and more quickly, thus saving time as well as energy. Discomfort that saps vitality, exhaustion from overwork, insufficient sleep, listlessness from want of change—these detract from the best housekeeping and from the happiness of the home, and are leaks that can be avoided.—Woman's Home Companion.

Man is twice born—the first time when he is made in the image of God; the second time when he becomes conscious of it.