

The Family Circle

THE ALTERED WORLD.

The old, old days, the old, old ways!
I see them, phantom-like and sweet,
Beyond the dark, abysmal gulf
That now hath opened at my feet.

Those dear old days, those sweet old ways!
Few now can read of them unmoved;
But what must they not mean to those
Who in them have both lived and loved!

Familiar, happy, peaceful scenes,
Which seem, alas, so long ago,
Ye are as absent from this age
As last year's melted drifts of snow.

To-day's raw, garish light reveals,
Instead of order, lawless strife—
A sickening insecurity
Of home, of property, of life.

In place of rulers who at least
Were honest, well-disposed, and just,
Coarse, greedy hordes, made money mad,
Now trample values into dust.

Unlearned, untrained, unfit to rule,
Their clever chiefs their coffers fill,
While specious promises and lies
Induce their dupes to do their will.

"Why work?" they ask. "Your hour has come!
What men have earned and now possess
Is yours by right; seize, loot, enjoy
Till" . . . earth becomes a wilderness.

For in their wreck-strewn wastes
Of squandered fortunes, ruined lands,
Where famished fools perceive at last
Their wealth comes not to idle hands.

A mad, mad world! Ideals gone,
God scoffed at, morals disavowed,
Art beggared, mental work ill paid,
And jeered at by the vulgar crowd!

Dear old-time days, sweet old-time ways!
I let this vile new world rush by;
Amid your pleasures I have lived,
Amid your memories will I die.

—JOHN L. STODDARD.

DUTIES OF PARENTS.

No auxiliary endeavor at supervising young people can do more than furnish an external safeguard against some one or other of many threatening dangers. There can be no substitute for the care and guidance that is the bounden duty of parents towards the young lives entrusted to them.

The consciousness of responsibility for the life of another must be ever present to the Catholic father and mother desirous of fulfilling their own life duty in the sight of God. Indifference is entirely incompatible with good Catholic living for such parents. The neglect we see round about us every day spells the condemnation of the parent, just as surely as it indicates the spiritual ruin of the child.

The position of the parent cannot be lessened by any specious reliance on the well-meaning efforts of any helping organisation. A conscientious Catholic parent is compelled by the law of God to watch over the children in the home. Outside of the home the parent should know the companions of the child, the homes which it visits, and the places of pleasure that it seeks; and to know is not to accept mere appearances, but to have thoroughly investigated the conditions into which the child goes when outside the parent's personal care.

This is downright Catholic truth and Catholic parents

will do well in these difficult days to remind themselves constantly of this sacred duty and take thought continually as to any more thorough way of accomplishing it. Well performed, this duty still leaves many temptations open to the child of to-day. This duty skimmed or neglected, the child is lost and the parent has prepared shame for its old age and a terrible judgment hereafter.—*The Standard and Times*, Philadelphia.

THE FRESHMAN.

A young man who had gone from a country home to college, found things very different from what he had expected. His clothes looked shabby in his new environment, and he suspected that some of his classmates were inclined to amuse themselves at his expense. What was still worse, his work proved unexpectedly hard. There were gaps in his preparation so that keeping up with his class taxed all his powers. The poor fellow, anxious, disappointed, homesick, struggled with the temptation to give up, and go back to the farm, but again and again he straightened himself for the ordeal by the thought "I mustn't disappoint Mary."

Mary was the little sister at home, a little lame sister, who believed her brother the most wonderful and brilliant of created beings. As he thought of her, the struggling collegian clenched his hands and set his teeth. What did it matter that some of his classmates laughed at his awkward figure in the old frayed suit, since in Mary's eyes he was perfection. What did it matter that some of the instructors shook their heads and doubted his ability to keep up with the class? Mary believed in him. And whatever happened, he must not disappoint Mary.

The queer freshman who is the butt of jokes, not always good-natured, sometimes undergoes a very striking transformation before his senior year. No one laughed at Mary's brother when the end of the four years came, and he graduated at the head of his class. Already he had shown himself the stuff of which leaders are made. Already it was prophesied that he would go far, a prophecy realised in every detail. But he knew then and afterward that his life might have been a failure if it had not been for the fact that in his darkest, weakest hour, he could not bring himself to disappoint Mary.

Some of you sisters at home are following your brother who has gone out into the world with your yearning thought and your prayers. And no matter how strong or how wise that brother may be, he needs your help. He needs to be sustained by your faith in him. He needs to know that your confidence is something he must not shatter, that he owes it to you and himself to realise your hopes. Many a young man besides Mary's brother has come triumphantly through some crisis in his experience, because there was a sister at home that he could not disappoint.

THE DREADED DAWN.

Though Canon Sheehan is best known as a novelist, we have from his pen many beautiful lyrics. A remarkable allegory is "The Dreaded Dawn," to which is prefixed the quotation: I know nothing more touching, or perhaps more terrible, than the dawn of self-consciousness in the soul of a child.

"Ismene! we walked the sands together,
And I was winter and you were May;
But our love of the sea broke time asunder,
Made summer for both that livelong day.

Ismene! the hooded eve came down,
And shadow fell betwixt you and me;
And your brow grew troubled; you looked afar
O'er the purple wastes of the twilight sea.

Ismene! I said, 'Behold the night!
The hermit night and his sanctities
Of star and wave.' Then I ventured to look
In the fathomless depths of Ismene's eyes.

Ismene! I hoped that thy child-soul gazed
From eyes that were pure as the eyes of a fawn,
Alas! 'twas a woman's soul looked at me:
I was face to face with the dreaded dawn."

S. F. Aburn

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