

## COURTSHIP.—A LITTLE MESSAGE.

"Now this is what I call comfort," said Madge Harley as she sat down by her neighbor's fire one evening; "here you are at your sewing, with the kettle steaming on the hob, and the tea-things on the table, expecting every minute to hear your husband's step, and see his kind face look in at the door. Ah! if my husband was but like yours, Janet!"

"He is like mine in many of his ways," said Janet, with a smile, "and if you will allow me to speak plainly, he would be still more like him if you took more pains to make him comfortable."

"What do mean?" cried Madge; "our house is as clean as yours; I mend my husband's clothes, and cook his dinner as carefully as any one in the parish, and yet he never stays at home on an evening while you sit here by your cheerful fire right after night as happy as can be."

"As happy as can be here on earth," said her friend gravely; "yes, and shall I tell you the secret of it, Madge?"

"I wish you would," said Madge, with a deep sigh; "it is misery to live as I do now."

"Well, then," said Janet, speaking slowly and distinctly, "let my husband see that I love him still, and that I yearn every day to love him more. Love is the chain that binds him to his home. The world may call it folly, but the world is not my lawgiver."

"And do you really think," exclaimed Madge in surprise, "that husbands care for that sort of a thing?"

"For love, do you mean?" asked Janet.

"Yes; they don't feel at all as we do, Janet, and it don't take many years of married life to make them think of a wife as a sort of maid-of-all-work."

"A libel, Madge," said Mrs. Matson, laughing. "I won't allow you to sit in William's chair and talk so."

"No, because your husband is different, and values his wife's love, while John cares for me only as his house-keeper."

"I don't think that," said Janet, "although I know that he said to my husband the other day that courting time was the happiest of a man's life. William reminded him that there is greater happiness than that, even on earth, if men but give their hearts to Christ. I know John did not alter his opinion, but he went away still thinking of his courting time as a jilt too great to be exceeded."

"Dear fellow," cried Madge, smiling through her tears, "I do believe he was very happy then. I remember I used to listen for his steps as I sat with my dear mother by the fire, longing for the happiness of seeing him."

"Just so," said Janet; "do you ever feel like that now?"

Madge hesitated. "Well, no, not exactly."

"And why not?"

"O, I don't know," said Madge; "married people give up that sort of thing."

"Love, do you mean?" asked Janet.

"No, but what people call being sentimental," said Mrs. Harley.

"Longing to see your husband is a proper sentiment."

"But some people are ridiculously foolish before others," reasoned Mrs. Harley.

"That proves they want sense. I am not likely to approve of that, as William would soon tell you; all I want is that wives should let their husbands know they are still loved."

"But men are so vain," said Madge, "that it is dangerous to show them much attention."

Her friend looked up, "O, Madge, what are you saying? Have you, then, married with the notion that it is not good for John to believe that you love him?"

"No, but it is not wise to show that you care too much for them."

"Say I and him; do not talk of husbands in general but of yours in particular."

"He thinks quite enough of himself already, I assure you."

"Dear Madge," said Janet, smiling, "would it do you any harm to receive a little more attention from your husband?"

"Of course not. I wish he'd try," and Mrs. Harley laughed at the idea.

"Then you don't think enough of yourself already; and nothing would make you vain, I suppose?"

Madge colored, and all the more when she perceived that William Matson had come in quietly, and was now standing behind Janet's chair. This of course, put an end to the conversation. Madge retired to her own home to think of Janet's words, and to confess secretly that they were wise.

Hours passed before John Harley returned home. He was a man of good abilities, and well to do in the world, and having married Madge because he truly loved her, he had expected to have a happy home. But partly because he was served and sensitive, partly because Madge feared to make him vain, they had grown very cold to each other, so cold that John began to think the ale-house a more comfortable place than his own fire-side.

That night the rain fell in torrents, the winds howled, and it was not until the midnight hour had arrived that Harley left the public-house and hastened toward his cottage. He was wet through when he at length crossed the threshold; he was, as he gruffly muttered, "used to that"; but he was not used to the tone and look with which his wife drew near to welcome him, nor to find warm clothes by a crackling fire and slippers on the hearth; nor to hear no reproach for late hours, and neglect, and dirty foot-marks as he sat in his arm-chair. Some change had come to Madge he was very sure. She wore a

dress in blue, sugar-her-yellow, with a neat linen collar round the neck, and a cap, trimmed with white ribbons, on her head.

"You're smart Madge," he exclaimed at last; when he had stared at her for some time in silence. "Who has been here worth dressing for to-night?"

"No one until you came," said Madge half laughing.

"I! Nonsense; you didn't dress for me!" cried John.

"You won't believe, perhaps, but I did. I have been talking with Mrs. Matson this evening, and she has given me some very good advice. So now, John, what would you like for supper?"

John, who was wont to steal to the shelf at night and contest himself with anything he could find, thought Madge's offer too excellent to be refused, and very soon a large bowel of chocolate was steaming on the table. Then his wife sat down for a wonder, by his side and talked a little, and listened, and looked pleased, when at last, as if he could not help it, he said, "Dear old Madge!"

That was enough; her elbow somehow found its way then to the arm of his great chair, and she sat quietly looking at the fire. After a while John spoke again:

"Madge, dear, do you remember the old days when we used to sit side by side in your mother's kitchen?"

"Yes."

"I was a younger man then, Madge, and, as they told me, handsome; now I am growing older, plainer, doller, then—then you loved me do you love me still?"

She looked up in his face, and her eyes answered him. It was like going back to the old days to feel his arm around her as her head lay on his shoulder, and to hear once again the kind words meant for her alone.

She never once asked if this would make him "vain;" she knew, as if by instinct, that it was making him a wiser, a more thoughtful, more earnest-hearted man. And when, after a happy silence, he took down the big bible, and read a chapter, as he had been wont to read to his mother in former times, she bowed her head and prayed.

Yes, prayed—for pardon, through the blood of Jesus Christ—for strength to fulfill every duty in the future, for the all-powerful influences of the Spirit, for blessings on her husband evermore. She prayed—and not in vain.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY IN CONNECTICUT.

A correspondent of the Boston Post has been looking at the branch of the Oneida Community which is located at Wallingford, Connecticut. No one could possibly read his description of their little settlement without feeling that so far as social happiness goes, they have reached nearly to perfection. A colony of pleasant cottages, surrounded with magnificient orchards and flower beds, while the material industries of the people were conducted in a perfectly appointed silk factory, testify to the thrift and industry of the community. The social principles of these people, however, are apt to disconcert the ordinary Christian, who has looked with an admiring eye upon their results. This correspondent interviewed one of the aged of the community, and so far as we can judge from his eloquent exposition of the "communal" doctrine, we should say that its practice is not very much more immoral than the Mormon theory of communal life. The curious feature of the Oneida religious and physical law is that common interest of all in lands and property extends to women. If John Smith weds Sarah Jones she is no more his wife than any member of the community who takes a fancy to her. We extract a few sentences which seem to embody the pith of the Oneida doctrine, as set forth by one of the chief apostles:

Our doctrine is that the whole matter of love and its expression should be subject to enlightened self control. We regard it better in the early stage of passionate experience for the young of both sexes to associate in love with persons older than themselves, and if possible with those who are spiritual and have been some time in the school of self control, and are thus able to make safe and edifying. It is well understood by physiologists that it is undesirable for persons of similar characters and temperatures to mate together. We have discovered that it is undesirable for two inexperienced and unspiritual persons to rush into fellowship with each other; that it is far better for both to associate with persons of mature character and sound sense. If you take an interest in this matter, sir, I can explain further by saying that another general principle with us is that is not desirable for two persons, whatever may be their standing, to become exclusively attached to each other, however popular this may be with sentimental people generally. Another principle with us is that persons shall not be obliged to receive, under any circumstances, the attention of those whom they do not like. The great aim is to teach every one self-control, and this leads to the great happiness in love and the greatest love to all."

It is remarkable that there should be any body of Americans, however small, who can thus make a practical denial of the Christian belief in the sanctity of marriage. Yet these people do it, and there husbands take an infinitesimal share in their wives without any apparent susceptibility to that feeling which prompts other men to murder the violators of matrimonial sanctity.

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