HAPPINESS IN THE HOME.

Usually, if we have a precious possession we do not hold it lightly. It is a vase, a gem, a picture, a flower; it cost labor and trouble, care and expense to bring it to the adornment of our homes, and we are conscious of its value, and solicitous that it shall neither be marred nor mislaid. It is the tangible evidence of a part of our wealth, and we show how much we prize it by our tenderness in its handling, by the protection we bestow upon it, and the manner in which we display it to our friends.

There is an intangible and precious thing which may be a part of our personal wealth, but which is held by a tenure more subtle and less easy of definition than that by which we own the material possessions. I refer to our home happiness. Every household should be happy. Where, instead of being positively so, the home is only the abode of an indifferent tranquility, not to say stagnation, or still worse, where it is the scene of asperity, friction and petty strife, something is very wrong.

Even in the Christian household it is well not to take too much for granted. There are husbands and wives who are loyal to each other's slightest interests, who make daily sacrifices for each other's benefit, and who still have so fallen out of the habit of sweet lover-like demonstration, of daily petting and caressing, of tender compliment, that they would blush and grow embarrassed should they happen to indulge in what ought to be the everyday fashion and coin of their lives. Is there anything much sadder than to observe neglect, if not rudeness, in the manner of a husband to the wife who has been his life's partner for half that life, or to hear that acerbity of the tones and see coldness in the looks of a wife who should know her good man too well to put his love and temper to so trying a test.

Our babies get their full share of kisses and petting. Bless their dear little faces and helpless hands and feet. An infant's utter helplessness gives it a claim on every heart. But many a growing lad and lass, quite beyond the prettily interesting season of infancy, arrived at the awkward age of betwixt and between, when impulse is eager, and experience is slight, and youthful confidence is overbold, and temptations throng, would be better for more of love's expression in the home. We can not err in being too affectionate.

If love be made a daily ministrant to any one in this world, it should be so to the aged pilgrim, whose way has grown lonely, whose life has taken on the neutral tints of sober eve, and to whom, by reason of infirmity, the grasshopper is a burden. Even if old age be querulous and exacting, as sometimes it is, youth and strength should be patient and gentle.

The happiness of home is conserved by perfect openness as to the style of living which may be maintained therein. A home which is managed in a style which, though not extravagant, is a drain upon the family income, which keeps somebody wakeful at night, which it is a terrible strain to maintain honestly, is managed in a mistaken way. Better narrow quarters and plain furnishing than ample space and everlasting wrong. Better the simplest viands on the table than the menace of a bill at the butcher's and the fact of an increasing account with the grocer, and no money to pay it with. Better the dress of calico than the silken gown, if silk crowd out mental comfort and weave itself into wrinkles on the brow.

Home happiness is often imperiled by incessant fault-finding. A chronic fault-finder in the house is as pitiless a [illegible], and she blights the peace of [illegible] as surely as a frost destroys the [illegible] some [illegible] are the [illegible] ers where the young people live in dread of Aunt Mary or Uncle John, of papa or mamma, who are not only never satisfied, but who seem to think that duty demands that they shall wave and snap a whip over the heads of all with whom they come in contact. If any of us perceive in ourselves the faint beginnings of a fault-finding disposition, we should fight against and repress it with all our strength.

Home happiness is enlarged when the home is not too self centered. Nothing is more directly educational to children than frequent presence of honored and beloved guests, who bring with them a pleasant breeze from the outer world and break the usual routine by introducing new fields of thought. The amenities of life which should not be overlooked or slighted when the family is by itself, are seldom forgotten when there is company under the roof, and politeness—even ceremonious politeness—is a social lubricator.

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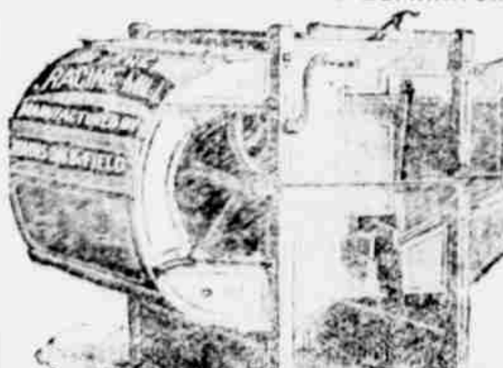

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[illegible] AMENDMENT [illegible]

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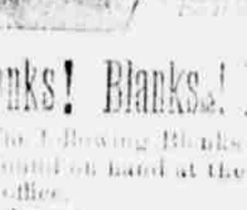

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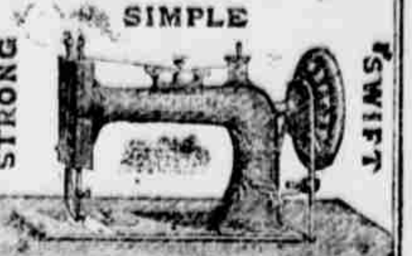

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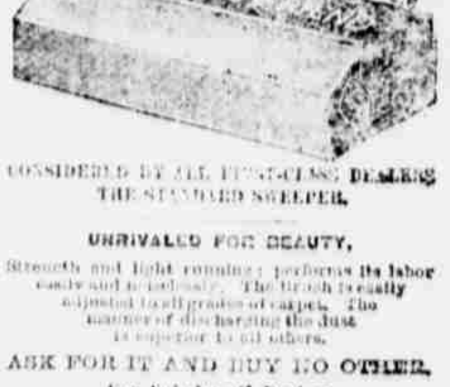

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