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WHEN TO SAY "NO."

How difficult it is to say "No!" Perhaps there is no word in the English language more hard to utter at the right moment. Alas! for the misery that is brought into many a home simply from the impossibility that a man finds in saying this little word firmly and once for all.

"Come, now, you are much too good a fellow to refuse to do a friend a good turn!"

"Any way, you are not so churlish as to decline to drink a glass with a neighbour!"

"You are not the man to throw cold water on such and such a scheme of amusement;"

And so, from the want of the moral courage to say No, the man yields; and to save himself the pain of a momentary mortification, he enters on a course of wrong doing, which, without he is stopped by some providential occurrence, will probably end in his misery and ruin.

A man has only got to look round him, in his own neighbourhood, amongst his own acquaintance, to see for himself that this is true. Well for him if he has not made experience of its truth for himself. Endless are the examples which might be brought forward.

For instance, there was Smith, a hard-working, industrious man, with a tidy wife and a family of young children. Every one liked Smith; he was such a kind-hearted fellow, always ready to lend a helping hand wherever help was wanted. He

was an honest, good man too, paid his way, always had his rent ready to a day; and though his home was a humble one, yet it was a happy and a respectable one. Unfortunately, Smith was no scholar. He did not see, he said, the good that came of so much book-learning. He tried to do his duty like an honest man, and that was enough for him.

But alas! that is not enough for any of us; we must have a higher motive for our actions, or we shall never stand firm when the hour of temptation comes. And so poor Smith found to his cost.

The day's work was over, and Smith was just taking up his basket of tools to return to his own home, when he was stopped by one of his fellow-workmen.

"Stay a minute, Smith."

"Well."

"I want you to do me a good turn."

"What is it? I will do anything I can to serve you."

"I know that; you are a thorough good fellow; and you see I have got into a bit of scrape. I want you to put your name to this piece of paper."

"Well," said Smith, "to be plain with you, I would rather not. I am not much of a scholar, and I do not know what I may be writing down."

"Writing down—only your name! There is no risk. I shall have the money long enough before it's wanted. I would not have asked every one; but you are such a good-hearted chap, I knew you would do me the kind turn."

But Smith still hesitated. He thought of his wife and his children at home; and scholar or no scholar, he knew quite well that he had better not put his name to the bill.

Jones saw his hesitation. "I am sure if I had thought you would have minded, I would not have asked you on any account," he cunningly resumed; "but you were the last man in the world I should have thought would have refused to help a friend in a pinch. I see I have made a mistake. I will ask somebody else."

Now Smith did not like to sign the paper; but still less did he like to be called un-neighbourly, or to have it supposed that he was not as ready as another to do a friend a good turn; so, taking up a pen, he scrawled his signature at the bottom of the page; and then, taking up his tools, went his way home. He did not, however, mention what he had done to his wife, but comforted himself as best he could that no harm would come of it, and soon he forgot the transaction altogether.

Some weeks passed away, when one day, on Smith's returning home from his work, his wife informed him there was a letter waiting for him.

The arrival of a letter was such a very unusual occurrence, that Smith asked rather anxiously whether his wife had opened it, and if so, what was in it.

"How should I know you would like me to break the seal? I do not know," replied the wife.

"Why, wife, whatever can it be about!" exclaimed Smith, as, opening the letter, he studied its contents for some time in silence; then passing it on to his wife, he added, "it looks as if it came from one of them law places."

Her anxiety being considerably heightened by this announcement, Mrs. Smith held out her hand for the letter. She was a better scholar than her husband, and it did not take her long to discover

that it was a notice from one of the Loan Societies, requiring that her husband should pay the sum of £10 to their account, on or before the next Saturday, the 12th instant, with the interest accumulated on the sum aforesaid.

"Why, James!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith, darting a quick suspicious glance at her husband, "whenever did you go to take up this money?"

"I take up money! I have never taken up a farthing!"

"What do they mean then by telling you you must repay these ten pounds?"

For an instant Smith was silent; then, the recollection of his transaction with Jones rushing back upon his memory, he answered uneasily:—

"Well, wife, I will not tell you a lie; I did put my name to a bit of a bill for Jones one day. I do not know whether this letter may have anything to do with that. But it can do me no hurt anyway; I have not had a penny of the money, and I know nothing about it whatever. No one can make me pay money as I have never had."

But though Smith repeated this latter asseveration several times over, as if to assure himself and his wife of its truth, yet neither of them were in reality a whit more convinced. Smith eat his supper gloomily and in silence; his wife said not one word; and the children, usually so full of talk and fun, slunk off to bed, feeling sure something was amiss, though they had no clear understanding of what was the matter.

Taking the letter with him, Smith walked down to the loan office before going to his work the following morning, and presenting the notice to one of the clerks, asked what it meant.

"Meant! why was not the notice clear enough that he must pay £10 and the interest on that sum!"

"But," urged Smith, "I have never had a farthing of the money!"

"Your friend Jones has had it, though."

"Then he should pay."

"It would be well for you if he would."

"I will go to him at once," said Smith.

"You will be a clever fellow if you find him," returned the clerk, insolently.

A confused idea that he had been taken in, imposed upon, and cheated, took possession of the unfortunate man, and turning to the clerk—

"Please, sir," he said, "I have never had any of the money; I am a poor man, and cannot pay such a sum; and it would be a cruel shame, that it would, to ruin an honest, hard-working man, by making him pay the debts of other folk."

"That is not our affair," returned the clerk; those who put their names to bills must see to their own safety. The money is owed to us, and the money must be paid."

"But I cannot pay it, and I shall not pay it!" returned Smith, fiercely.

"Very well," returned the man, coolly, "then we shall County Court you."

It was in vain to storm or fret; not a word more could Smith get from the clerk; so, shouldering his basket of tools, he walked straight away to Jones' lodgings. There was small comfort for him there; Jones had left for more than a week, gone away without paying his rent, and "Good riddance, too, of such a fellow," said the angry landlady, "a drunken, unprincipled man!"

"Did she not know where he was gone?"

"Not she, and she did not think any one else knew any better."

There was no help for it; Smith had already lost half-a-day's work; if he delayed longer, how did he know his master would not discharge him? and that would be disastrous, to lose his work at this particular moment: it would, indeed, be all over with him then. So, with a heavy heart, turning from the house of his treacherous friend, Smith hastened on towards the buildings where he was employed at work as a carpenter. What would he not now have given to have been able to undo the fatal deed that he had done! If he had but said "No," at the right moment, all the misery and ruin which now stared him in the face would have been averted. It was in vain to tell himself he did not mean to do wrong—he only thought to do a neighbourly act; how could he suppose Jones would behave like a rascal—spend the money and leave him to pay? He knew that he himself had acted weakly and wrongly; and not all the excuses he could invent could alter this one disagreeable truth. There was no use either to turn his thoughts in the other direction, and fancy the Loan Society might not press their claim, or that if they did press it, they might fail to recover their debt; however he might argue the point, he knew there was no hope of escape; he saw the County Court just close before him, and beyond, the walls of a prison rose darkly to his view.

Poor Smith! he thought his was a very hard case; and it was none the less hard that he had brought his misfortune on himself.

If any lingering hope had remained in his mind that perhaps, after all, the storm might blow over, it was cruelly disappointed by the arrival of the summons. There was no help for it; he must appear in court, with the pleasant knowledge that if judgment is given against him, he will be worse off than ever—debt and interest as before, whilst the court fees would then be added to swell up the amount.

Smith knows that his case is desperate; if he has to pay the money, then he is a ruined man; and turning eagerly towards the judge about to give sentence—

"Sir,—please your honour," he exclaimed, beseechingly, "it is not my debt. I have never had a farthing of the money."

The judge, who was a kind-hearted man, touched by the sight of his evident distress, paused for a moment: and taking up the bill which Smith had so heedlessly signed,

"Tell me," he said, "is this your hand-writing?"

"Yes, it is my hand-writing, sure enough," returned Smith; "but it is not my debt, your honour; it is not my debt."

"But, my good man, do you not see that when you signed your name to this paper, you made this debt your own?"

"No, please your honour, Jones said he should have the money ready long afore it was wanted. It is a cruel hard shame to ruin me for him, your honour."

"It is a very sad thing for you, that you should have been so weak as to put your name to the bill; but since you have done so, I have no choice left but to order that you should pay the money. You ought to have known what you were doing,

and if you did not like to take the risk, you should have refused to sign the paper."

Judgment given against Smith with costs.

Smith hears the sentence and returns to his home a broken-hearted man. And well he may be broken-hearted. Everything for which he has been labouring through his whole life—is lost at one throw. For years he has been working hard to keep his home comfortable, to bring up his children respectably, to pay his way like an honest man. True, he has not been able to put by anything against a rainy day; but hitherto he has owed nothing to any one, and there lives not the man who can say a word against his good name. But what is to become of him now! Where is he to raise the money to pay this bill, with all its attendant expenses! Who will lend it to him! and even could such a friend be found, how is he to discharge the debt which he would thus incur? Will it not hang upon him and drag him back for months—nay, perhaps, even for years to come? And yet if the money is not forthcoming, there will be no help for it, the bailiffs must seize every scrap of furniture he possesses: that furniture which has cost him so many hours of hard labour to get together; but which, now seized and sold at any sacrifice, may not, perhaps, bring in even money sufficient for the discharge of the debt: and then what remains—a prison for himself—the workhouse for his wife and children! No wonder that as Smith thinks of the future, he covers his face with his hands, and groans in the bitterness of his spirit.

Now, this picture is not overdrawn; this is not an imaginary story, sketched to suit a particular

purpose: there is not a County Court in the kingdom that does not bear record to its truth; there is not a district of which two or three such stories may not be told; and yet, in spite of the warning voice thus raised, men hear these things, read of them, see them, and then go away and do likewise. The unprincipled man raises and spends the money, which his easy, kind-hearted security is left to repay. And all this misery and wretchedness might be avoided, if men would but learn to say "No" to a first temptation.

It is absurd to argue that there is no use in endeavouring to put a stop to the evil so long as loan societies are allowed to exist; you might as well affirm that there is no use in trying to suppress vice so long as sin is permitted in the world. There is no doubt that the existence of loan societies leads to many a great and crying evil; but the fault is not so much in the societies as in the men who apply to them. If men would be true to themselves, these societies would cease to be an evil at all; nay, more—for just as a poison, rightly applied, may become a useful medicine, so might these societies, under wise regulations, become a source of benefit to the community, instead of being, as now they undeniably are, a fruitful cause of misery and crime.

See to it then, men, for it rests with you to destroy the evil influence of these loan societies, even should you fail to render them, what it is quite possible they might become—a benefit to honest, hard-working men—who, through their agency, might obtain the passing assistance, all they need to get them through some sudden and unlooked-for difficulty. It is quite possible, how-

ever, that the facility thus offered to a man for getting out of a scrape, might prove a dangerous precedent; and there is no doubt that it is far wiser to live upon your means, whatever they may be, than to have recourse even to the most legitimate method of raising money to meet a temporary want. "He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing," says the old proverb, and every man who has ever borrowed money knows that this is true. Still, circumstances often arise in which the loan of a sum of money for a few days or weeks sets a man all straight again; and then the loan society is certainly of use; whilst to an honest, high-principled man borrowing money is hardly such a pleasant occupation, that he will be tempted to repeat the act unnecessarily.

It is surely a false argument which many people employ when they say, that to get rid of an evil, you must do away with temptation. "How can you expect," they ask, "that a poor man will turn away from the easy method offered to him of getting out of a present difficulty? Remove the temptation, and the man is safe; destroy the loan societies, and you render it so hard for the man to borrow the money, that you take from him the very thought and wish of doing so."

This may be true: but is not this a very cowardly way of getting out of the difficulty? Supposing you wanted to bring up your child hardily, what course of action would you pursue? Would you keep it in a hot room, coddled up in warm clothing, never allowing it to breathe the fresh air of heaven, removing from its reach everything with which it could possibly hurt itself, and watching all its movements and

actions from morning till night, to see that it came to no harm? Every one knows what would be the result of such a training as this. If the child lived to grow up at all, it would live to become a poor miserable creature, without spirits, without courage, without energy, unfit to help itself, unable to be of use to others. But accustom the same child from its infancy to take care for itself; let its lungs be expanded with good pure air; let its limbs be strengthened by proper exercise, and its body nourished with good wholesome food; let its mind be early trained to the practice of self-denial; let it learn to avoid danger, not by removing the hurtful cause, but by teaching it to estimate it aright, so that it may either avoid it prudently, or else boldly confront and conquer it. What would be the natural result of training such as this? Will not the boy, with God's blessing, grow up into the strong healthy man, whose arm may defend his country, whose true brave heart will make the happiness of his home and of all connected with him?

And it is the same in things moral as it is in things physical. If you are always removing temptations out of a man's way, how do you ever expect him to learn to overcome them? And so with regard to these loan societies: there is no doubt that they do throw very great stumbling-blocks in the path of the working man; they offer a sore temptation to a person pressed at the moment for a little ready money, by the easy facility with which they enable him to raise it. But what then! is this a reason for doing away with the societies altogether? If to avoid temptation is our object, we must go out of the

world, and so give up the very aim and object of our being, which is, so to pass the time of our trial here, that we may pass an eternity of peace and rest in heaven. True, we cannot fight the battle in our own strength; if we try to do this, we shall certainly be beaten; and it is because we will seek to do this that we are so constantly defeated. Let us go forward and conquer temptation in the strength of the Lord; we shall find this will be far better for us than merely having the snare withdrawn from our path. The one will strengthen our moral nature; the other will merely debilitate it, and so make us more liable to fall again on the next opportunity.

It is not the mere presence of a temptation that makes a man yield to it—every one will allow that. There may be a deep pit dug in the road by which you go to your daily work; but, because the pit lies in your direct path, you need not step into it, need you? Of course, if a man chooses to do so, he may walk straight into it, tumble down it, and so break his limbs or his neck. And it is perfectly true, that if the pit had not been there for him to walk into, he would not have lost his life. But what then! was it the pit's fault, or the man's? Could he not have walked round the pit, had he been so inclined, and so have avoided all risk and harm?

To say "No" to a first temptation is comparatively easy—to yield in the vain hope that hereafter you will be able to say the word, is folly and impiety; for it is nothing else than to tempt the Almighty, by supposing that He will work an especial miracle in your favor, by snatching you from the consequences of your own misconduct:

for without the grace of God be interposed, to save the man who voluntarily enters on a course of wrong-doing, let him be well assured, that he will never be able to draw back of himself.

Had you told Jones, for instance, when he borrowed a pound to go to the Hampton Races, that the act of which at the time he thought so lightly, would lead in the end to his becoming a swindler, he would most probably have given you the lie direct; and yet that one act was the beginning of a course of wrong-doing, of which he is now suffering the punishment, a convicted felon in a penal settlement.

Nor is Jones a solitary example. Look at Jackson, a clever, intelligent man, a first-rate workman, who can at any time earn with ease his thirty shillings or two pounds a week. But this does not content him, he wants more, and he wants to get it quickly, and without the drudging of working for it. He knows that many of his fellow-workmen accumulate large sums rapidly by betting, gambling, and speculations of various kinds; but though Jackson has never been a religious, yet hitherto he has been a moral man, and he has shrunk from having anything to do with dishonest and underhand dealings; but instead of separating himself from dangerous companionship, and determining to content himself merely with making the most of his own honest earnings, he has allowed his mind to dwell so constantly on the desire of making large and rapid gains, that at length when one of his companions observed to him casually, as they were leaving the workshop together,

"If you have got a ten-pound note to spare, Jackson, I can turn it into twenty for you,"

Jackson was wholly unprepared to resist the temptation, and instead of at once refusing to listen to the suggestion, and bidding the tempter go about his business, he answered evasively,—

"How should I have a ten-pound note! It is only fellows like you who have money to throw away. I never have a shilling to play with."

"Then it is entirely your own fault," returned Brown, "a clever chap like you should always have money in hand."

"It is easy saying so."

"Well, but I offer you the chance."

"But I tell you I have not the money," answered Jackson, with a slight sigh.

"What so easy as to raise it!"

"How?"

"Any Loan Society in London will do it for you."

Jackson hesitated. He had never yet borrowed a farthing from any man, nor did he wish to be beholden to such assistance; still the bait was tempting. It was impossible to say "No" at once to so good an offer. Brown saw his hesitation, and added,—

"If it is only the security you are thinking about, no difficulty whatever in arranging that. It is a sure card I offer you. I will be security; and so I answer for it, will Green, or Smith, or Tomlins, or any of our fellows. A month hence, you can repay the money, and pocket the ten pounds profit."

Ten pounds! it would be a famous nest-egg to speculate with—the nucleus of who might say what fortune in time to come! So Jackson followed his companion into the office of a neighbouring Loan Society, and without any difficulty whatever obtained the loan.

Brown, who had his own objects to serve, in his apparent zeal for his friend, took care that the speculation should turn out as successfully as he had promised. The ten pounds were turned into twenty. The loan was repaid. Jackson treated his friends to a bottle to drink to his success, and still found himself with funds at his disposal. And so the very ease with which everything had been managed, tempted him, as it has tempted thousands of others, to enter on a course which seems to promise all pleasure and profit, but which for the most part ends in a man's utter ruin.

There is a strange fascination in the gambling of speculation—an excitement that keeps a man's interest alive—something new, something fresh, something stirring. He has made a fortunate hit—a little more he will double it—he has lost! Well, let him try again, and he will win it back with interest; and so on—on—on—and still on a man is drawn—till, like the moth, which has so long fluttered round and round the light, once too often he tempts his fate, and falls to the ground writhing in agony.

Having tasted the sweets of this fatal excitement, Jackson could no longer settle steadily to the drudgery of his daily work. What harm, he asked himself, had come of this first venture? Why, harm sufficient, if he went voluntarily to seek the companionship of a man whom he had always hitherto avoided; knowing him to be utterly wanting in principle, and the leader of a fast bad set.

That Jackson, lured on by his success, would come and seek his advice in future speculations, was exactly what Brown had hoped would take place.

Several of his doings of late had brought an evil reputation on his name, and he foresaw that if he could not infuse new blood into his clique, his days of rapid winnings were gone by. Jackson was just the man of whom he was in search—prompt, intelligent, acute—with a reputation for fair and upright conduct, on which no imputation had ever yet been cast. It was worth some outlay and trouble to get such a man for himself, and to do him justice, Brown spared neither one nor the other; and so Jackson, though far too clever a man not to discern before long the ruling motives of his companion's actions, yet allowed himself to be drawn on by his ever-increasing thirst for gain, till he found himself entangled in the inextricable shackles of debt and difficulty.

Like many other clever workmen, Jackson was a man of very irritable temper, and the excitement of his present mode of life was not likely to exercise a soothing influence; and although he had at first sufficient self-control to confine his outbursts of passion to his own home, where his wife and children led a sorry life of it, yet gradually the same want of temper became perceptible in his transactions with his employers. He had worked for the same firm for so many years, and was such a first-class artizan, that for a long time the Messrs. Boothbys passed over his irritable speeches with no further notice than a gentle reprimand. Encouraged perhaps by this very kindness, or irritated by some more than usually heavy loss, Jackson one day let his temper so far get the better of him, as to refuse to execute an order, unless he might do it in his own way, and at his own time. In a large establishment, insubordi-

nation such as this could not of course be overlooked, and Jackson received an intimation that for the future he must look for work elsewhere.

Clever workman as he was, he would have had no difficulty whatever in obtaining it, but then he must have applied to Messrs. Boothby for a character, and it would have been too galling to his pride that it should be said he had been discharged through any fault of his own. It was easier to go to Brown, and take counsel with him as to the best means of raising a sum of money to meet present emergencies. This was the very point to which Brown had sought to bring him. Instead of being the tempted, Jackson was now in his turn to become the tempter, and lure others into the same snare which had been so fatal to himself.

But seared though it was, Jackson's conscience was not yet wholly destroyed: nor had he yet brought himself to the pass of being able to raise money with the deliberate purpose of leaving his unfortunate security to pay the debt. It was in vain that Brown laughed at his scruples, Jackson could not be brought to do the deed.

"Well, just as you please," said Brown, "there are three things before you; you can take which you please—work, borrow, or starve;" and without another word he turned and left his companion to his own reflections.

They were sufficiently bitter; and as Jackson thought what his home had once been, contrasting it with what it was now; as he remembered what his future life had once promised, and what was the reality now before him, he cursed Brown bitterly in his spirit, as the cause of all his degradation. Should he not rather have looked

nearer home, and pronounced condemnation on the true criminal? Had he but said "No" at the right moment, all might have been well. Could he but now summon up courage to say the word to his present temptation, past errors might yet be redeemed. Work! yes, he could work: he knew that at this very moment, if he were only so inclined, he could get as much work as he needed. But then, if he determined to work his way out of his difficulties, he must forswear all the excitement which had now become almost necessary to his existence; he must give up many an indulgence to which he had now become accustomed; he must go without many a comfort which had now grown to be thought a necessity; he must be up early; he must go to bed late; he must toil, toil, toil, from one week's end to another, and for many a week to come, before he could hope to find himself set free from the engagements in which he had so recklessly involved himself. This was not a pleasant prospect to a man in Jackson's present frame of mind.

Well, then, he could starve; that was one of the alternatives which Brown had put before him. But if the idea of work was not an agreeable one, the idea of starvation was still less inviting. Well, then, what remained? Jackson knew well enough what remained; crime and infamy were before him; and with his eyes wide open, he rushed headlong into the path which he knew would end in utter ruin and destruction.

No need to trace the downward steps by which this end was reached. One glance more: the picture is a sad one, but it is drawn from the life.

In a miserable room in one of the small back

streets of the suburbs of London, a man lies, to all appearance, dying. Haggard, unshaven; who would recognise, in features distorted by debauchery, in limbs shrunk by sickness, the once active, intelligent artizan? The room is quite in keeping with the appearance of its wretched occupant. It is utterly denuded of furniture. The very bed on which Jackson is lying is only a heap of straw. The children, those who are still with their parents —for the two eldest are gone to ruin long ago— are crouching in one corner of the room, trying whether, by huddling altogether, they can impart some ray of warmth to each other on that miserable, cold, snowy day. Clothes they have none; for those dirty rags, which do not even cover their nakedness, are not worthy of the name. The wife—once a pretty bright-eyed woman, now half-starved, a mere skeleton, with sunken cheeks and livid complexion—sits on the ground by the side of her husband's bed, looking into vacancy with that meaningless stare which results from utter degradation of mind and body. She has suffered so much, that a little more or a little less of wretchedness makes no difference to her now. And so she hears the heavy tread of men's footsteps on the stairs without taking the slightest notice; and when the door opens, and two powerful looking men walk into the room with the air of persons accustomed to exercise authority and to be obeyed, she does not even turn her head to look at them, but sits still in the same attitude, her hands clasped over her knees, gazing on in blank despair; whilst the children, crouching still further into their dark corner, eye the visitors with dull curiosity, and patiently wait for

what is coming next. Accustomed as the bailiffs were, day by day, to see sights of misery, there was something in the utter destitution of that miserable home, that touched even their sympathies; and without a word as to the object for which they had come, one of the men walked up to the woman's side, and laying his hand upon her shoulder, said kindly, "Is he so very bad, my good woman? We must see if we cannot send some one to help you."

The unusual tone of kindness in which the bailiff spoke, startled the poor creature as no words of abuse would have done; and shivering all over, she exclaimed, "He is a-dying—dying fast, and there is none to comfort him, none to say a kind word for him. Oh, my God! my God! what will become of him?"

A deep groan from the dying man showed that he had still consciousness of that which was passing around him. But what comfort could the bailiff give? He could only turn away, and beckoning to his companion, they left the room as quietly as they could tread.

"Who would have thought it, Jenkins?" he said, as they found themselves in the outer court again; "it is Jackson who used to work for Boothbys. He was such a smart, clever man; who would have thought it would ever come to this?

And what had brought him to this? Not the existence of the loan societies, surely, although they had furnished him with the means of ruining himself. Was it not rather that the man had wanted the moral courage to say "No" at the right opportunity? He had never been accustomed to say it to himself—to his own covetous

desires and passions; little wonder, then, that he could not say it when the necessity met him from without. He had allowed his mind to dwell so constantly on the desire of rapidly acquiring wealth, that at length he had lost the power to subdue the eager longing; and so, when the tempter crossed his path, instead of resolutely turning aside, he listened, longed, and fell. The fault was in the man himself, not in the fact that, when he had yielded to the temptation, the means of gratifying his desires were ready at hand for him to take hold of.

It has been granted, fully granted, that the loan societies hold out great temptations to a working man; and could the societies be done away with wholly, it would be without question a great boon to a large portion of the community. But the question is, whether, in such a country as England, they can be done away with; and thoughtful men have come to the conclusion, that in the present state of our commercial relations, with the actual necessity for possessing some amount of capital, it would be hopeless for any man of small means ever to attempt to carry out successfully any scheme, however well-intentioned or judiciously thought out, without he had some such assistance as, for the most part, can only be given through the agency of these loan societies. "And would it be right," they ask, "for the sake of guarding the weak from temptation, to deprive the industrious intelligent artisan of the only means by which he can make his ingenuity or his labour available?"

"What is one man's food is another man's poison;" and the old proverb is undoubtedly

true: but then he is the cleverest and the wisest man who, knowing this, can yet convert his poison into food. And that it can be done is proved—for scientific men are doing that which is equivalent to it every day in the year, when they make the most deadly poisons subservient to the most beneficial uses; and the medicine which would kill in one form, becomes, in another, the tonic which re-invigorates and strengthens the whole system. It is not in the use, but in the abuse of a thing that the mischief invariably lies. Take an example in illustration of this truth.

In a small but cheerful-looking room, with its bright fire, closed curtains, cleanly swept-up hearth, and well-trimmed lamp upon the table, a man was sitting, his whole attention absorbed in some calculations which he was making. His dress was that of a mechanic; but the expression of his face, and his whole manner and bearing, showed him to be one of no ordinary stamp. His forehead was broad and massive; his eyes deep-set, but clear; and his thin lips, firmly compressed, bespoke the calm determination of his character. At the present moment, however, his expression was rather that of painful thought than of fixed decision; and at length, turning to his wife, he said slowly, and with a voice that slightly trembled,

"It is of no use, Susy, I have tried it every way, it is of no use; I must give it up."

"Oh, do not say that," exclaimed his wife, as, putting down the work in which she had been busily employed, she came and stood by his side, resting one hand caressingly on his shoulder, "do not say that, William, and after all these hours, and days, and nights you have spent upon it!"

"It is not the time I mind," replied Weston; "that has not been wasted if the thing never sees the light; the hours I have spent over it have done me good; I understand many a truth I never so much as thought on before. I do not begrudge the time; but what cuts me to the quick is, to see my success—for, wife, mark my words, it is a great success, and if I do not bring it out, some one else will—to see it, I say, taken out of my own hands, and appropriated by another, all for want of a few pounds to help just at the right moment. It is enough to drive a man mad, that is what it is."

"It is very, very vexatious," replied the wife, soothingly; "but, perhaps there is a way yet, dear William. Think how often we have been helped just at the right moment, and in the way we did not expect. We should try to be hopeful and patient, William."

The strong man turned and hid his head on his wife's shoulder, and for the moment he felt she was stronger than he; but he did not speak, neither did his wife, she only passed her hand with a light touch over his forehead, soothing him with an almost magnetic charm.

"Have you tried whether Jem will help you?" she said at last.

"Yes, I went to him yesterday," returned the husband, raising his head from his wife's shoulder and speaking in a firmer tone of voice, "but he said he could do nothing."

"And the masters, would not they lend you the money?"

"Not they; they would want all the credit of the invention for themselves."

"How much would do, William?"

"Thirty pounds might do, not a farthing less."

"Thirty pounds! that is a great sum."

"No need to tell me that, Susan."

"Well, well, I did not say it to discourage you; only it did sound large just at first, William. You know it is not what I like or what I would counsel in a general way," continued Mrs. Weston, after a moment's pause, "but in such a case as this, why should you not raise the money? There are plenty of societies that would be glad enough to let you have it."

"But then there is the repaying it, Susy!"

"Of course there is; but you have said all along there was no doubt of your success; all that you wanted was a little temporary assistance, and when once the machine was at work, money would come in fast."

"Yes, I have said so," returned Weston, "because I know, sooner or later, it is sure to be the case. But who is to say I am to be the fortunate man? It is not always the inventor who makes the money; for the most part, men thrive and grow rich upon other men's brains."

"Oh, William, it is not like you to speak so bitter; you are down-hearted to-night."

"Well, may-be I am; and small wonder."

Again there was a pause: Mrs. Weston hardly knew what to suggest, when her husband resumed—

"And suppose I did what you say, Susan, who would be my securities?"

"Surely that need not be a trouble;" and Mrs. Weston named half-a-dozen men.

"But worse still, Susan; suppose I cannot pay when the time comes, and the loss falls upon them, what then? I could bear anything but to forfeit my good name."

"No need to take such a gloomy view, William; let the worst come to the worst, we have furniture to sell."

"What, wife!" exclaimed Weston, almost fiercely, "sell you out of house and home, make the children beggars, and all because I would not give up a scheme of my own! I am not quite such a selfish brute as that, neither."

"You have been a good husband to me for years, William," returned his wife, "and a better father to his children never walked the earth; it is very hard if we cannot do something for him who is always so ready to do everything for us. I have got hands to work with, William, and I am willing to make them work at anything that is of use to you. And as to the children—they are strong and hearty, and it would be a shame indeed if they could not be put about a bit when their father wants their assistance. If you thrive we shall all thrive with you; it would be hard lines if we could not be content to rough it with you too. For better, for worse—that is what we took each other for, was it not, Will? And, please God, we will hold fast to our word."

If there is a time for all things in this world, there is surely a time to say "Yes," as well as "No;" and Weston, although somewhat reluctantly, allowed himself to be over-persuaded; and on the following day the loan was taken up, the matter of securities, as Mrs. Weston had foretold, being very easily and quickly arranged; Weston's character stood so high as a sober, industrious,

high-principled man, that his friends were quite ready to take the risk, which they knew quite well he would never leave them to bear alone.

Mrs. Weston, meanwhile, determined not to be idle on her part. She knew that her husband had only yielded to her persuasions, and she therefore felt that the responsibility of the action was her own. Hitherto, it had not been necessary for her to help out the weekly expenditure by her own earnings. Her husband's wages were so good, that her time and services were better employed in attending to the wants of her own family than in gaining a few additional shillings. Now, however, the case was altered. By her advice, a debt had been incurred; and, until that debt had been discharged, she could not honestly call her time her own. A person who, like Mrs. Weston, can turn her hand to anything, need never want employment: accordingly, she no sooner sought for it than she found it. Withdrawing her eldest daughter for a time from school, she deputed to her the fulfilment of the household duties, inspiring little Susy with a positive pleasure and pride in her work, by making her feel that she was a person of consequence, old enough to be a real help to father and mother. John, too, the eldest boy, must needs be of use as well as Susy, and so work was found for him; and although it only brought in a shilling or two a-week, yet it was so much added to the family store. And so, thanks to Mrs. Weston's clever management, and the spirit with which the whole family worked to achieve one common object, the greater part of Weston's wages were laid aside to repay the loan, whilst the father

worked on with such a hearty will, and, owing to the timely supply of money which he had obtained, with such a rapid success, that before the period had elapsed for which the thirty pounds had been borrowed, Weston's invention was perfected, and scientific men had endorsed his own opinion, that it would be "a great success."

The loan was repaid with interest, and Weston, without debt or encumbrance, found himself free to start in the career which has since provided him with a respectable independence. And so it has come to pass, that, in his case, the existence of loan societies, instead of being a snare and temptation, a cause of unhappiness and misfortune, have proved to him the mainspring of all his after prosperity.

Nor need this story be a dangerous precedent. Because Weston borrowed wisely and repaid honestly, can be no reason why another man should borrow recklessly, and dishonestly repudiate his debt. Half measures are proverbially mischievous: either you must follow to the letter the plan which Weston adopted, or you must not blame him for having lured you by his example into the commission of an act which, in your case, instead of succeeding, has ended in the misery of yourself and every one dependent upon you.

It is always dangerous to over-state an argument, and never fair to hear only one side of a question. No good ever comes from keeping the truth out of sight; and that is why the case of Weston has been placed side by side with those of Smith and Jackson; and each man may judge for himself how far what has been brought forward is founded on fact, for all these cases are of

constant occurrence, not, of course, as regards the details of the stories, but as regards the principles involved. Because a man borrows money, he need not of necessity be either a rogue or a swindler; if this were inevitable, the English people would indeed be in a sad plight. The points to be considered are these:—"For what cause is the money borrowed?" "In what spirit do you set about repaying the debt?"

If money is raised merely to satisfy the indulgence of a man's appetites and passions; if it is wanted simply to gratify his mad spirit of speculation, or to promote his eager making haste to be rich, depend upon it, that loan will do the man no good, for money borrowed in this spirit will never make its possessor practise self-denial sufficient to get quit of the debt; it will only serve to stimulate still further the bad passions, which will plunge him eventually into certain poverty, possible crime.

But on the other hand, it would be cruel to deny to the working man and the mechanic the same privilege to which our merchants and bankers owe so large a portion of their prosperity and wealth: and if a man sees that he can attain to an honest independence by obtaining the temporary assistance which the loan societies are prepared to afford, and if he determines, in a spirit of sturdy self-denial, to forego all unnecessary expenditure till he has worked his way out of debt, surely it would be unjust, and impolitic too, to debar a man from the possibility of obtaining such assistance, by doing away with the societies from whence alone it can be given. We can only repeat what we have already said—it rests with a

man himself. He can, if he pleases, take up a knife and kill himself: he can, if he chooses, use the knife for the purposes for which it was intended, and so convert an instrument of death into a useful servant.

One word of caution more to those who, not being principals in the transaction, are too often left to bear all the loss, whilst they have received none of the benefits. People are very fond of declaiming against present grievances: this, at least, is not an evil of modern times; as long ago as the days of the wise king of Israel, Solomon warned his people:—"He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hateth suretyship is sure."

Surety for a stranger—herein lies the whole pith of the matter. If a person will be so foolish as to put his name to a bill to oblige a man with whom he has perhaps no more than a "Hail fellow, well met" acquaintance, and this simply because he is so easy-tempered he cannot bear to say "No," choosing rather to run the risk of ruining himself and his family than to be called "unneighbourly;" what can you expect of such a man as this, but that he will smart for his deed? If you become surety for a man whom you know leads a fast life, spends more than he earns, associates with a dissipated bad set, and if you promise to become his surety for the repayment of £20 when you know that you have not got £5 between you both in the world, what can you look for but to repent of your folly?

But more than this. If you meant to do a kind act, you have failed in your purpose. In nine cases out of ten, to become security for such

a man, is only to give him the opportunity of sinking himself still lower in the social scale, and of adding to his former misdemeanours, that of having involved his security in the same ruin with himself. It does seem almost an insanity that, month after month, year after year, men should be found ready to repeat the very same act by which they have seen their companions involved in every conceivable disaster; whereas, if they would but take the common precaution of ascertaining the habits and characters of those for whose honesty and solvency they make themselves responsible, all the mischief of the system would at once be done away.

The same mercantile regulations which cause the necessity for borrowing capital, oblige likewise the existence of securities; and the obligations of family or friendship may bind a man at times to incur some risk; let him only be sure of the man for whose rectitude of purpose, honesty, firmness, and energy he becomes responsible, it is not often that he will find cause to repent of the deed.

Men see to it. Acts of Parliament will not help you; arbitrary measures of restraint will not help you. It rests with yourselves to protect yourselves. If you only so will it, loan societies can never harm you; you have it in your own power to convert them from tyrannical masters into useful servants. Be but patient in well-doing, true to your word, faithful to your God, and who is he that will harm you, so long as ye be followers of that which is good?

JARROLD AND SONS, PRINTERS, LONDON STREET, NORWICH.

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14943

HOW DO PEOPLE HASTEN DEATH?

OR

PLAIN WORDS FOR PLAIN FOLKS.

BY

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LONDON:

LADIES' SANITARY ASSOCIATION, 14A, PRINCE'S STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.;

JARROLD AND SONS, 12, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Statistics of Death, A.D. 1854—Hereditary Maladies, and how to correct them—Deaths in Infancy—From Carelessness—From Ignorance—From Parents' Indifference—From Adulteration of Food—From Suffocation—Epidemics—The Young Lady who dies—The Young Wife who dies—The Sempstress who dies—The "Social Evil" which kills—Death from Over-haste—Victims to the Lives of others—"Broken Hearts"—How a Son can kill his Mother—How a Father can kill his Children—Death from Joy—Bad Food—Cookery—The Lady Cook—Cleanliness—Baths and Wash-houses—Fresh Air—A Day in the Country—Prevention better than Cure—Curious Case of Vitality and Longevity—"Falling Asleep."

WHY DO PEOPLE HASTEN DEATH?

In the year 1854, when the cholera prevailed, 437,905 persons were reported to have died in England and Wales. A fraction more than 1199 died in one day; a fraction more than 49 died in one hour; and $\frac{49}{60}$ died in one minute.

In many cases the death of one person represents the grief of a whole family; consequently, the amount of sorrow involved in the above statistical number of deaths is incalculable. The question here is: how far death, which is commonly attributed to the "will of God," happens rather from neglect of His laws, and is, therefore, to be prevented by human means? This question strikes me, in the first place, most forcibly in the mortality of infants, of which the proportion is always very great.

Upon this point I address myself especially to those who are, or who hope to be, mothers. The care of the mother for her child ought to begin from the hour in which a woman is conscious that another life than her own is encompassed by her. In China this truth is so well understood that a birthday is there dated nine months before a child enters the world. Great regard, in considering a man's constitution and disposition, ought to be paid to the habits of the parents —of the mother especially—during, and even before, those nine months. In the present state of society in England

and other overcrowded countries, parents of all classes have generally some hereditary taint—moral or physical—to combat against in the management of their offspring.

I am no preacher, but I do not hesitate to declare that hereditary diseases of the body are almost always, if not invariably, the consequence of sin, or of departure from God's natural laws, on the part of the child's parents or forefathers. It is thus that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children of the third and fourth generation. For example: a man is a drunkard; he begets a child. The mother, during the period before the child's birth, is exposed to brutality, and to all the miseries and anxieties of a drunkard's wife. Perhaps, to drown the sense of care, she follows her husband's example, and drinks also. In due course of time the child is born; and a miserable child it is to what God meant it to be :—ailing, fretful, subject to convulsions, perhaps an idiot. The milk in the mother's breasts is dried up, or devoid of nourishment. Awakened too late to the sense of their imprudence, the parents possibly would now deny themselves anything to save the life of this child. They send for a doctor. But what can the doctor do? Something perhaps, but not much. Even at this extremity the mother can do more than the doctor. She alone, by unremitting care, and patience, and watchfulness, and *cleanliness*, can give her child a chance of living. She alone can redeem the errors of which her child is the victim; and, if he live, can, by her management of his health in infancy, and by helping him, as he grows older, to overcome the bad tendencies which, in all probability, he has inherited from her and his father, make life something more like a blessing than a curse to himself and to others. The mother can, alone, do this I say? No, not quite. Her husband must help her. What can a woman effectually do in such a case, without a husband's help and support? If he be out late at night, pursuing his own selfish pleasure, how can she be up early in the morning pursuing her duty to his child? If

the man will not work and save money, how can the woman nurse his child, and feed and clothe it? If the man make the woman miserable, how can she, weeping, teach his child to smile? And better that a child should die in his first infancy, than live to know himself to be the victim of the sin and selfishness of either of his parents. Better that he should die, the unconscious victim of their bad habits contracted before or after his birth, than be a living exponent of the foul taint of hereditary sin, uncorrected by education —be one of the band of juvenile criminals (of the mass of children whose parents have sinned against God's written and natural laws) which band, notwithstanding all that legislation, wholesome institutions, and good men and women are doing to lessen it, is still too formidably large not to make all who think, tremble for the next generation.

But the picture of a man and woman—father and mother —standing by the side of a little coffin which contains all that remains on earth of their child, for whose death they, the father and mother, will some day be surely called to account on the other side of the grave, is a terrible picture; and the more terrible when placed in contrast to what might have been if only they had lived frugally, worked honestly, and denied themselves that which was bad for their own souls and the child's body.

The picture of a home where the husband is honest, healthy, and sober; where the wife is modest, loving, and true to her duty; and where children smile and thrive, as the children only of good parents can thrive and smile, shows what the "will of God" really is in its fulfilment.

From the hour in which a woman is conscious that the life of another is encompassed by her, it becomes an important duty to promote her health by judicious and sedulous attention. She ought to avoid late hours, to adopt easy and convenient clothing, to prevent the necessity of strong aperient medicines by taking regular exercise, to be careful in diet, to encourage innocent amusement. The fact ought

never to be forgotten that irascibility and nervousness will, if yielded to, have a bad effect, morally and physically, on the child so soon to be born into the world. It cannot, therefore, be too strongly impressed on the expectant mother how doubly important is *self-discipline* at such a period, nor how incalculable its results. Both parents are in some measure responsible for the health and happiness of their offspring; but on the mother especially it is incumbent to remember that by her foresight and management hereditary evils may be ameliorated.

But the large amount of mortality amongst infants in London alone, which is attributable either to the sheer carelessness of parents, or to their ignorance of natural laws affecting human life, or to absolute indifference concerning their offspring, is an awful consideration, calling alike upon the preacher and philanthropist to do something towards checking that which has become a national evil.

As physician in a large populous district, of which I am also Medical Officer of Health, and having for some time performed the duties of Coroner in another district, I have had ample opportunities of judging of the extent of this national evil—*this undue proportion of deaths in infancy.* I will now, from my own experience, tell you some of the causes of these deaths which are preventible.

A child is born in a close street or alley in London; the mother has been a servant, fond of dressing, and gadding, and gossiping. Her husband is a working man in a neighbouring factory. As a servant, she was flaunty and lazy; as a wife and a mother, she is slatternly in her home and careless of her duties. The husband grumbles, and takes to the public-house; the wife scolds when he is at home, and gossips with her neighbours when he is out. The child is a plague to her. The poor little thing is badly fed, thinly clad, unwashed, uncomfortable; indeed, quite predisposed to "take" fever, or cold, or any complaint whatever.

It is a wet day. The mother stands in the open doorway,

gossiping with a neighbour, the child on her arm. After a time the child begins to fret; the mother scolds at him, beats his back (to quiet him, she says), and first turns him this way and then that, placing him in every position but the right one of lying down in his cradle or bed. But, naturally, the child only frets more; so at last his mother puts him down on the ground to crawl. He is now quiet, for he has crawled to a puddle of water in the doorway, where he dabbles with his hands, glad to cool his hot palms with the rain. His clothes get wet, and presently he begins to cry again. His mother, whose gossip is just over, now catches him up in her arms; but she is all behind-hand in her work indoors, and has no leisure to change the child's clothes; and as the fire has gone out, she cannot dry them. By the time she "has time" to attend to the child, he is asleep on the floor, and the clothes have dried of themselves. "So much the better," she says, "for it saves me trouble." But the next day the child is ten times more fretful than he was the day before. Every hour he becomes more and more restless; his hands burn, his cheeks also; he can hardly breathe. What ails him? The mother thinks that she will go and consult her neighbour, the gossip, about him; and so she takes him up out of his cradle, and rushes out into the street, with him in her arms.

A cold, east wind is blowing, and the child coughs and cries. "What shall I give him to quiet him?" asks the mother of her neighbour, "What ails him?" "What can ail a child," answers the neighbour, "but flatulence or teething?" And forthwith a drop of gin is given to the child, or else some "soothing syrup" from the chemist's round the corner. "For a doctor costs so much," agree these women, who want new cap ribbons, and are too proud to go to the parish doctor.

The gin is given, and the child, who has inflammation, dies. Or the soothing syrup is given, drop after drop; for "surely it is a fine medicine to quiet a child." Quiet!

Yes, he is quiet enough at last, for he dies, poisoned—by *an over-dose of opium.*

Now, take another case. A mother is a widow—honest, hard-working, and fond of her child. To earn a livelihood for him and herself, she goes out washing or "charing." She gets a fortnight's job at some distance from home, so that she cannot return at nights. She therefore avails herself of this opportunity to wean her child, and gets a fellow lodger to take care of him during her absence. The fellow lodger is a trustworthy woman, and she promises to look after the child well, and especially to give him the *pennyworth of best milk* every day, for which the mother leaves the money in advance.

At the end of the fortnight the mother comes home, eager to see her child again. He is brought to her. But she scarcely knows him again—he is so wan, and white, and weak. He whines and frets continually. His hands are sometimes clenched, as if with pain; he has other symptoms of convulsions; and deep blue circles are round his eyes. "What have you done to my child?" the mother asks of the woman who had had charge of him. "Done?" answers the other, "nothing but as you told me to do; and above all things I took care to give him *the best milk you told me to buy for him.*"

The mother is satisfied that this is the truth, but what can be the matter with the child? He gets worse and worse. Again and again the mother tries to feed him with the best milk she can buy, but sometimes he rejects it altogether, and at other times, after sucking it in eagerly, he is convulsed with agony. A doctor is sent for, but physic in this case does more harm than good. The child dwindles away, and dies—"*of decline,*" it is said; but *starvation* is the real cause of his death, for the "best milk" that had been given to him was mainly *chalk and water.*

The poor mother knew nothing about adulteration of food,

and the child died because of her ignorance and a tradesman's fraud.

The want of proper nutritious food (in large cities) is one chief cause of death in infancy.

But another cause of the death of infants, and that cause the most horrible, if not the most frequent of all, is *suffocation.* Many children die from being what is commonly called, "*overlain in bed.*"

I do not allude here to *infanticide,* for which crime a parent or nurse is amenable to the law of the land, but to *carelessness,* or, still worse, to *drunkenness.* So abhorrent must this part of my subject be to many of my readers, that I would willingly pass it over as lightly as possible, but I dare not do so, as I know its terrible importance. Often, in my various capacities, have I been called upon to judge as to how it could have come to pass that young children have died from *suffocation.*

Most of these cases that have been brought under my notice have occurred on a Saturday night.

The father of a family is paid his week's wages; he goes with his earnings, not to his home, his wife and children, but to the public-house. There he drinks and spends his money. Late at night, when the public-house is closed, he comes home in a state either of absolute intoxication, or of brutish stupidity. With or without his clothes he flings himself heavily on the bed, where lie his wife and youngest child. The mother, worn out by a hard day's work and a long night's watching, has, perhaps, fallen asleep already; or if not, is soon soundly so after her husband's return; glad to see him safe, even in such a condition. In the morning she wakes; her husband has not yet shaken off the fumes of his last night's debauch, and still snores heavily. She looks beneath the bed-clothes for her child. It is dead —"*suffocated.*"

Still more horrible, if possible, is such a case when resulting from the intoxication of both parents. But, alas!

when a man drinks, his wife but too often follows his example; and to the habitual and joint unconsciousness of both parents do I attribute the fact that when one child in a family is thus *overlain in bed*, the case is not unfrequently followed in that same family by other children's deaths from the same cause.

Such cases require the closest investigation. If not coming under the head of *wilful murder*, the consequences of the parents' sin of drunkenness are nearly allied to it.

But, as I before said, children are also *overlain in bed* from *carelessness*. Such an instance has lately come under my notice, in the circle of my own acquaintance. A lady had one child, about six months old. To attend upon this child an experienced nurse was hired, part of whose stipulated duty was to sleep with it. The child one night was put to bed in perfect health. The mother went to see it the last thing before retiring herself to rest that night, and she particularly noticed its soft, regular, breathing, and other signs of health. At daybreak the next day, the mother was roused by the nurse, who, in extreme agitation and alarm, told her mistress that she feared the child was dead. Medical assistance was instantly sent for, although the father of the child was painfully convinced that it really was dead the moment he had hurried with his wife to its bedside.

The mother at first tried to hope against hope; but when the medical man arrived, he declared that the child must have been dead some hours. "*Suffocated to death by being overlain in bed.*"

The nurse was in despair. She was innocent of all evil intention, but nevertheless she had caused the death of that child, for whom the parents were bitterly grieving. Her *carelessness* had killed the child and ruined her own character. Her position was inexpressibly painful, but not to be compared with the agony of a mother under such circumstances; for what must be the feeling of a mother who knows that her child is killed—suffocated to death—by her neglect? No punishment for crime of which the law takes

cognizance can be worse to bear than the remorse of that mother, unless her heart be dead within her. However hardened a man or woman may be, conscience will, sooner or later, make itself heard; and at the judgment day God will surely require of parents an account of the little ones which He has given to them.

But as all babies and children do not die, and as many in this metropolis grow up to be young men and women, healthy to all appearance, and then suddenly droop or drop into the grave, let us ask—Why do adults die? Die—not from sudden accident, nor from epidemic diseases (which diseases, be it remarked, generally originate in the neglect of sanitary rules, as old as Moses), but from no perceptible and immediate cause whatever. These cases are particularly rife amongst young women. And here, before applying the argument to the middle and lower classes, I would beg to observe that much of the misery and death amongst young women of the higher classes of society is attributable to want of wholesome and organized *occupation*. Young ladies are brought up to play the piano, to draw, to speak foreign languages, to dance, &c.; or rather, of each of these accomplishments they are taught a little, but not enough of either to satisfy the mind, or to endow it with the inestimable boon of a thorough vocation.

Now I am convinced that the healthy employment of the brain is as essential to the health of the whole body as exercise of the limbs, or breathing pure air. Can a smattering of superficial accomplishments grant this healthy employment? It seems not, or why are they too often altogether neglected directly a young lady escapes from school, or that they have helped to secure her the matrimonial alliance to which they were considered only as a means to an end? Many a young lady, single or married, sinks into languor and vacuity. She sighs under a sense of her own helplessness. If single, she feels miserable, idle, lonely. If married, the revelations of the divorce court tell

us too plainly what humiliations she is, possibly, called to endure. She has no resources within herself; thus she has not the advantages of a professional singer, dancer, artist, or author. They—let their trials and temptations be what they may—have at least something to live for, *i.e.*, *something to do*. No; after all the large sums invested in her education, the young lady too often feels too late that she is not trained to take her part in life or to endure the world and its trials. She sickens and droops. Change of scene is prescribed. Her frail body is hurried about from place to place, but her mind is still unoccupied. In that lies the real evil. She becomes nervous, hypochondriacal. If single, she fancies herself crossed in love. She dwells continually upon an imaginary passion. The books she reads foster it. If she inherit the germs of consumption, they will now develop themselves; and soon she will add another to the long list of victims of her sex and class who have been taught all things, and nothing well. She dies from inactivity of the brain; or rather because she was not educated according to the will of God, He having endowed her with faculties which were never exercised for the happiness of herself and others. If married, the young lady has, probably, but an indifferent husband. She looks forward, however, to the time of becoming a mother as the period to end her weariness of mind and body. "I shall then have something to love, something to *do*," she says. The time comes. With no trained power of endurance, or will, to triumph over the pain and the terror that time brings with it, her nerves relaxed, she dies, perhaps, in childbed; or if she live, she finds that her own dreary life of mental and physical inactivity tells its own sad tale upon her puny offspring. The child grows up fretful, tiresome; he is no companion, only a trouble to her. She cannot nurse him. She cannot educate him. He is given over to paid nurses, governesses, schools. She, with nothing more to look forward to, with nothing to do, relapses into weariness worse than ever.

For all this a young lady's parents are accountable, and afterwards her husband. Of course we are not here talking of a model husband—of a husband as he ought to be; the friend, the adviser, the guardian of his wife, whom he tries to make companionable to him by correcting the errors, or supplying the deficiencies of her earlier education; but the husband who, seasoned in bachelor selfishness, soon finds after marriage that a pretty face and badly-sung opera song are no compensation for an empty head, useless hands, a fretful temper, and a badly-cooked dinner. Thus, a wife with no power of controlling, amusing, or helping herself, soon finds to her cost that she has none of controlling, amusing, or helping her husband. They are mutually weary of each other. The end of idle lives like this is worse than death. The remedy, you ask? Why, I would have all young ladies taught *to do one thing well*. I believe everybody, male and female, has some one particular talent more strongly marked than another, if it could only be found out. I would by education, by developing this one talent to the utmost (as though for a livelihood), make a girl independent of the matrimonial market. I would make her mistress of her own fate. If she could do nothing else, she could sew for the poor. Above all, I would make her useful. There is plenty of work for women, whether single or married, old maids or mothers, to do in this world. The best men, in every class, have almost always had the best mothers. (It is said that Napoléon I. owed his courage to the control over herself exercised by his mother before his birth, in time of battle and great peril to herself and her husband.) The noblest qualities of the greatest men have generally been transmitted through the mother.

In every class the least endowed woman can be useful. But to be so she must be taught to be independent. In the upper classes a solid education, or the training essential to the development of one particular talent, imbues a woman with a sense of the dignity of her position, and makes her

less likely to fancy herself "in love." Thus trained, if she marry a poor, striving professional man, she need not be a costly incumbrance to him. If she marry a rich man, she is capable of being the companion of his leisure; or if she marry not at all, she will never feel lonely, because she will never be idle. But as it is not yet the universal custom of English education to endow girls of the upper classes with a "vocation"—nay, as it is still (notwithstanding a recent movement in the right direction) the fashion to bring them up in idleness, I say that rich men's daughters often die because they have nothing to do. The fate, therefore, of the daughters of the middle and lower classes is often more enviable than that of those of their own sex and age, for whom, in the order of things, they are trained to work.

Take a young sempstress, for example: notable, neat, working under the protection of an honest father's roof at home; adding, by her exertions, to the comforts of that home; supporting, possibly, some aged relative or infirm brother or sister by the work of her hands; or, it may be, laying up a little store, by her loving labours, for the time when she will become the wife of one who is, on his side, striving to accelerate the time when he may prudently marry her. There is health, there is happiness, in such lives as these. Self-denial, unselfish work, unselfish love, promise fair for a long life. Young men and young women who know how to work and how to wait for each other, seldom die. Their hopes bid fair to be realized; and to such as these, when husbands and wives, their country looks for future generations of men and women as useful, as good, as healthy as themselves. To such I bow my head, and can only say, "Long life and happiness!" But take the case of a young sempstress working over hours for under pay in the house of some fashionable dressmaker, or beneath the rule of some hard taskmaster or notorious shirt-maker. In the former case, whilst administering to the wants of her luxurious and indolent sisters (whom we have just seen dying because they

have nothing to do), she is possibly cooped up for twelve, sixteen, or eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, in a close, small, ill-ventilated room, the confined air of which she breathes, or stifles under, with half a dozen or a dozen girls, young and fragile as herself. Her body is bent to her work. Whilst pursuing it for hour after hour, thoughts—anxious thoughts of home, if she have one—sicken her with depression. Her food is scanty, ill cooked, indigestible for want of exercise. Her head aches. She goes out at night from the close, hot room, where she has sat all day, into the cold wind. Her clothing is too scanty to protect her—she coughs. The next day she is ill. Perhaps she still totters back to her work at the fashionable dressmaker's, fearing to lose her employment. Perhaps she cannot rise from her bed. She refuses to send for a doctor until the last moment, because she cannot afford to pay him. Can you wonder why hired sempstresses die? I don't. Let Madame—the court dressmaker, and Mr.—the prime shirt-maker, look to this. Possibly, the shirt-maker lets the young women in his employ take their work home. But, with such pay as he gives them, does this help to prolong their life? Do we not all know the "Song of the Shirt?" Since that song (all praise to it!) was sung, there is, in some houses giving employment to female hands, a merciful improvement; but alas! the evil of underpaid labour is still widely spread, and to that, amongst other causes, may be attributed the awful increase of what is commonly called "*the social evil.*" I do not desire here to dwell on this; but, whilst rapidly glancing at the preventible causes of mortality in London, I cannot altogether pass it over. No physician, no sister of charity, no clergyman who has been behind the scenes of this tremendous evil, which walks, bedizened, in our streets, need ask—Why do women, unutterably unhappy, die? The end of the underpaid dressmaker, or shirt-maker, in her poor but honest home, is bliss to the end of these, her frail sisters, who, many of them (let employers think on this!),

have been impelled to their doom by impatience at inadequately requited work. And not their doom only, for why do young men often die? Why? Because they have forgotten the "discretion" which they are exhorted in the Bible to study; because they have turned from the right way, and followed after her whose "feet go down to death, and whose steps take hold on hell." Remunerative employment, which is now being gradually offered to women in large printing houses, in the electric telegraph offices, in watchmaking, and in other trades, where women's quick intelligence and lightness of touch are desirable, may, if extended, do much to lessen this social evil, and its inexpressibly awful consequences to the young of both sexes.

Many people, young and old, but more especially the young, die from *sorrow*. Grief, long continued, wears down the strongest. "Died of a broken heart" is not always a figure of speech only. In some cases, after long suspense and under sudden reaction or excitement, a vessel of the heart really does burst, and the substance itself gives way. The same thing also occurs from over-exertion. I will tell you of such a case, that not long since came within my own professional experience.

A middle-aged merchant, stout and hearty, wanted to catch the Brighton five o'clock express train from London Bridge station. He was in a cab. Just as he was driving into the arena before the station, he found that the time was nearly up. The way was blocked. To save time, he jumped out of his cab, and ran fast. He rushed through the station, where the clerks knew him as a daily passenger, and out beyond, just as the bell had rung, and the train was on the move. Hoping to catch it, he dashed on more furiously than ever. The railway guard saw him; the door of a carriage was flung open ready to receive him; he had just reached it, when suddenly he stopped short, panted, staggered, and fell down on the platform. He was dead. *His heart had burst.* From which fact we may learn that it

is best to take things coolly. Had that gentleman only waited quietly for the next train, he might now be considering "Why do people hasten death?"

But here, before proceeding to tell you some cases of *death from sorrow* which have come under my own immediate observation, I must say that I scarcely ever knew one such death but that sin or selfishness was at the bottom of it. Not that the victim himself or herself was guilty of sin or selfishness—far from that in most of these cases; but what I mean to say is, that as no individual—man, woman, or child—can stand aloof and alone in this world; but as each individual is dependent for weal or for woe on the actions of others, we all more or less rejoice or we suffer in proportion to the virtues or the vices of those with whose lives our own is interwoven. It is not, therefore, so easy a task to "make the best of both worlds" as by some it is declared to be. For example:

I once knew a lady, who was good, and elegant, and accomplished; but she had married a gambler. After ten years of married life, and when she was the mother of eight children, this lady found that her husband was no longer able to maintain herself and her family, because he had lost all that he possessed at play. Previously to this, as may well be imagined, many had been the cares and anxieties and vicissitudes of that poor lady's life. Anybody who knows anything of the feverish and delusive career of a gambler or a speculator can well understand that nobody connected with such a life can be calm at heart; least of all the mother of children whose fate is inextricably involved in that of their father, who is a gambler. Well, the day came when ruin stared this family in the face. But the lady resolved to confront her fate, and to surmount it. Naturally energetic, she determined to do something in behalf of those she loved. "I am not ignorant," said she, "of many things that others pay to learn. I will teach." She had friends, who respected her; she went from one to

the other of these friends, and asked them to engage her as daily governess to their daughters. They did so, and the lady was successful in her teaching; so much so that she was enabled to maintain a comfortable home, on a small scale, for her children. Her husband, much humbled, and, as she hoped and believed, cured for ever of his passion for play, sought and found a situation as clerk in a house of business; but his pay was small, and therefore she it was, as I just now said, who was the main support of their home and family.

After a time, she was advised by her friends to take a larger house—such an one as she had had in the earlier years of her marriage—and to keep a school. Thankfully she complied with this suggestion, and soon was enabled to receive many pupils, whom she educated beneath her own roof with her children. "This," said she to me, "is the happiest time of my life. My husband has forsworn play, my children are happy, and I am useful."

In a few years her school had increased largely; so, likewise, had her household expenses. Her husband was now in a mercantile position which, though subordinate, was one of great trust and importance. Her children had grown to be nearly men and women. The eldest daughter was engaged to be married to a young surgeon, who was only waiting and working for the time when he could afford to make her his wife. Meanwhile this daughter assisted her mother in the school. Would that my story ended here! But alas! About this time I observed, in my professional visits to the school, that the lady's brow was often clouded, as though with care; that her serenity had forsaken her; that she was growing pale and thin, and began to look old. I questioned her as to her health, but she denied that anything was the matter with her. Turning to the daughter, I perceived that her cheeks were flushed, that her hands trembled, that the slightest noise made her start, and that words of kindness filled her eyes with tears. What was the

matter? What could ail this mother, who had fought the battle of life so bravely; and this daughter, upon whom life was just now dawning so cheerily? Soon I perceived other changes in my visits to the house—certain little luxuries began to disappear from it. Plate was no longer on the sideboard; rings were no longer on the lady's fingers. A horrible dread came upon me. "Has that moral disease," said I to myself—"that passion which is said by some to be incurable—broken out again? In a word, has the husband, the father of this family, gone back to the gambling table?" Even so. One miserable fact crept out after another in this case. The lady had tried to pay her husband's play debts out of the house on which she and his children were dependant for a livelihood. Superfluities had first been dispensed with in that house; then necessaries; for the tradesmen, kept longer waiting for their money than usual, began to be clamorous. Pupils were withdrawn, one after another. Servants were discharged one after another. The wreck and the ruin could by no means be stayed, for the vice which was at the bottom of all this misery was raging furiously—the more, as it seemed, for having been long restrained. At last that unhappy lady stood in the midst of the schoolroom, the scene of her labours and her honest pride, with only her children and one family of four pupils, entrusted to her care from India, around her. An execution was in the house; nor had this been the first, for most of the furniture was already carried off. She felt sick and faint and helpless; the time was fast coming when her children, and the children of strangers, whom she was bound to support, and on whom alone she now relied for a subsistence, would absolutely want food. What should she do? She sat, mechanically going on with her business, hearing her Indian pupils read and say their lessons; but inwardly she was revolving the fearful problem of "*How to live?*" Just at this moment a knocking was heard at the outer door. The mother and her eldest daughter both

looked up terror-stricken; for, their nerves overstrung, they lived in trembling, but vague expectation of fresh evil befalling them every moment. Their fears were not exaggerated this time; nay, for that matter, they scarcely equalled the truth; for in another moment who should unceremoniously enter the room where they were sitting but the uncle of the Indian children, who, as their guardian in their parents' absence, had placed them in the school, *from whence he now came to remove them.* Rumours of the school's poverty and distress had reached him in the country, where he lived; and, believing that he and his young relatives were badly done by, he had travelled up to London in great haste, and in much wrath at "*being imposed upon.*" Those were the words he addressed to the lady, as she sat there, sick at heart, and striving still to do her duty to the children. "*Imposed upon!*" and other hard, insulting words besides. The lady looked up at him as he said those words; she could not speak, for her heart beat loud and fast, and words only choked in her throat. She looked up at him, and in another moment fell senseless to the ground, with a stream of blood gushing from her mouth, and flowing all along the school-room floor.

She had burst a blood-vessel. Her children carried her to bed, and there she lay insensible; life, as it seemed, was fast ebbing from her. But she did not die then, though for weeks she remained prostrate, insensible, delirious, and in imminent danger of death at any hour. All this time her children, her eldest daughter especially, watched and nursed her. But my fears were as much roused for that daughter as for her mother, for she showed alarming signs of rapidly declining health. The Indian pupils, the last mainstay of this unhappy family, had been taken away by their guardian. Most of the remainder of the furniture had also been removed for rent. Indeed, the very bed on which the lady lay was only due to the mercy of creditors. Necessaries—bread, meat, and such like—were supplied to the family by

neighbours who had loved and respected the lady and her children. As to the husband, he was at home, sometimes wandering like a lost spirit through the deserted rooms; at other times sitting stupefied, as it were, for hours together by his wife's bedside.

Not then, but afterwards, I found that that poor lady had not sacrificed her all merely to pay her husband's gambling debts, but to save his honour. That he might have the wherewithal to gratify his insatiate passion, or to redeem his losses, he had robbed his employers, trusting to his "luck" to replace the money he had taken. So this was the burthen of sorrow and shame that was bowing down his daughter to the grave, for *she* knew of the shame. In the delirium that had been part of her mother's illness it had been revealed to her. The mother slowly recovered, but the daughter drooped and gradually declined.

And now this family had to separate. The boys, whose education was still unfinished, had to take any situations they could find, where their services would be deemed equivalent for their board and lodging. The eldest daughter had to leave her mother, and went into a gentleman's family as governess. The lady herself and her husband sheltered themselves in obscure lodgings with their younger children. He was suspected of the misdeeds of which he had been guilty; all his wife's sacrifices had not saved him; he was deprived of his employment, and had an attack of illness, from which he rose prematurely old and paralyzed. His wife, the wan shadow of her former self, still worked for him; not this time with her head, but with her hands. She whom I have described as an elegant and accomplished woman was now a household drudge, performing the most menial offices and acting as nurse to her husband, and doing needlework for money. But even with all this, the family could not have lived at all had not the parents of former pupils subscribed amongst themselves, so as to form a little fund of charity.

Very poor indeed this lady and her children were. Their life was one of continual hardship and humiliation. But the daughter, the eldest daughter, how fared she? Why, just as I expected, she was returned to her family at the end of six months, too ill to continue her duties. Nobly had the poor girl "borne up;" but the tide was too strong against her, for her lover—her husband that was soon to be—was deceived and ruined by the nefariousness of a practitioner with whom he had lately entered into partnership. All his savings, hoarded up for the time of his marriage, were swept away, and with them all his cherished hopes of making that noble girl his wife. His only chance of beginning life afresh was to emigrate. The blow fell heavily upon the young girl, who had already known the agonies of sorrow and of shame. She was sent "home," as I before said, too ill to continue her duties as governess. The sight of her parents' squalid home, of her father's helplessness, of her mother's changed face, and form, and habits—of her half-hungry younger brothers and sisters—the fear of being an extra burthen on all this misery, made her worse.

Then came the time of parting with her lover. She bade him farewell in a firm voice that strove to speak cheerfully; she saw him on board the emigrant ship. The ship set sail; the girl returned home. When she went to bed that night, her mother was glad that the "parting" was over. Parting? Yes, a double parting, for the next morning, when her mother called her, she did not answer. The mother crept on tiptoe to the bedside, fearing to waken her. But no need to fear that, for—her daughter was dead—"*dead of a broken heart!*" That is one of the real cases of broken heart that I know, and I could tell you of others, but the theme is a mournful one, and I think you have had enough of it. As to the family in which this case occurred, there is not a single member left alive of it. One died of decline, another at sea, two in India, two of typhus or low fever, and one from an accident. The parents drooped and died, one

after another; the lady at the close of her life doing the work of a sister of mercy amongst those even poorer than herself, being asked by a band of charitable women to assist them in good deeds, and provided by them with the temporal means of doing so.

This is a sad tale, but it is too true. I could tell you other tales as true and as sad; but they all go to prove that *people do die from sorrow, and that sorrow generally is the fruit of sin.* One more example:

I knew a widow lady, who was very rich. She had one son, of whom she was passionately fond. This son was heir to an old name and to a fine property; his mother's pride was great in him. But, over-indulged in his childhood, he grew up dissipated and disorderly, and at twenty years of age was a grief to his mother. He married against her will. Afterwards, dissatisfied with himself, he took to drinking, and he died. His mother, though long alienated from him, never recovered from the shock his death caused her. She drooped and, in time, died too. There was nothing more for her "to live for." Indeed, it is terrible to reflect how in every class of life one human being has power to "*put the screw*" upon another. By this power lunatic asylums are filled, and graveyards are filled. Until there be less *selfishness*, there can scarcely be less *deaths from sorrow.*

Sometimes a man, a thoroughly "respectable" and regular church or chapel-going man, puts the screw upon his children because he loves his money more than he loves them, and will not spare them any if he can help it. He buttons up his pockets, and "takes care of the main chance," as he thinks; but, whilst he buttons up his pockets and chinks his money, he is knocking nails into the coffin of his son or daughter. His children, left to their own resources by his parsimony, cannot marry nor enjoy any of the good gifts that God has given to them whilst their father lives. The best years of the son's life are passed in overcoming the difficulties which inevitably beset a man who starts

unaided in any profession or trade. To escape from these difficulties the young man is tempted to try a short cut to fortune by speculation. Absorbed by feverish anxiety as to the rise and fall of stocks and funds, he neglects his trade or profession. Every month the young man gets deeper and deeper into the mire. He is engaged to be married some day, when he can afford to take a wife; indeed, that is one main reason of his trying to find a short road to fortune. But the family of his promised wife discovers his secret and its failure; he is discarded, and in despair rushes at length to his father. But his father only blames him, and vaunts his own prudence in having buttoned up his pockets against him. Now less than ever will he give him a penny. A violent scene ensues between them; the son is determined to defy fate and his father. He makes a bold venture, whereby he hopes to redeem his losses and his love. He loses, and finds himself a beggar. The father opens his morning paper, and in it he reads the "shocking intelligence" of his son's suicide. The father may button up his pockets now with impunity, for the son has blown his brains out.

And this, I grieve to say, is no fancy sketch of mine, any more than that of the parsimonious father's daughter upon whom also the screw is put. She, too, is engaged to be married. "Let her wait," says her father, "for the man she is engaged to cannot afford to marry her without money." She does wait, wearily and drearily, for year after year. But time, and hope long deferred, do not perpetuate her youth, and beauty, and temper. Her lover gets tired of all this waiting; he begins to think her old, and plain, and cross. They quarrel about a trifle, and are parted. The lover marries somebody else, and she dies *from depression*. I have known many such facts; but, as I said in the case of broken hearts, I think you have had enough of them.

And yet joy—great, sudden, and unexpected joy—can cause death as sharp and as sudden as can great grief.

We have seen how the young girl died of a broken heart after parting with her lover on board the emigrant ship, and now I will tell you how about two years ago the wife of a captain in the merchant service met her husband after a prolonged absence. She went on board his ship, that she might be the first to welcome him home. Breathless with joy, she entered the cabin, and there beheld her husband. She uttered a cry of delight at sight of him, and held out her arms towards him. He ran forward to greet her; but suddenly, just as he was about to clasp her to his breast, she fell backwards, and was dead. *Her heart had "broken" from joy.* Mine was the terrible task of assuring the husband that his wife was really dead. Never shall I forget the honest fellow's despair when convinced of that fact and its cause; and this is one of the exceptions to the general rule I have laid down, viz., that sorrow usually has sin or selfishness somewhere at the bottom of it.

But, on the whole, I believe there is less sin and selfishness now than there used to be. Men and women are banded together more than formerly for good objects and noble purposes; their hearts and minds are enlarged thereby.

Time here warns me to pass over many conditions of life, and causes of death, which crowd upon my memory; but, in endeavouring to prove that health is more in people's own power to preserve or to destroy than they think, I must warn them against the *poisonous effects of bad meat*. It is better to eat a dry crust of wholesome bread than to eat bad meat. An animal dies of disease; the meat of that animal is sold cheap; the poor are tempted by the low price to buy it; they eat, and in time find themselves diseased. Many a man, woman, and child has been poisoned by bad meat, stale fish, and decayed or decaying fruit or vegetables. By the word "poisoned" I do not always mean killed, but inoculated by complaints which are hard to cure. Every wife and mother of a family ought to know good meat when she sees it, and how to cook it. A well-cooked meal goes twice as

far as one badly cooked. It also makes a poor man (indeed a man in any class of life) contented with his home. Good meat, well cooked, satisfies the stomach, and thereby often prevents a craving for drink, which ends by destroying the stomach altogether. I would have every woman, let her rank be what it may, *know how to cook well.* I have met ladies who have confessed that at some time or other of their lives this knowledge has been more valuable to them than all their accomplishments. I will give you an example of this. Some few years ago a young lady, a friend of mine, married a man of high rank, and went with him to Australia, where he had a government appointment. In course of time they had several children. The mother, who was highly accomplished, educated her own children; and whenever her husband's public duties led him to move from place to place, she travelled with them in his company. This practice often exposed her to fatigue and inconvenience, but she willingly endured any discomfort rather than be separated from either her husband or her children. About four years since it therefore came to pass that she found herself in a remote part of Australia, with her little sons and daughters (six, I think, altogether, and all under the age of eight) and her husband, without a servant to attend to the children or to wait on their father. She had been obliged to discharge two servants for misconduct at the last city through which they had passed; the third had since fallen ill, and new servants were not to be had in that distant place. This lady cheerfully fulfilled the household and nursery duties thus suddenly imposed upon her; but one day her husband unexpectedly brought home two gentlemen, great travellers, to dine with him. For a moment the lady was in despair. "What shall I do?" asked she of herself, "there is no dinner fit for these visitors, and nobody to cook one. Still worse, whatever their fare, they will expect me to sit down to it." At last, "My husband has shot some game," she remembered; "there is uncooked meat in the larder, and

flour, and butter, and rice." She lifted up her head. "Surely," said she to herself, "I am not so stupid but what I can make something out of all these things!" Then she ran and welcomed her husband's guests, and, apologizing to them for an engagement which would keep her away from their society for an hour or two, she hastened to the kitchen, and there, assisted by her children, who enjoyed "the fun," she set to work. When the dinner hour came, great was the surprise of her husband and his guests in seeing before them a dainty feast that reminded them of London or Paris. The lady sat at the head of the table. Her husband looked inquiringly at her; and "Why how is it," asked his friends of him, "that you can get a dinner so well cooked in such a place as this?" The lady laughed, and her husband guessed the truth. "I am glad to say," he answered, "that my wife is not so incompetent to fulfil her duties in Australia as servants often are to undertake theirs in England." The lady declares that this was the proudest moment of her life; that no Italian song she could sing, nor drawing she could do, nor language she could speak, ever made her half so happy as the dinner she had cooked. And yet that lady had often had servant maids of her own who thought themselves insulted by being asked to boil a kettle of water or to cook a potato! Are such servant maids fit to be poor men's wives? Before becoming such, let them learn to cook. By good cooking a woman can save her husband's money, make his home comfortable, and keep him from the public-house and gin palace.

My endeavour is to show that under any circumstances, life, which is proverbially short and sad, ought not to be made still shorter and sadder by our own misuse of it, by our ignorance, or false pride. There is no doubt, that apart from accidental causes, virtue prolongs life, and vice shortens it. It is profane, therefore, to assume that it is always by *God's will* that we die, or mourn the death of others. Life is actuated by certain laws, and it is generally prolonged or

shortened, rendered happy or miserable, by our obedience to, or neglect of those laws. Nay, I believe that the natural term of man's life might be much prolonged by a virtuous use of it. And here let me remind you that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." There is now scarcely a district in London where public baths and wash-houses are not established. As a friend to those who have not the means of conveniently washing their clothes or bathing their bodies at their own homes, I say: Go to these institutions often, and when you get there use pure water freely. Take your children there and bathe them thoroughly. A clean child is generally a good child; a dirty child is generally a bad child. A clean child thrives in the world; a dirty child does not thrive. A clean child avoids many diseases to which a dirty child is subject. A clean child finds favour with his schoolmaster or schoolmistress. A dirty child is scouted even by his schoolfellows. A clean child, as it grows up, is sure to get employment in preference to a dirty child. A clean child is supposed to have a good mother; a dirty child is supposed to have a bad mother, or none at all.

Fresh air is now almost as plentifully supplied to all classes as fresh water. Cheap excursion trains into the country start at frequent intervals from all the principal railway stations of London. A very little economy—the price of an extra pot or two of beer—will give a day in the green fields to a poor man and his family. They can take their dinner with them. Once upon a time—even a few years ago—there lived and died in London, many children who had never seen the green fields, nor the blue skies, except the glimpse visible above the smoky chimnies of the courts and alleys where they lived. But the love of children for the country is naturally very great. Its sights, its scents, its sounds, affect them powerfully, even when they have only enjoyed these as it were by stealth in the bye-ways of London. I have seen children who never were in the country in their lives, run after a cart of flowers and try to catch a falling

leaf or a blossom, as a great treasure. I have seen them listen with eager faces to the song of caged birds. London parents! Take your children into the country whenever you can. Save your money from the public-house, and spend it, not under the gas-light of the reeking gin palace late at night, but at the railway station in the early summer mornings. Let the mother go with her children and her husband into the country whenever she can. She will feel young again whilst watching her children's healthy pleasure. In the green fields, under the blue skies, with their children sporting about them, whole years of care and sorrow will roll away from the hearts of father and mother. They—parents and children—will come home refreshed for their next day's work or duties, and will look forward with joy and thankfulness to another day of pleasure such as that they have just spent together. When parents die, children remember such days as these. And, apart from accidents, parents who have passed such days will not die so soon as those who have not. Neither will children, who from time to time have been refreshed body and mind by a day in the country, be so subject to sickness as those who have known no such change. But, though prevention be better than cure, I cannot close my subject without impressing seriously upon all parents the duty of seeking medical advice immediately one of their children shows signs of illness. Poor parents often delay doing so from the fear of incurring expense, and in the hope that such and such symptoms are of no consequence. I have known many children, who from this delay and delusion, have either died or been enfeebled for life; especially from hooping-cough. "Oh! it's only a bad cold," says the mother at first; and not until the complaint so increases as to threaten death is the doctor sent for. By that time it is possibly past remedy, although it might in its earlier stages have been checked. Delay breeds danger. I have seen much of the sad consequences of this delay, and particularly amongst some of my poorer Irish patients. "Docthor,"

said one of these to me not long since, "Docthor, I've been and brought my child to yer honour."

"What is the matter with him, Mrs. Malony?" asked I.

"And shure, isn't that what I want to know?" said she; "but he's got a little bit of a *could*, with jist an *imprission* on his chest, yer honour."

"Why," said I, examining the child, "your child is seriously ill; he has inflammation of the lungs; in fact, I fear he is in danger."

"Whirra! yer honour," she cried; "and isn't that jist what I thought? And doun't I know too well that he won't get ow'r it? For shure, this is the third that I've lost already with the self-same complaint."

And yet, when that child died, the mother rocked herself to and fro in despair. Again, I say, *delay breeds danger.*

And now for the aged. We need scarcely ask, Why do they die? although in the case of some old folks I have found a tenacity of life, such as I seldom or ever witnessed amongst the young.

And here I may observe, that *change of air and scene,* which change is good for the young, is sometimes prejudicial to the old. Before concluding, I will tell you one more anecdote which may help to prove that such a change sometimes even kills aged people, whose vitality, nevertheless, has withstood shocks that would have been fatal to their children or grandchildren.

A few years since I was sent for to see "an old lady" who was said to be dying. I found her in bed, suffering from erysipelas in the face and head. This disease, commonly known as "St. Anthony's Fire," is always serious, and when it attacks the face and head, is attended with danger to life. The more advanced the age, the greater the danger. I asked the age of the "old lady," and was told that she was ninety-seven. Hearing her age, and seeing the severity of her attack, I feared that the result would be unfavourable; but, nevertheless, I directed suitable remedies to be administered. One of these remedies was a bottle of good old port wine, and this was not difficult to be procured, for the patient had saved up a considerable sum of money during her long lifetime. The people in the house where she resided were kind to her; and as she was known not to have made a will, they wished her to live. May-be, they wished this from other besides mercenary motives. I really cannot say; but, anyhow, the result was good. *They wished her to live,* and that in more ways than one, is a great step towards helping a sick person to recover. She did get well. Not long afterwards I was sent for again to the old lady; and this time she told me that she was suffering pain and inconvenience from *cutting a tooth.* So many curious freaks of nature have I seen that I am scarcely surprised at any; without expressing any doubt, therefore, I investigated the matter, and found that what she said was true. I had the old lady's gum lanced, and her new "wisdom tooth" came through. Some months after this, she again needed my advice. It was now winter; the cold was intense; the frost and snow were on the ground. By some accident, one of the old lady's feet had been left uncovered in a room without a fire. The great toe of that foot was, therefore, frost-bitten. Mortification had begun and spread to the foot; but still she did not die. She lost the greater part of that foot (her right foot) and she also lost her temper, (thinking that she had been neglected) but she did not lose her life. I ordered brandy to be given to her every hour, and this sustained her. About a year after this, the old lady met with another serious accident. She fell down-stairs, and besides otherwise injuring herself, fractured her elbow joint. It was a compound fracture. She was now just 100 years old. I really did not think she could possibly recover this time; but she did. Her nerves, however, were shaken. She began to think that she should meet with fewer accidents in the country than in London. And to the country she went, *for the first time since fifty years.* The people where she lodged

in the country took great care of her; but, in a month from the hour of her leaving London, she died. Died, of no special complaint, nor from any accident, *but from change of air and scene.*

Nothing so certainly puts an extinguisher upon the flickering flame of life in the aged, as removal from old friends, old customs, old scenes, old associations; which fact helps to show how good and natural it is for the Grandfather or Grandmother to sit still, whilst others, for whom they have worked, work in turn for them. *The strength of the aged is to sit still,* revered as oracles of wisdom and experience.

Having fulfilled all their duties in this world, and having lived to see their children's children grow up, they are led by easy and gradual stages to rest from their labours. The natural decay of bodily power from old age is not painful. The natural result of a long life well spent, is gently to fall asleep. And here, in conclusion, I will quote an Eastern proverb in reference to this falling asleep, by which proverb it will be seen whether in a distant land (where the aged are held in much honour) death, in the course of nature, is held to be painful or otherwise; "When man is born, he weeps and others smile. When man dies, he smiles and others weep."

THE END.

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THE MISCHIEF OF BAD AIR:

OR

WHAT "BAD AIR" REALLY IS.

Mrs. A. I was glad to see you at our (Sanitary) lecture yesterday evening, Mrs. Brown; I hope you were pleased with what you heard.

Mrs. B. Well, of course, Ma'am, a great deal of it was very true. It's certain we don't all keep our places as nice as we might; and I always say it looks much better to see a place look tidy, and the children's hands and faces clean; but I can't say I go along with all that the gentleman said, neither.

Mrs. A. How so, Mrs. Brown? What was it he said, that you do not agree with?

Mrs. B. Why, Ma'am, I do think he made too much fuss about what he called "bad air." I don't understand all their long words about what the air is made of; but of course they that are clever enough to find out what it is made of, may find out that there is sometimes less of one thing in it, and more of another, and that this may be what makes it smell bad; and to be sure I know bad smells are not pleasant. But then, when he talked of the bad air being *poison* to us, and causing most of the fevers and sickness, why you know, Ma'am, that's more than I *can* believe; there seems no sense in it.

Mrs. A. I daresay it does seem very strange to you, Mrs. Brown; but if you understood a little more how the bad air poisons people, I think you would agree with me that the lecturer could hardly say too much about the mischief it causes.

Mrs. B. Well, to be sure, Ma'am, if it really *did* poison people, nobody would like to be poisoned if they could help it.

Mrs. A. I think, perhaps, I can partly explain to you in what way the bad air really

does poison us. In the first place, I daresay you hardly understand what the bad or impure air the lecturer spoke of actually is. Bad air is nothing in the world but *dirty* air—*foul* air, as it is often called.

Mrs. B. Dirty air! what a funny idea! How can the air get dirty?

Mrs. A. Exactly as everything else does, by being used. The air which you use, by breathing it in, comes out again dirty, as surely as that piece of wet flannel did, out of the inside of the cupboard you were just now cleaning with it.

Mrs. B. Dear now! how strange! Do we breathe the air, then, to clean ourselves inside, as I was cleaning the cupboard?

Mrs. A. That is one of the great uses of breathing. The air, if pure and good when we breathe it in, supplies our lungs, and by means of them our whole bodies, with a sort of food which is most necessary to our health and life, though we cannot see it; and when we breathe it out again, should carry away with it matters which our bodies have no further use for, and which, if they remain in our blood, clog and

literally soil it and the delicate organs and vessels within us, just as what you call dirt does your cupboard, or your brooms, or the skin outside your body. The blood in our lungs, before it is purified by the air we breathe into them, is literally *dirty*, black blood; but afterwards, if we are breathing good fresh, *clean* air, it becomes bright, red, *clean* blood again, fit to refresh and feed our whole bodies.

Mrs. B. Does it indeed, Ma'am? That sounds very wonderful.

Mrs. A. It is very wonderful. The Bible says quite truly that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." You can understand now that air that has been breathed into our lungs comes out again dirty, as I tell you; and in the same way, whenever the air comes to us over dunghills, or open drains, or rotten vegetables, or foul water, or such like, it carries with it putrid matters and particles from these, and becomes unwholesome, foul air. These unwholesome particles are so small indeed, that we cannot *see* them; but God has given us another sense by which we can find them out. We can *smell* them immediately.

Mrs. B. Then do you mean, Ma'am, that whenever we smell a bad smell in the air, there is some sort of dirt in it?

Mrs. A. Exactly so; and when we breathe this bad-smelling air into our lungs, instead of cleansing, we are positively dirtying ourselves inside, as you would do your basin or saucepan if you were to wipe them out with that dirty flannel just after cleaning the cupboard with it.

Mrs. B. And then that poisons us?

Mrs. A. It poisons our blood. You must not suppose that poison always kills people directly. Everything is really a poison which helps to cause death, whether slowly by disease, or quickly by convulsions as some violent poisons do. And the way in which this foul air poisons us I can a little explain by comparing our lungs, with which we breathe, to a fine sieve through which the waste and all unwholesome matters from the blood are to be sifted out, and at the same time pure clean air-food is to be sifted in. Now, if we breathe air already loaded with such unwholesome matters, it helps to choke up the tiny holes in the sieve, so that not only the waste from the

blood gets very imperfectly sifted out, but more waste or dirt-particles are being continually sifted or breathed in; so that the blood gets more and more dirty and unhealthy, till disease, and too often death, must follow.

Mrs. B. Well, I do remember my mother used to say that sickness and fevers came of bad blood, but I never knew how that could be. So you say it's really the dirt in the air, Ma'am, which makes bad blood, and does all the mischief?

Mrs. A. I do not say that bad air is the only thing that poisons the blood. There are other causes of illness; and some people are born less strong and healthy than others; but even when illness comes from other things, breathing foul air will always make it much worse; and the strongest, healthiest man that ever lived cannot keep his health unless he has pure, clean air to breathe.

Mrs. B. And the lecturer said, children especially pine and die for want of it.

Mrs. A. Because children are weaker and more delicate, and it takes less poison to kill or

injure a child than a grown person. Besides, children need to grow as well as to live, and therefore need plenty of the best food, both in victuals and air.

Mrs. B. Well, Ma'am, I always have tried to keep my children well washed and as clean as I can *outside;* but now that you have told me about the air, I shall remember that that is only half the business, and that I must do all I can to keep them clean *inside* too.

Mrs. A. I was sure you would, Mrs. Brown, once you understood the importance of it; and I have no doubt that, by good management*—opening your door and window—the top of the window, especially, remember—at proper times, never keeping anything in your room that can make it unpleasant, and keeping your children and the room itself clean, you will be able to contrive that the air in it shall *be fresh and nice*, particularly at night. Only be sure to remember that, whenever you smell it close or disagreeable,

* For modes of airing rooms, see Tract on "The Worth of Fresh Air."

the air is really *dirty*, and pouring dirt into your children's lungs at every breath they draw.

Mrs. Brown. No fear I shall forget that now, Ma'am, and many thanks to you for making it out plain to me. I always was a clean body, and have no notion of dirt about anywhere, much less in our insides, now I know what puts it there.

THE END.

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WASPS HAVE STINGS.

MRS. CARTER'S school has been closed for a week. It is harvest time, and the children are all out in the fields leasing. But Mrs. Carter is never idle; she dearly loves children; and when she cannot do them good in *one* way she tries to do it in another. She has children of her own, too, and everybody knows how well she brings them up, and what rosy, happy little things they look. Mrs. Carter knows more than most of her neighbours. Some of them think her notions strange, but they say truly enough that she's a kind friend, and always ready to help them in trouble and sickness. She has not often time to go to the distant parts of the parish, but she takes advantage of the holidays to have a friendly chat with some of the mothers who live far off. Mrs. Brown is a great favourite of hers, partly perhaps because she is a widow like herself, and a good mother to

her children, and also because she is a sensible woman, who does not scorn being taught, and is willing to give up old ways if she finds new ways better. She is passing her door to-day, and not having seen her for some time, she steps in, in her cheerful way, and has a little chat, which perhaps you may like to hear.

Mrs. Carter.—Good morning, Mrs. Brown. If I am not in your way just now, may I come in and sit down a bit? I should be glad of a rest, as I've to go up to the north end this morning, and it's very tiring weather.

Mrs. Brown.—So it is, ma'am. Pray walk in and take a seat. The children's all out on the Common, and I've been on my legs pretty well since five o'clock, so I can afford now to sit down and bide quiet a bit myself.

Mrs. C.—I'm glad to find you so busy. You seem to have a heavy wash this week, by the look of the lines out there!

Mrs. B.—Yes, ma'am, there's several new families come in to town, and I'm in luck to get three of them. They be rich folk, too; and I washes for servants, and children, and all.

Mrs. C.—I'm glad to hear it, and I hope now that Jim's well, and you and the children are

stronger, there'll be a trifle for the Savings Bank laid by for a rainy day.

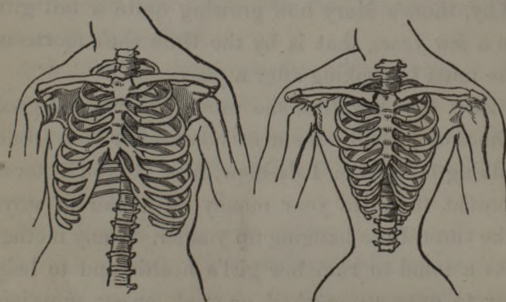
Mrs. B.—I'm thinking there wont be much to put by yet awhile, for you see, ma'am, winter's a-coming, and the little girls be all wanting clothes. Why, there's Mary now growing quite a tall girl. In a few years, that is by the time she's fourteen, she must be looking after a place.

Mrs. C.—Yes, that she must. There's no good comes of keeping them at home after that; but, talking of clothes, I do hope, Mrs. B., you'll never consent to waste your money on a pair of stays like those I see hanging up yonder. If any mother has a mind to ruin her girl's health, and to help her to grow up crooked, or weak, or consumptive, why she's only to begin early and lace her up tight in a pair of stays, with a stiff bone in front; keep her in them for a few years, and see what happens!

Mrs. B.—Why, bless me, who'd have thought it! All the folks I know of seem quite proud to buy them for their girls, and I've heard tell that a young woman aint the right kind of shape without them.

Mrs. C.—And pray tell me now which *is* the right kind of shape, do you think, that which

God has made us, or that which we try to make ourselves? They are quite different shapes I allow, and if you'll let me have that slate for a minute I'll soon show you the difference. There now, this is how God has made us (No. 1), and this is



No. 1. No. 2.

how we are changed by stays (No. 2). Only look at the waist!

Mrs. B.—Well, I never! The lasses about here wouldn't like to see *theirs* so big, I'm thinking! La me, how they do strap themselves in, and try to imitate the gentry, and look genteel, with their bits of waists!

Mrs. C.—So much the worse for them, rich and poor! We are all made alike, and I call it a *sin* for any mother who knows better, and the

rich *ought* to know better, to ruin her child's health for the sake of a small waist.

Mrs. B.—So it is, when you puts it in that way; but I'm no scholar, and knows nothing about such things.

Mrs. C.—I'll soon teach you. You are a mother, and ought to know; and I am sure you'll be the first to cry out against stay-makers, and wish they might learn some other trade to earn their bread by than torturing us poor women. In No. 2 you see the shape of a woman who began when she was a little girl to wear stays. Her bones were then quite soft. I will tell you what was under those stays, and what happened from wearing them. Under them were twelve pairs of ribs, as you may feel in your own body; these bending round from the back bone to the breast bone, make a kind of strong box, in which are carefully placed the lungs and heart, liver and stomach. At first it was large enough to hold them safely; there was plenty of room for the air to go in and out of the lungs, and for the heart, stomach, and liver to do their duty; but by degrees, as the child's bones were soft, these ribs were not strong enough to resist the tight stays always pressing against them, and they were squeezed into quite a different

shape. The mother wished the waist to be small, and the strong box, instead of being like No. 1, grew to be like No. 2. The child might have been healthy enough at first, but what could you expect of a poor body which was squeezed and tortured in that way?

Mrs. B.—I hear some people say when they've been ill they can't sit up even one day without their stays, they seems to miss them so, and haven't got no strength without them.

Mrs. C.—So I should think, because they've got into the habit of looking to their stays for support, instead of trusting to their own good back bone. Look at men. Now, happily for them, *they* don't wear stays, yet they can hold themselves upright, and don't complain of wanting support for their backs; and what is the consequence? Why, that there are not half as many boys who are crooked or consumptive as there are girls.

Mrs. B.—Well, ma'am, I believe what you say is true enough. I suppose if we was intended to have waists as big as they we ought to let them be, and not try to cramp them in as some do!

Mrs. C.—Certainly, it would be far wiser, and prettier, too, if we would but think it. Some

fashions are very foolish, but this is worse, it is a very *wicked* one. Make something loose and warm to take the place of stays, without the torture of tight-lacing or bones. The best thing is a body cut like a plain gown body, and made of jean, calico, or any strong stuff. The waist and chest should be very carefully measured, and the body made in all parts at least one inch larger than the measures. In measuring it should always be remembered that a woman's waist when she is standing is smaller than when she is seated, and that therefore this difference should be allowed for. Were this plan adopted thousands of young girls would in this country alone be spared to grow up and make good wives and mothers, instead of dying early, or living on, weak and sickly, because they are vain enough to wish to be admired for what is called a fine figure. It makes me quite sad now on a Sunday, when all our neighbours are out and going to church in their best gowns, to think that there is a nasty stiff, tight pair of stays under each, pressing on their chest and stomach and back, and doing them a world of mischief like a secret enemy. A doctor was once asked by a squeezed-up, pale-faced, fashionable woman, whether tight-lacing was bad for consumption.

"Oh dear no," said the doctor; "bad for it! I should say not: it is one of the things it lives on."

Mrs. B.—Well, I can't say that my stays are always very comfortable. I'm stouter than I was, and I ought to have had a bigger pair these two years if I'd had the money.

Mrs. C.—Well, my advice is, leave them off at once, and don't lay out a penny of your money on that which makes you such a bad return. If you *will* have them, take a string and measure loosely round your body, and don't pay for stays which measure a bit less than that. There's a pretty difference in those you've got on now, I should think?

Mrs. B.—And what about the children, ma'am? I was thinking of giving them to the three eldest girls this winter, but——

Mrs. C.—But do not, there's a good woman, you could not spend your money worse. If you doubt what I've been telling you, ask the doctor; he knows more about it than any of us. It's my opinion that doctors ought to be the only people to sell stays, because then people wouldn't be allowed to hurt themselves, as they do now. When you go to a chemist to buy laudanum for the tooth-

ache, there is "Poison" printed in large letters on the bottle, to warn people how to use it; so I think there ought to be the word *Torture*, or Murder, in large letters, on every pair of stays, and then people would learn to be afraid of them.

Mrs. B.—That don't sound altogether pleasant; and now that one's used oneself to them, it aint exactly so bad as that neither!

Mrs. C.—Perhaps not; still it's all true that I tell you. Every thing that binds, or presses upon us, in the way of clothes, is doing us harm. If a woman faints, what is the first thing to be done? Why, to cut open her stays, to be sure; because every one knows that she will breathe better without them. If a woman wants to lift, and bend, and carry, and move well, and easily, she must have the free use of all her limbs, and all the muscles in her body; and very thankful should she be if her mother has had the sense to let her grow up without wearing stays, and so made her depend upon her own natural strength and power.

Mrs. B.—It sounds very reasonable what you say, and I've made up my mind not to hurt my little girls' healths, if I can help it; so there'll be a trifle for the Savings Bank after all, if I put in the cost of three pairs of stays.

Mrs. C.—If you do, I'm sure you'll not repent it: we are fearfully and wonderfully made: remember that our bodies are God's work, every part of which *must* be right, useful, and necessary. How *dare* we then try to improve or change them?

Mrs. B.—No, indeed; it does seem shocking to think of.

Mrs. C.—If my son was looking out for a wife, I should say, Don't marry a girl like a wasp. She will never make you a good wife, for, ten to one, there is a sting under that small waist, and that sting is *Ill Health.* She can never be strong and hearty, and fit for work, if she has pinched herself into such a shape; and if it does not show itself at first, it will be *sure* to do so by-and-by. A large waist, and plenty of room to breathe and bend, is a far better sign of good sense and good health, and that is what I hope *your* little girls will have when they grow up.

Mrs. B.—I'll tell Mary all about it, and then I hope she'll be ashamed, when she's a woman, to follow the example of other silly girls, instead of doing what's right.

Mrs. C.—I hope so too, for her own sake; at all events you'll have done *your* duty. And now

I think of it, I must tell you of something which is done by the mothers in China, which perhaps you never heard of, and will scarcely believe, it sounds so cruel. It seems that the first thing a rich mother thinks of in that country, when a girl is born, is to make her foot as small as possible. It never will do to have it the natural size; it's not fashionable! In order to do this, the poor little toes are taken and bent down under the sole of the foot by a strong band, which is drawn tighter every day, so as to keep it in the same position, and prevent it growing. It is, of course, horrid pain to the poor child; but no matter, if it cry its little heart out, or faint, or even die, the mother says it must be done, as small feet are so beautiful: and no one can put up with them in China, if they are left the natural size, like yours and mine. By the time the girl is grown up, the feet are not more than three to five inches long, with all the toes growing into the sole, like a round dumpy ball! Of course the poor creature can't *walk*, though she contrives to waddle along somehow, when she wants to get about. However, the mother is satisfied, and everybody admires her, so nothing is thought of all the cruel pain she has gone through! What do you say now to the Chinese mothers?

Mrs. B.—Why, I say they don't deserve to have children if they use the poor innocents that way. I wonder how they've got the heart for to do it!

Mrs. C.—So do I. Yet *we* do worse. The mischief done by our English mother to her child, when she once begins to lace her up in stays, is far more serious. The doctors say that about 15,000 women die every year from diseases brought on by this horrid custom. Your child may possibly escape, but if you value the blessings of health, have nothing to do with such wicked inventions; and depend upon it, the shape she was born with is better than any you can pinch her into. But what a long chat we have had. I must say good day now. I've had a nice rest, and feel quite fresh for my walk.

Mrs. B.—Good day, ma'am, you are very welcome, and I hope you will look in again before long. I must go and look after my clothes now. Upon my word, you've made me feel quite spiteful against them stays! I shan't have no pleasure in getting them up nice, when I think of all the mischief they've been doing to some poor body!

Mrs. C.—Yes, it is very sad, when we want

all the health and strength we can get for our daily work, that we should take such pains to make ourselves unhealthy. However, we'll hope to do better in time; and when we find ourselves benefited, and know that a thing is really right, we must do our best to help our neighbours, and show mothers in how many ways that cost nothing they can do good to their children.

Mrs. B.—Ay, that's it! I tells my neighbours that we ought to try and do what you wish us, because you means it all for our good, and no one can say they can't afford it.

Mrs. C.—No, Mrs. Brown, that's certain. Any beggar may follow my advice and not be the poorer, but, on the contrary, all the richer, in health and strength. By the way, I forgot to say, that I shall expect the children back to school on Monday; the harvest will be pretty well over by that time, so don't let me be disappointed.

Mrs. B.—No, ma'am, that you shan't; you may depend on seeing some of mine, anyhow.

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