

"Very terrible, though calm, is outraged Nature," writes Charles Kingsley. Therefore, my dear sisters, "on the counter of the world take heed what coin is rung. Throw down a kindness, however small, and as sure as God is over everything, the change comes back to you in love; first to the one you have benefited, and then to all humanity. Throw down a wrong, and the change is given to you in hate to the one you have wronged, and then to the rest of the world." And as a pebble thrown into yonder lake produces a ripple, the circle of which widens and widens until it reaches the remotest circumference thereof, so doth the influence of every man, good or bad, stretch outward and onward to the very border of time itself.

"Nor since the days of Adam until now," says a wise man, "has anybody ever done anything great or useful by listening to the 'voices from without.'" Let nobody, therefore, be afraid or ashamed to work. We live in an age of progressive movement. And, if needs be, we must step out of the beaten tracks, for the less our professional career contains of the old worn out methods the better for its real vegetation and future usefulness. Remember that there is a false notion in the world respecting employment; and thousands of our fellow-men imagine that if they could live in idleness they would be perfectly happy. Now this is a grave mistake. Every industrious man and woman knows that nothing is so tiresome as being unemployed. "Industry is a noble thing."

Whether we look at our bodies or examine our minds, everything tells us that our kind and bountiful Creator intended that we should be active. Hands, feet, eyes, and mental powers plainly show that we were born to be busy. If we had been made to be idle, then, I fear, a very large portion of our bodily and mental faculties must be redundant. And I would maintain most strongly that "all excellence in art, if it cannot advance, must decline": which brings us to the beginning and the ending of the whole matter. "Give unto me the key to yonder wicket gate, which leadeth unto the Academy of Knowledge, sister," said a "plucked" young student to me one day. "With pleasure, my young friend," was my reply. And handing to him a bunch of keys, I said, "Examine the bunch for yourself, and you will doubtless find a key labelled PLOD; and this also is the self-same name of highway beyond the gate." The young man took heart again, and passed his examinations with honours. *Perseverance will overcome all difficulties.* This life is an education—right on from the cradle to the grave. "What man hath done man can do," should be our watchword; "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap," be our belief.

"Produce, produce all you are able," writes Carlyle. We must never look backward, except to learn the lesson of doing better to-day. We *must* believe in "possibilities." Look at the condition of our towns and cities. How densely are they populated! Herein the scope of our young profession is limitless. But we want a better education to enable us to rise equal to and keep pace with the times. Then the thousands of our richer folks were never so dependent upon each other as they are at the present time, and we are all dependent upon each other. The true interests of all men are identical. Then, why, Sir, should we not be—each in his own little circle—quietly and gradually developing into Trees of Knowledge, bearing luxuriant fruit, whose leaves might be utilised for the healing of the nations? Must we longer hesitate to—

"Sow good seed, that those who follow
Future blessings yet may reap—
Joy resound o'er hill and hollow
When we all have gone to sleep.
Germ of truth and knowledge gather
On the varied ways we go;
Know—the present is the father
Of the future weal or woe."

"You will remember," says G. Campbell Morgan, "that when a poor loving woman expended her substance upon the purchase of an alabaster box of ointment, and broke the box

to pour its contents on the feet of her Lord, the representative of the world, the financial secretary, said, 'Why this waste?' Jesus turned upon him with, 'Let the woman alone; she has done it for My burial.' If we begin to work for God until the fire consumes us, men will ask, 'Why this waste?' A young man comes from the country into a town, the fire of God burning in his heart, and he works for God until his form is wasted, and the hectic flush is on his cheek, and men ask, 'Why this waste?' Jesus says, 'It is for Me.' I would rather die a premature death, and go down to an early tomb, and let men put over my tomb this epitaph, 'Why this waste?' than live an idle life until my head was white with the blossoms of years, and never have done one deed that the Recording Angel could write in the book of the heroes." Gazing wistfully through the long winding vista of time, methinks the dawning of the new Era breaks upon my view—harbinger of the advent of the universal brotherhood of man—the welcome time when "each shall find his own in all men's good, and all shall work in noble brotherhood." Thank God, the religion of to-day is coming nearer the world's need. Happily the time draws on apace when it will be considered a sin to live and die rich; for, believe me, true wisdom consists in training men to be as much above riches as poverty. "Unselfish brotherliness is the panacea for every social woe."

"All I desire," said Seneca, "is that my poverty may not be a burden to others or to myself." And I am fully convinced, Sir, that that is the best state of fortune which is neither directly necessitous nor far removed from it. "A mediocrity of fortune," continues Seneca, "with gentleness of mind, will preserve us from fear of envy, which is a desirable condition, for surely no man wants the power to do mischief." How is it, I wonder, we never consider the blessing of coveting nothing, and the glory of being full in ourselves without depending upon fortune? With parsimony a little is sufficient for all our needs, without it nothing; whereas frugality makes a poor man rich.

Without entering upon the pros and cons of the matter, in walking along some of those beautiful terraces adjoining one of those stately mansions of old England—for I have enjoyed a bit of Private Nursing betimes—I once upon a time found myself soliloquising thus: "If we lose an estate, we had better never have had it; for he that has least to lose has least to fear, and those are better satisfied whom fortune never favoured than those whom she has forsaken." And assuredly that state is most commodious which lies between poverty and plenty. Diogenes understood this very well when he put himself into an incapacity of losing anything. I earnestly thank God for all the invaluable lessons my spell of Private Nursing taught me.

Some anonymous writer says, "That course of life is most commodious which is both safe and wholesome; the body is to be indulged no further than for health, and rather mortified than not kept in subjection to the mind." Noble sentiments! True, it is necessary to provide against hunger, thirst, and cold, and sometimes for a covering to shelter us against other inconveniences; but not a pin does it matter whether it be of turf or of marble. A man may lie as warm and as dry under a thatched as under a gilded roof. *Let but the mind be great and glorious, and all other things are despicable in comparison.*

"Oh! call not this a vale of tears,
A world of care and sorrow;
One half the grief that o'er us comes
From self we often borrow.
The earth is beautiful and good:
How long will man mistake it?
The folly is within ourselves,
The world is what we make it."

Thanking you, I remain, Sir, yours in good hope,
THEODORA.