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Editorial.

A Message of Spring.

THE month of April brings with her a message of joy and peace reminding us of Calvary and the sacrifice made, that we ourselves might be imbued with goodness to permeate our pathways. Unexpected offerings of exquisite spring flowers brought to us a message of cheer, which we should like to pass on to our readers. The first gift was a box of snowdrops; we have seldom seen if ever, such large pure heads on such long stalks, but perhaps that is the result of their venerable ancestry in a sheltered and historic garden from whence they came. It was sheer joy to arrange them in a circular green vase and to place them in a position where the delicate flowers could cast their spell on all who crossed the threshold of the room.

"The snowdrop robed in the living light,
A gleam of hope in the longing night,
Proclaims anew that the Spring is near,
And the flowery pageant of the year.
Oh, this lady of light—I call her Hope,
For the gates of Heaven her fingers open."

A week later the second gift arrived as if to add the essential colour to our office. It was a box of daffodils, obviously from the woods, short, delicate stems with proud golden trumpets. They were arranged by our friends with great care and artistry and finally deposited where they please the eye and shed their message of Spring abroad. Their effect on the office reminded one of Wordsworth's lines:—

"And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

The gift recalled to our memory a sermon we once heard on "The Power of Kindness." The minister explained how in life, if we hoped to successfully understand others, we must study the common feelings of human nature. To show the sort of appeal which would prove successful, he related the following story in which a kindly expression casually dropped, had a good effect. In a part of the Highlands of Scotland, the people were exceedingly backward in all matters of tidiness about their houses and gardens, in spite of constant reminders and reprimands of the proprietor of the estates. The proprietor, vexed about the slovenliness of his tenantry went to visit another estate which belonged to a lady of considerate and benevolent nature. To his extreme surprise he found all the cottages and gardens in the district, neat and orderly, and the gardens universally blooming with the prettiest flowers. "This," remarked the lady, "is the result, I may say, of one kind word. One day

I observed during my visits, in a wretched garden behind the house, a single marigold amidst a crowd of weeds. 'What a beautiful marigold you have got there,' I remarked to the cottager. The man was delighted with the knowledge of possessing what I prized so highly, and he commenced to dig and clean his garden and plant further flowers. Others did the same and a general improvement of taste ensued."

There is no moral principle applicable to private or domestic life, which is not equally applicable in public affairs. This is not generally seen or even acknowledged, but because it is true the world is awakening to the fact. An American writer related an instance of the benefits of the law of kindness in an affair approaching to the character of the public. She wrote of a young, hard-working and uneducated youth who was one of forty New Englanders who had associated themselves as Christians and had gone further to make a settlement of their own in the western highlands. They were industrious and capable, and all things prospered under their hands. But unprincipled adventurers soon entered the fold, and acted according to their creed. The Christians however, remonstrated gently and repaid them with unwavering kindness, announcing openly "We shall return good for evil." Lawyers offered their services but the Christians answered, "We have no need of you. As neighbours we receive you in good faith, but for us your occupation has ceased to exist." "What will you do if rascals burn your barns and steal your harvests?" "We will return good for evil. We believe this is the highest worth and therefore the best expediency." Barns were burnt down at night, and cows let into the cornfields. The Christians, however, repaired the damage, put the cows in the barn, and at night gently drove them home saying, "Neighbour, your cows have been in my field. I have fed them well during the day, but I would not keep them all night lest the children should suffer for want of milk." Eventually the example changed the ways of the adventurers and the milk of human kindness pierced their armour, proving the worthlessness of their folly. The American writer of this incident listened with delighted reverence to the labourer explaining his philosophy of universal love. She was known to say later, "That labourer brought greater riches to my soul, than an eastern merchant laden with pearls."

This is the message which Easter brings to us. Only by consulting the interests of others by mutual kindness can we ourselves derive happiness and benefit morally. Is it not written: "Verily, I say unto you, that kindness is mightier than the conqueror, for the conqueror subdues only the body—kindness subdues the soul."

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