

The Spectator

Two friends of the Spectator, young gentlemen who ought to have known better than to waste their time, spent many weeks several years ago in writing a novel. As one of the authors was a romanticist and the other was a realist, there was much difficulty now and again in deciding upon the treatment to be adopted. In reviewing the work of each other, they did not exactly quarrel, but they strained courtesy almost to the breaking point. But at length the work was completed, and the pleasing event was celebrated with a modest dinner in what is known as the French quarter of the town. Now came the question as to what should be done with the manuscript. An acquaintance who had had experience with publishers informed the young gentlemen that it would be necessary to have the manuscript copied by a typewriter before it was sent to a publisher. This was done, and the aspiring authors had the satisfaction of paying forty dollars for this work, and the outlay had the same effect on the romanticist that it had on the realist, and the latter felt that typewriting was a kind of semi-publication. Another dinner was eaten to celebrate this event, and this dinner was a strain upon the digestion, as the young gentlemen felt that they were entitled to a more elaborate repast than usual, now that fame and fortune were almost within their grasp. During this dinner it was decided to submit the manuscript to a large publishing house in New York, because the reader for that house was a friend of the realist member of the copartnership. And so the precious typewritten story was handed in and submitted to its first trial.

The young gentlemen did not see much of each other for more than a week. Then they met every day for more than a week, passing an hour or more together in anxious speculation over the result of this first trial. One day the realist appeared with the manuscript under his arm, and a letter from the reader in his hand. The reader said that he had examined the manuscript with care and pleasure, but he was afraid it would not keep the average reader long enough in suspense, and therefore his firm, with many thanks for the privilege of examining it, returned it with regret. The letter was a sugar-coated condemnation. But the authors did not see it exactly in this way. They re-read the story together, and made slight changes here and there. This involved a week of hard work. Once more the novel was committed to the tender mercies of a publisher. This time there was a difference of opinion among the readers, and a decision was not reached until the head of the house had himself dipped into the story. He did not find what he tasted at all to his liking, and the authors got back the manuscript, now considerably soiled and dog-eared, with more polite words of condemnation. Our authors did not celebrate either of these last events with dinners; instead of that they fought shy of each other, and each suspected that the other blamed him and his work for the failure of the book to please the readers. But they tried the story on several other publishers without success, and then rearranged it as a serial for a magazine. By this time another typewritten copy was needed, and this cost \$32, so that the Spectator's friends had now invested \$72 in cash in their literary venture. But the editors returned the story with polite words of regret. Now they tried the publishers of light reading-matter—summer novels.

The authors waited week after week and month after month. Its long detention made them hope that at length the MS. had found favor, and they celebrated this revived hope with another dinner. In complacent after-dinner mood they agreed to call on the publishers the next day and ask for a decision. They were met with the politeness that is the characteristic of dealers in literature, and were informed that the manuscript had been rejected and returned many weeks before. Here was what Mr. Gilbert has called "a pretty howdy-do." The manuscript appeared to have been disposed of, but the authors had achieved neither fame nor fortune. Now ensued some very polite letter-writing. The publishers promised to search for the lost novel, but denied all responsibility—whether the loss had been occasioned by their

carelessness or not. The authors took advice from their friends on every side. The lawyers said that the publishers were liable; other publishers said that they did not know whether there was any liability or not, but all of them expressed the hope that the authors would test the question in the courts. It may be remarked just here that this question of the liability of publishers for manuscripts submitted to them has not been definitely settled. One thing was certain, however—that if the authors sought to recover for the lost manuscript they would be required to prove its value. Here was a hard nut to crack. Had the manuscript any value? Naturally, the authors thought that it had, but it would be well-nigh impossible for them to prove such a fact. Taking this into consideration, together with their indisposition to appear litigious, they concluded to let the matter drop for a while, and, when they had recovered from their disappointment, recast the first draft and have a new copy made. At this juncture the publishers generously offered to pay for typewriting a clean copy. There the matter rested for several years.

One day in December of last year one of the Spectator's friends, the romanticist of the partnership, received a letter from the gentleman who had just retired as Consul-General at Cairo, in Egypt, saying that the lost manuscript was in the American Agency there, evidently by some mistake. Application was made to Mr. Frederic Penfield, the present Consul-General in Cairo, and that courteous officer replied at once, and in part as follows:

When I took over the archives of this Diplomatic Agency and Consulate-General, I found many interesting articles and documents—for this is the land of the mysterious—but none more so than the MS. of a story which not only revealed your name, but familiar chirography. I had long intended writing you about it. I now send you the wrapper of the parcel with its inscription, and also Colonel ———'s memorandum. How the MS. came to be in Egypt, or why ——— should have left it at this office, is more than I can tell.

The wrapper bore the name and address of the publishers, and also the name and address of one of the authors. These two addresses indicated places in New York not ten minutes apart. The gentleman who received the manuscript by mistake, and deposited it in the United States Consulate in Cairo, is an African explorer and also a writer of some note. Why he should not have notified the publishers of the mistake is, to say the least, rather odd. It may be that he had received a manuscript of his own that had been rejected, and that he was not in a mood to waste politeness or courtesy upon any one. But, at any rate, the lost had been found, and the authors were in a quandary as to whether they should condole with or congratulate one another. Of course they will try that manuscript on other publishers, for authors never quite believe that what they have created is devoid of merit.

The Spectator has related these incidents in the hope that their recital may here and there discourage a person from engaging in the profitless work of making manuscripts. If the work put upon manuscripts in the United States, that are made for publication but are never published, were paid for at the rate of one dollar a day, the amount in two years would, in the aggregate, be sufficient to half pay the National debt! The Spectator feels sure that this is not only a waste of time but worse than a waste. Even when the maker of manuscripts has a good measure of success, his reward is miserably small in comparison with a similar success in any other profession. But ninety-seven per cent. of the writing that is done is never published—that is, these authors fail utterly. And those who succeed, those who write that other three per cent., what is their reward? It is a mere pittance in comparison with a lawyer's or a surgeon's fees, and the Spectator verily believes that there are not ten literary men in America whose earnings, independent of salaries as editors, amount to more than a bare and insufficient living.



The Home

The Center of the Circle

A wife who does not wisely use the money placed in her hands for the support of the family becomes a greater or less object of disapproval to her friends, and especially to her husband's friends; but rarely do we condemn the woman who misuses her strength so that she deprives her family of the benefits which would accrue to them were she in the full flush of health. Health is certainly quite as important an item in the family life as money, and the woman who over-exerts herself and reduces her strength below the normal point is as worthy of condemnation as the woman who misuses the income placed at her disposal. Time is also an important factor in the family life. If this is not wisely used, especially where the income is limited, as it is in most American homes, the wife should be, at least to her own conscience, a subject for condemnation. One of the greatest fallacies held by the women of the middle class in America is that it does not pay, for instance, to do their own sewing when garments can be bought ready-made so cheaply; yet every woman who knows anything about it by experience knows that the garment for which she has purchased the goods, and which she has made with her own hands, outwears the ready-made garment by many months. The making of it may have saved but a few cents, but the making of the dozens of garments, if a woman has the skill, the time, and the strength, means just that much of an increase to the income; and that increase may make the difference between having a pleasure fund and being compelled to do without all that that word is made to cover in each separate family.

Many a woman makes the mistake of believing that she economizes in what she does without, when true economy is expressed by what she has, by the resources she commands for herself and family by the use of her money. "Doing without" may simply be another name for indifference, for laziness, or for selfishness. Not what we do without represents us, but what we have; and many a woman who claims that she never has any money for books, though she loves them, could have them if she economized in the use of her time. In hundreds of homes in America the wives of clerks, of men commanding small capital, or of professional men, live the lives of women of assured incomes, and the financial struggle is doubled because of the mistaken idea that it does not pay to use time, because the use of time in certain ways would mean so little expressed in money. Strange as it may seem, there is really more economy in the use of time among the so-called rich where the homes are governed by intelligence.

There comes to mind now an evening spent at a country house where there were three young girls and several young men. As the twilight deepened, the lights were lighted, and each young lady brought out a silk waist which she was smocking. Each of the girls was going to spend a certain length of time at Lenox, and these waists were part of the wardrobes. The girls had allowances, but smocked waists were expensive, and if they purchased them ready-made it meant the surrender of other necessities that make up the perfection of toilets; and so they learned how to make these waists. One of the young men, with a puzzled expression, said to the chaperon, "Why, do girls sew! Why, I never saw my sisters sew!" And yet his sisters did not command the income of any one of the three young girls who sat before him. The puzzled expression deepening upon his face, he said: "Why, I do not

understand it; at home we always have those things made, or the girls buy them."

It is the right use of time that results in the difference between freedom and oppression. It is the use of time in the home, and for the home, that preserves it. Where the table is supplied by canned goods, the wardrobes replenished by ready-made garments, and the house managed by the servants, there can be little of the true home feeling. But where money, time, strength, and skill are at the disposal of the household, then in truth are the women of that family home-makers, and not merely mistresses, and the family live a life of freedom, not because they do without, but because provision is made for, the necessities of that particular family life. If the home is to be more than a place of shelter, and more than a restaurant, it must command the best of the wife's strength, time, talents, skill. No position in the world accords her the honor, the love, the authority, that are accorded her when she fills her position of home-maker with intelligence.



Mother and School

By Sarah L. Arnold¹

The approach of the momentous "first week of school" brings many a thought of relief to tired mothers who have found their cares multiplied by vacation. Hard to follow with unfailing patience the countless excursions of Fred and Frank and Joe, to mend at night the rents they never failed to announce on their home-coming, to know that no number of baths would cause them to stay clean, that no amount of planning or persuasion would prevent clatter and confusion. Then Kate and Susie and the baby must be cared for, too. Dresses must be washed and ironed, and old frocks must be let down to meet their growing needs. How the day resounds with "Mother, can I do this?" "Mother, can I go there?" "Mother, Joe took my fish-pole;" "Mother, please fix my kite;" and even "Where's mother?" when the momentary absence is noted, and the children would be assured that she is within reach of their clamor! Small wonder that the weary mother thinks with relief of the coming days when she will know through six hours of the day that her brood are comfortably housed, happily occupied, and cared for by some one else.

So many a mother will send her children away that first Monday morning, and every morning after, thinking only that she is relieved from care and burdens heavy to bear, trusting, without knowing why, that the children are all right when in school, and questioning no further.

On the other hand, this same "first week of school" causes many a mother's heart to quake with foreboding. How can she part with her roguish little Ralph, her delicate, sensitive Ruth, for so many hours in the day? How can she intrust them to the care of the teacher whom she does not know, and who can never understand her children as she does? How can she let them encounter the rough experiences of the playground, meet the children from whose influence she has carefully shielded them, and be exposed to the atmosphere which may taint their young lives, and to suggestions which will mar their pure thoughts? These questions the mother asks herself over and over again, holds her children closer, and shrinks from the evil day.

What would we ask of all these mothers for the sake of child and teacher, for the mother's sake as well? This, that time be taken from pressing duties and anxious thought, from the days already so full, to do this one thing more—to learn all that it is possible to learn of the school to which the children are sent, to study its conditions, to know the spirit and motive which direct it, to appreciate its advantages and disadvantages, and so to help the little ones and the teacher to whose care they are

¹ Supervisor Primary Schools, Minneapolis.