

The Home

A Recent Incident

So much is being constantly said on the subject of indiscriminate giving that it would seem as though the echo of the two words were ringing constantly in the air this winter; but there never was greater necessity for them. This winter is the professional beggars' harvest. The generous impulses of every human heart are aroused, while the naturally generous heart is quickened. The professional mendicant reads human nature well; it is his capital. Last week a woman was met with a basket at a basement door. Inquiries brought out the not uncommon story of six children and a sick husband, too sick to work. The case was hunted up. The family were found living in two basement rooms. Eight persons, six of them adults, lived in these rooms, which were dark, damp, and dirty. There were four children, evidently children of the husband by a former marriage, ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-eight, and two young children, ten and twelve. All were dirty and thriftless beyond description. A day's washing was offered to the girl of twenty, who tossed her head and said "she did not know how to wash"—a self-evident fact. The boy of seventeen said he did not go out to shovel snow that day, for he had no shovel; he was not at all pleased at the suggestion that he would find many people willing to lend him one to clear their walks. Close questioning brought out the fact that the income of this family, when the four older children were at work, was twenty dollars per week, and that they worked on an average about two-thirds of the year. They paid no rent; the mother kept the halls and stairs of this tenement-house clean for their house-rent; they rarely bought food, because the mother went out with her basket twice each day begging from door to door. There was no sense of shame, because there was no comprehension of the fact that they were beggars of the worst class. They were Italians; the boy of seventeen and the younger children were born here, but had never attended American schools. The woman had begged the food for the family for twelve years, and generally in the same neighborhood.

Is it not criminally careless for those who have even broken food to give, to be so indifferent to the waste of their own larders as not to know who receives the benefit? This woman's domain for begging had been within fifteen minutes' walk of her home. All about her were poor families who really needed, for support, the food that enabled this family to build a bank account; and in a few years they will own a rookery that will be overcrowded—a menace alike to the health and morals of the whole community.

The real sin lies at the door of the intelligent house-keepers who permit such families to live at their expense. A thousand times better to throw the food away than to develop and nourish beggary.



Casting Ballots in New Zealand

The San Francisco "Chronicle" gives the following description of the casting of the first ballots by women in New Zealand, November 28, 1893:

From end to end of the colony, in the crowded cities and in the sparsely settled country districts, the women recorded their votes at the polling-booths. The candidates had committees of ladies as well as gentlemen, and the members of the ladies' committees were as keen as the men in bringing voters of their own

sex to the polls. They made provision by which any woman having a baby had a member of the committee to relieve her of family cares while she was recording her vote. No provision was made for separate polling-places for women. They went to the same booths as the men, and in no single instance was there the slightest annoyance caused to any female voter.



The Old Home and the New

By Helen Churchill Candee

The reiterated newspaper jokes about "the pies mother made when I was a boy," and which Corydon is perpetually flinging at the mortified pride of his newly wedded Phyllis, have really been founded on an uncomfortable truth. As a matter of course, the central figure in the new home is Phyllis, but beside her stands Corydon, both with ideals of home formed from what is best in the homes they have just left, and widely at variance. If Corydon is a great blundering man, devotedly fond of Phyllis, so long as he is made comfortable he questions none of her ways; but if he is of a nervous temperament, with fine æsthetic sense, all of his love and all of hers are required to make the marriage-car run smoothly during its first experimental year.

Phyllis must be the head of her own home, just as a man is the head of his business firm, and she has a right to reject suggestions which border on dictation, even though they proceed from so high a source as her own or her husband's mother. She may thereby make mistakes, but, as it is impossible that one person can live the same life as another, she best understands the conditions of her own life, and is working toward the establishment of an ultimate harmony for the good of all concerned.

Two great questions which agitate the new home, and which must excite in the mothers of the young pair a desire to adjust matters, are money and morals. As Corydon is the wage-earner, it is natural his mother should look with jealous eye on the matter of expenditure; and as Phyllis has led a girl's simple and protected life, her mother looks with apprehension on easy Sabbaths, wine at dinner, an occasional stag-party, or a club membership. The wise mother will let the young couple work out their own salvation, unless applied to for assistance; and a little partiality to the child who is not her own will be salutary.

The young people start with family traditions on both sides; and as man is by nature opposed to changing his ways, he is apt to hold on to his with insistence and tenacity. It may be that Phyllis's domestic habitude has included a heavy middle-day dinner on Sundays, with a supper of toast and tea, while at Corydon's old home dinner was at night as usual, and a handful of friends were asked in to enjoy it. Then, to his wife's suggestion that there are other days more suitable for entertaining than Sunday, Corydon will bring his argument, "Better for these people to be with us in our home than to feel sadness and discouragement in their shabby lodgings." Or, Corydon's father did not believe in subscriptions to charitable institutions, which, he said, dissipate larger sums in salaries than in relief; but Phyllis had personally visited the places and their dependents, and in future her husband throws no more charitable appeals into the waste-basket. Insistence, if it be in so small a matter as where the etchings shall be hung, will beget friction that is not easily forgotten. The aim and province of both members of the new home should be to look with impartiality on the two homes they have just left, singling out the virtues to emulate, and to add to the common sum the ideals which are peculiarly their own. If pure personal prejudice has had no part in this process, the happy result will be worth the self-subjugation necessary. It will prevent endless insistence on unimportant customs, and will also prevent that obliteration of individuality which often absorbs one who marries into a family of iron-bound prejudices.

It is so many years since the mother of Corydon or of Phyllis began her own new home that time has obliterated some of her ideals, and expediency has taken the place of desire. The noble efforts of the young couple to make home

a sort of earthly heaven awaken her. The large-minded, greatly humble woman of experience sees in the graciousness and selflessness of the beginners something to emulate. She observes that in the new home the entertaining is of a different character from her own. There is a pretty dash of conventionality, and an adoption of frills inseparable from it, and any little slip causes the hostess disproportionate annoyance. There is a disposition to have the newest thing in centerpieces, in confections, in glassware; the guests are apt to be critics, also young home-makers, and there is a fear lest their keen eyes discover some fault. Mother looks on from her calm heights of experience and charity and says, "Well, dear, I think everything is lovely, but if your guests criticise your best endeavors to please them, reflect that such criticism is unworthy your notice."

Then the elder woman goes home, and, with a vision of a pretty table fresh in her mind, sees her own as Phyllis perhaps saw it; suddenly is aware that things are not dressed as daintily as might be, and that, as the boys are grown so large, there is really no need of serving vegetables in little dishes from the end of the table. They might as well help themselves from the dish passed by the servant, and avoid giving their places the look of Jupiter surrounded by his moons. Then, the table would look far prettier dressed with little dishes of nuts and sweets, which make such a pleasant excuse for lingering long at table. Phyllis's waitress looks far prettier than hers because of the uniform of black dress, white cap and apron, and wide rolled collar and cuffs. Mother feels that she is never too old to learn, so adopts whatever of good she sees in Phyllis's methods. The young wife's unselfish efforts to make home a rest and delight to others recall to her mother the days when she had builded on similar lines, and stimulate her to continued effort.

In these latter days, when "emancipation" is heard so frequently in connection with woman, there is great danger of neglecting some of the fundamental attributes without which she may build but an unsymmetrical domestic structure. The ability to make home a source of inspiration as well as a happy refuge is not one that comes without effort. The woman whose work is in the world can have it; and the finished housekeeper who harries her household with fretful admonitions fails of acquiring it. It comes from an appreciation of the highest good in life, and an effort to both attain and dispense it.

The altar of domestic detail is one upon which many a young, unwarned housekeeper has sacrificed health, beauty, and happiness. It is one that is often self-sought from a mistaken idea of a housekeeper's duty. The endless possibility for drudgery that spreads itself before the woman who starts on this career is one that will claim her entire life unless some one will point the way to higher ministration to her family. Some one should tell her that the services that cannot be bought are the true field of the home-maker. Well-trained servants can take the drudgery of routine work, but only a progressive, gracious woman can introduce into the home an atmosphere of geniality and refinement. The children's nurse in the dining-room can cut up their food, but only mother can make each meal a happy event where *bons mots* are repeated, and interesting episodes of the day are recounted. The home-maker is to save herself from tiring, menial duties to expend her strength on large considerations, both mental and moral.

Change and progression are the watchwords of the times, and the ideal housekeeper of the day is a very different woman from the one of a generation back. That poor figure is now ridiculed as having no thought nobler than a replete preserve-cupboard, no ambition higher than dustless furniture; she is a lifelong warrior against dust, who must finally succumb and be resolved into the element which she has so long combated. The woman who has taken her place feels that there is more in life than she has been extracting, and therefore converts her housekeeping into a methodical routine, applying to it some of the principles that govern her husband's business. The morning hour of close application to domestic duties finished, she can let her mind apply itself to larger regions of thought, and the result is the elevation of the home circle.

Children and father feel that the mother is not an upper servant, but a grand, unfailing source of mental stimulus and cheer and sympathy.



An Autumn Afternoon

By Mary Willis

It was startling to hear that there was sorrow near us. The hills seemed to inclose that "happy valley" and protect us from all the outside world. Probably yesterday morning, when we lay in the hammocks, commenting on the beautiful cloud that hung over the mountain, even at that moment the death-angel was at the door of the little cabin just below its top, and the baby voice was stilled. Yes, of course we would go to the funeral. There was not much we could do, but what we could do we would. Over the dusty road, through the doubtful light that promised sunshine one minute to contradict it the next with heavy shadow, over the bridge, through the woods, climbing higher at every step till we reach the clearing. Looking back over a glorious sweep of country, with here and there through the trees a curling line of smoke indicating that there are other homes, with the possibilities of joy and sorrow, up the stony field, along another stretch of road, into the narrow path that ran up the steep ascent that brought us to the top of the mountain. Panting with the exertion, we rest on the fence before we enter the little home just beyond the turn of the road.

It is of one story, and at some time has been whitewashed, the last evidence slowly disappearing just under the eaves. Not a sound or evidence of life or death about it. A few flowers in old tin cans are blooming on a wash-bench under the window, but they are the only evidence of adornment. A gate, hanging on one hinge, swung inward at pressure, and we are on the weather-beaten piazza.

A knock on the door was answered by a woman whose face was almost as weather-beaten as the house. She opened the door, but retreated at once to a chair on the other side of the room. At the side of the room opposite the stove, in which was a roaring fire of wood, were five small children, whose bare feet hung helplessly above the bare floor, though all wore gayly trimmed hats. A baby, whose feet were covered with stockings through which its bare heels and pink toes were plainly visible, played on the floor. Three women, one with a baby, sat as close to the wall as possible. In the corner, with one end on the table and the other on a barrel covered by a sheet, was the tiny coffin, the closed top carefully covered with a newspaper on which were two tumblers filled with flowers, and a clumsy wreath of white bachelor's-buttons. The coffin was the only "store-bought" piece of furniture in the room. Its polished surface and silver nails were not to be treated carelessly or familiarly. On the foot, staring at us, was the price-mark in chalk, \$2.50.

Not a person spoke. Was the young man, in the chair by the roaring fire, the father? He looked too intelligent to live in this barren home. Which was the mother? Was it the weather-beaten woman, whose very soul must have been worn out? There was no evidence. Every face was devoid of expression. There was not a sound but the crackling of the wood in the stove and the sweep of the wind outdoors. It tore round the house, shaking windows and loose boards; blew leaves and light twigs over the clearing, and lashed our usually happy lake into white-caps that became waves.

Presently a door opens into a tiny bedroom, and from it come a young man and woman, the father and mother of the quiet baby whose going out of life had created much more of sensation in that mountain region than its coming. The coming of babies into those mountain homes is so frequent as scarcely to arouse comment, but death makes few visits. The children in all the homes make regular human stairs—from the baby in arms to the young men and women who are about to make homes of their own. There are equal distances between the heads as they stand in a row. The white-faced mother sits down, with the