

## The Home

### The Dayspring

Easter is the time of hope. We turn to it as a flower to the sun; all the disappointments, the discouragement, of the year seem to lie behind us, and we turn with new ardor to the year that begins with the promise of renewed life, new opportunity. Nature seems to increase this surety. The earth is trembling with the new pulse of activity that will clothe her with beauty and fragrance.

We may stop for a moment, and look over the year behind us. It will be found, perhaps, to have in it more failures than successes, more defeats than triumphs. It may be marked by a broken love, a shattered friendship, an empty niche where a statue had been placed, the offspring of the imagination; it may be that the defeat of the year is in one's self; and this is the hardest to bear of all the burdens the year has placed upon us, yet it is the one that has the fullest promise of the Easter-time. To roll the stone away from our dead selves, and stand in the full light of knowledge with the opportunity for rehabilitation, yea, more than that, new creation, is to touch the very heart of divinity, and feel its pulsations in the soul. To stand with defeat behind us, and to face Godward, knowing that every sin has left an impress on character that will need the vigilance of the awakened manhood to overcome, and yet to know that the soul never stands alone, that the power to overcome is always within the grasp of the man who fights to win, gives victory. To feel the throb of a new purpose, to stand before men a type of the Man giving sympathy, help, hope to all men—this it is to feel the Easter-time and live the Easter hope.

Mistakes, disappointments, shattered hopes and idols, defeated purpose, even mistaken interpretations, become but helps to the new year whose birth is the spirit of Easter promise. Life, hope, opportunity, and new power are the promises of every Easter.



### A Modern Shylock

By Lucia Trevitt Auryansen

Portia came into my sitting-room the other day with something that was almost a frown on her usually serene brow. She gave me an abstracted greeting and sat down in her favorite chair, pulling off her gloves and hardly noticing the cat, who came wriggling about her affectionately.

"It is a very uncomfortable day out," she remarked, almost gloomily. Portia is never *quite* gloomy.

I looked up in surprise. She never talks about the weather unless as an argument to urge me to go out walking or driving with her, so I knew something was on her mind.

"What is the matter, my dear?" I asked. "It isn't the choice of lovers this time, surely!"

"No, indeed," and she looked caressingly at the heavy circlet on her pretty hand. "That is settled."

The choice of lovers had been happily settled long ago.

I went on with my guessing. "Well, are you worrying over what might have happened if your Bassanio had chosen the wrong casket?"

She laughed. "Don't be absurd, Titania. I knew he would stand the test. There wasn't the least doubt in my mind but that he would make the right choice."

"That was because you loved him."

"No, that was *why* I loved him; that power of his to discriminate and choose, without making any fuss about it."

There was something significant in her tones, but it did not give me much clue to her trouble.

"Then is it the oppressor and the pound of flesh that disturb your mind, my judicial little lady?"

Her face brightened. "That comes nearer to it. I am puzzled about what we owe to do and what we do not owe. I don't know exactly what the Shylock is who is claiming not only a pound of flesh, but the whole of us, body and soul."

She paused a moment, then added, with a little laugh: "It's rather a numerous Shylock, Titania."

"Well?" I knew she would come down to plain English before long.

The cat had climbed up into her lap, and she stroked him thoughtfully a few moments before she spoke.

"Titania, don't you think a great deal is required of women nowadays?" she went on. "I mean just ordinary women like you and me, with lots of friends and interests, and an ambition to amount to something. Let me give you a bit of my observation first; then I will tell you some of my own experience. You understand that I don't mean to be critical."

"It was at our Emerson Club last night. John and I have planned to be away next Sunday, and I thought it would be a good chance to find some one to take my Sunday-school class."

"I asked Sylvia first, and she said, 'Oh, dear! you don't expect me to do anything more, do you? Why, I haven't an evening to myself this week, to say nothing of the days, and I couldn't possibly study the lesson.'"

"Perhaps it was unreasonable to ask her just after she had told me her engagements for the week—dancing-school Monday, Whist Club Tuesday, Emerson Club last night, Julia Marlowe Thursday, Symphony Friday afternoon, and meeting in the evening (most of the girls in our set go to the prayer-meeting, unless they have too pressing an engagement), and Saturday evening a choral society."

"That is a full week, to be sure," said I. Sylvia is a pretty delicate girl, compounded largely of nerves and vivacity. I thought the pound of flesh would come from near the heart, but, with Portia, was not quite sure what was the Shylock.

"I asked Helena next," Portia continued. "She said she would be glad to do it if she could, but her evenings were as full as Sylvia's, and she has so much to do at home, for they are doing their own work. She could not possibly stay to Sunday-school anyway, it would make dinner so late."

"Cornelia has a class of her own, but she is going to give that up because she is so busy. She is studying music, you know, and practices four or five hours a day, besides giving lessons and singing with a quartet and in the choir. I suppose it is too hard for her to teach and do all the other things."

"Rosalind said she could teach them to do the flying trapeze act or to come down a brass pole hand over hand (you know she has gone crazy over physical culture, and she is amazingly pretty in her 'gym' suit), but as for instructing them in the Scriptures, she would as soon think of teaching them Sanscrit! And she is a church member and a dear girl," said Portia, wistfully.

"I hated to ask Constance, for she teaches all the week, and works in the church and studies hard besides. I know she is doing too much, but Shylock in that case is an exacting conscience that makes her do everything of that kind she is asked to because she thinks she ought. The young men of the Club were listening to all this conversation, and finally Harry remarked, with that scornful little laugh of his: 'What a busy set you are! I should think you would all succumb under the pressure of so many obligations. I'm thankful mine are all discharged between nine and five at the office, and I can do as I please the rest of the time.' He is *such* an irresponsible boy," and Portia sighed in a discouraged way. "One of the girls said she *was* about ready to succumb. Her mother said she must give up something, and she had just told Mrs. Lovell to take her name off the membership list of the

Mission Band. She really could not get time to keep it up. Harry said yes, he should think she would draw the line there—an hour a month was a good deal of time to give to such an unimportant matter! I don't think she half appreciated the sarcasm," said Portia, laughing. "She only looked puzzled, and Harry's face was inscrutable."

My gentle little judge fondled the cat for a few minutes without speaking, then she went on, thoughtfully:

"Of course we do have obligations, social, intellectual, and physical, as well as religious, and it isn't easy to discriminate."

"And Shylock?" said I, anxious to see how she would bring out her idea.

"I'm afraid I haven't carried out the figure very well. I suppose my thought was that love of pleasure or ambition to shine in society may get possession of us, and make us believe in spite of ourselves that we owe more to them than we really do; so the other things get crowded out. You see what I meant when I said so much was required of women nowadays. In our grandmothers' time they were not expected to know all the new dances, read all the new books, keep up with the best things at the theater and opera, belong to musical societies and whist clubs, and hold an equal interest in the church work besides. Where are we going to draw the line, Tita? Keep out of society altogether and attend to our domestic affairs alone?"

"I hope not; what would be the use of homes, if they were not for the foundation of society and state? But you have given me only the result of your observation, Portia. What was the experience?"

"The problem seems to be difficult enough for girls, but don't you think, Tita, that it becomes still more complicated for a married woman with a husband and a house to think of besides her church and social duties? Now, John and I were out every evening last week, and I was at home only one afternoon. The other day we counted up eleven organizations that I belong to, and this week I have been asked to join an art class, a choral society, and a whist club!"

Portia flung down these facts as a sort of challenge.

"What are you going to do about it?" I asked, laughing.

"I don't know; I want to join the art class, and John and I would both enjoy the music. As for the other, you know Mrs. Page, Tita? well, she came in yesterday morning and announced with great satisfaction that at last there was a vacancy in their whist club, and she was at liberty to ask me to join. I think she hadn't an idea but that I would jump at the chance. I told her I would consider it. I like to play whist well enough, but it means an afternoon every week, fair or foul, from two to five, providing a substitute if I can't go, and entertaining the club twice in the season, furnishing the prizes and light refreshments. It is such a *serious* form of recreation! When I play, I want to do it incidentally."

"It is a little like taking one's amusements under bonds. What does John say about all your engagements?"

"Oh, he lets me do as I please."

"The *ambition* for self-improvement is very likely to become the oppressor to conscientious women like you. I mean that women with a taste for literature, art, or music find themselves tempted to go into all sorts of delightful clubs and classes, and to keep up with all that is going on in the way of exhibitions and concerts and lectures, so that a perfectly praiseworthy desire for self-improvement may become a goading ambition that leads to self-destruction."

"Isn't that putting it strongly, Tita?" asked Portia, laughing.

"Not at all; and when our artistic and literary and musical young woman has a taste for philanthropy also, and feels herself under obligations to do all that is asked of her in the church, and to keep her house perfectly, and return all her calls, and entertain all her friends, the chances are that Shylock will claim his full bond before many years."

"But isn't it true," began Portia, argumentatively, "that it is a woman's duty to make the most of herself intellect-

ually, and keep herself in touch with all great movements and the current of modern thought?"

"Of course it is; she cannot be a true wife without it; but, you see, she defeats her own purpose by trying to do too much. She wants to be literary, but her reading clubs demand so much time that she seldom has leisure to enjoy a book. She is philanthropic, but her benevolent societies and missionary associations are so absorbing that she does not have time to call on her poor neighbor; while all the round of concerts, lectures, and meetings fill her days so completely that when she does have an afternoon or evening at home she is too tired to enjoy it. The pendulum has swung a long way since women were expected to acquire only domestic accomplishments."

"You are quite eloquent, Titania," said Portia, as I closed my harangue somewhat breathlessly. "Perhaps I have been spreading myself out too thin," she added, meditatively, "but it is hard to know where to draw the line."

"I heard Helena say the other day that she was so rushed with all her different engagements that it would be a relief to be sick and obliged to give up everything for a while. And yet she hasn't the moral courage to choose the most important things and let the rest go."

"Portia, do you remember the old French motto, 'Noblesse oblige'?"

"Oh, yes," she cried, eagerly, "and it always brings before me a picture of the old noblesse—the lovely women in the country châteaux ministering to the poor, doing all sorts of good, and bearing themselves bravely under misfortune, because their noble birth *obliged* them to do noble deeds. I think it is beautiful."

"It *would* be beautiful, wouldn't it, Portia, if we could all remember it when we have to choose between higher and lower things?"

One needs only to suggest an idea to Portia; she grasps it and makes it her own at once.

"Oh," she said, with kindling eyes, her voice low and earnest, "because I am a child of the King I must be too proud to be selfish or frivolous. If I am really and truly of the noblesse, it will be impossible for me to put anything but the best and highest things first, and let others come in in their places. And the highest are the duties to the King himself."

With that she kissed me good-by and went away.

There was no doubt in my mind that she was "really and truly of the noblesse," and she made me see how it was possible for all of us to write the old legend on our hearts, until in all our work and play we shall remember that we are children of the King. Then, holding our heads high enough to breathe the atmosphere of truth and see above the mists of worldliness, we shall choose for our life-work what will make us most useful and helpful, and guide our pleasure with unselfish hearts; not because we owe it to ourselves or to society, but because "Noblesse oblige."



## A Home Apparatus

Sterilized milk, in the minds of most people, is milk so treated as to be of peculiar value to infants and delicate children. Sterilized milk is valuable for all household purposes for which milk is used. Housekeepers who economize are careful about the ice-bills. In cities and large towns meat can be brought from the butcher's just in time for cooking, and other marketing can be kept down to the point of absolute necessities; but milk, like water, must be always on hand. To keep milk fresh and sweet, even with large refrigerators, in extremely hot weather becomes a problem, and often a vexatious one. The United States Government has become the servant of the household by experimenting until a convenient and cheap apparatus for the sterilization of milk has been found. It consists of a three-gallon tin pail, in the bottom of which is placed, upside down, a tin pie-plate—perforated. On this are placed small glass bottles in which is the milk, a little more than