

THE
FAMILY TREASURY

OF

SUNDAY READING.

EDITED BY THE

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READING.

DIARY OF MRS. KITTY TREVYLYAN.

A Story of the Times of Whitefield and the Wesleys.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHRONICLES OF THE SCHÖNBERG-COTTA FAMILY."

Wednesday, May the First, 1745.



OTHER always said that on the day I became sixteen she would give me a book of my own, in which to keep a Diary. I have wished for it ever since I was ten, because Mother herself always keeps a Diary; and when anything went wrong in the house,—when Jack was provoking, or Father was passionate with him, or when our maid Betty was more than usually wilful, or our man Roger more than usually stupid,—she would retire to her own little light closet over the porch, and come out again with a serenity on her face which seemed to spread over the house like fine weather.

And in that little closet there is no furniture but the old rocking-chair, in which Mother used to rock us children to sleep, and a table covered with a white cloth, with four books on it,—the Bible, Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," Thomas à Kempis on the "Imitation of Christ," and the Diary.

The three printed books I was allowed to read, but (except the Bible) they used in my childish days to seem to me very gloomy and grave, and not at all such as to account for that infectious peacefulness in Mother's face and voice.

I concluded, therefore, that the magic must lie

in the Diary, which we were never permitted to open, although I had often felt sorely tempted to do so, especially since one morning when it lay open by accident, and I saw Jack's name and Father's on the page. For there were blots there such as used to deface my copy-book on those sorrowful days when the lessons appeared particularly hard, when all the world, singing birds, and bees, and breezes, and even my own fingers, seemed against me, and I could not help crying with vexation,—those blots which mother used to call "Fairy Fainéante's footsteps," (for Mother's grandmother was a Huguenot French lady, driven from France by the cruel revocation of the Edict of Nantes,—and Mother taught us French).

It made me wonder if Mother too had her hard lessons to learn, and I longed to peep and see. Yes, there were certainly tears on Mother's Diary. I wonder if there will be any on mine.

So white and clean the pages are now, and the calf-skin binding so bright and new! like life before me, like the bright world which looks so new around me.

How difficult it is to believe the world is so old, and has lasted so long! This morning when I went up over the cliff behind our house to the little croft in the hollow where the cows are pastured, to milk Daisy for Mother's morning cup

have only the one talent, let me be all the more careful to trade diligently with it, and, like the poor widow with her one farthing, to cast it unbroken into the treasury of God.

Yes, let me seek greater simplicity of faith, and also greater faithfulness as to what the Lord has already entrusted to me. I need no more talents just now. I have plenty—far more than I shall be able to give good account of when the Master comes to reckon with his servants. But oh for faithfulness!

And I must seek to live a life of prayer. Here, if anywhere, lies the victory. Joshua-like service in the valley is a failure, only because Moses-like

wrestlings on the mount are relaxed. Strength of grace will manifest itself first of all in strength of prayer. And thus, waiting on the Lord, I shall renew my strength; and though in myself as weak as ever, my lowly life-work shall be in a measure done; while I shall feel all along, in the doing of it, that it is not I, but the grace of God, which is with me (1 Cor. xv. 10).

My reader, set no limits to your expectations from God's grace in Christ Jesus. Alas! that we so limit the Holy One of Israel. "Expect great things from God," and this will give you heart to "attempt great things for God." "Grace reigneth."

April 1864.

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THE SINS OF THE TONGUE.

BY THE REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.



THE gift of speech is a marvellous gift. For five whole days of creation's first week the Almighty was clothing the new-born earth with light and verdure, and covering it with the myriads of animal life. But it was a voiceless world. At length God made man in his own image, with not only a soul to appreciate his Creator,

but a *tongue* to give expression to his homage, and "as the new-formed being gazed around him, the silence was broken, and creation thrilled with the melody of speech."

Philosophers tell us that every uttered word produces a vibration in the atmosphere; an ingenious theory has therefore been broached that these vibrations never entirely cease! If this were true, we should still be moving among the inaudible words of all our progenitors. This seems fanciful in natural philosophy; but there is a sense in which every uttered word *lives for ever*. It lives in its influence on the speaker—in its influence on others. Paul's voice echoes still; millions of God's faithful messengers, being dead, yet speak!

When Latimer was on trial for heresy, he heard the scratch of a pen behind the tapestry. In a moment he bethought himself that every word he spoke was *taken down*, and he says that he was very careful what words he uttered. Behind the veil that hides eternity is a record-book, in which our every syllable is taken down. Even the most trivial are not forgotten, for the Lord Jesus tells us that "every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the *Day of Judgment!*" If our words have an eternity of existence—if good words have so potent an influence to save—if idle, or profane, or poisonous speech work such perennial mischief, how needful is the perpetual utter-

ance of the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

I. Among the many sins of the tongue are *idle words*. "Avoid foolish talking," says the wise apostle, "and let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." There is a peculiar sin in idle talking when we remember that the same expenditure of breath might be productive of so much blessing. When we contemplate a Whitefield in the full rush of his resistless oratory—now startling a guilty sinner from his slumber on the verge of hell—now leading a bewildered wanderer to Christ—now kindling a saint into rapture, and now melting a rebel into penitence—we grow indignant at the thought that this prerogative of speech should so often be spent in silly jests and contemptible frivolities. Are time and eternity so lacking in themes of importance that we shall spend our precious breath in fuming emptiness? Surely, if we would but reflect how soon our tongues will lie silent in the tomb, and how speedily the dust will gather upon our lips, we should be awed into more sobriety, and purity, and carefulness of speech.

Shall we never jest? Does not a pleasant joke sometimes do good like a medicine? Very true. There is more marrow in a wise man's jokes than in a fool's solemn inanities. But a wise man "sets a watch on his lips" even when he utters a pleasantry. Especially, he never jests at the wrong time, or about sacred things. He never utters puns and parodies on the Bible; for what men have once laughed at, they seldom reverence. Heartily do I wish that I had never uttered a ludicrous application of a Scripture-line, and had never heard one; for the profane or indecent burlesque will often shoot into my mind in the midst of a sermon or a prayer. Wit and humour are allowable when controlled by good

sense and by reverence for God ; but when we venture into the sublime-domains of Revelation, we should put our shoes from off our feet, for the ground whereon we stand is holy. From my soul I abominate *merriment in the pulpit*. Should he court a grin who should be winning souls to God ? When an ambassador of Christ descends to make sport in the sacred desk, the devil laughs.

II. Malicious words are cousins in sin to idle and profane words. Paul says, "Let all bitterness and *evil speaking* be put away from you with all malice." Kind words are the oil that lubricates every-day intercourse. They cost little. A phrase of common comfort, "that by daily use hath almost lost its sense, will fall upon the saddened heart like choicest music." We love to meet certain people. They always have a kind, cheerful, inspiring word for us. They make us hopeful, and heal our heart-aches. Others we instinctively shun ; they always have a sly thrust at somebody ; they hatch mean suspicions in our minds ; they are ever letting out a drop of *acid* on some character or cause that is dear to us, and the acid leaves an ugly stain. There was an ancient malediction that the tongue of the slanderer should be cut out ; if that summary process were now enforced, we fear that some of our acquaintances might soon lose the "unruly member." A slanderer is a public enemy. One reckless tongue is enough sometimes to embroil a whole village and to set a church in a flame. "There are six things which God hates ; yea, seven are an abomination unto him." The seventh of the category is "the false witness who speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

III. In treating of the sins of the tongue, we must not omit a word in regard to that feculent ichor that exudes from some lips in the form of obscenity. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; and a filthy imagination—like a fever—comes out on the tongue. In companies of youth, in shops and counting-houses, in rooms of colleges and boarding-schools, in ships' cabins and soldiers' tents, a venter of obscenities is a walking pestilence. Long years do not obliterate the filthy memories ; not even the converting grace of God can wholly purify the unclean chambers of imagery.

And then there is *profane swearing*. This is the most gratuitous and inexcusable of sins. The man who swears turns speech into a curse, and before his time rehearses the dialect of hell. He waits for no bait ; but "bites at the devil's bare hook." The shrewd Quaker's advice to the profane youth, "Swear away, my young friend, till thee gets all that bad stuff out of thee," points to the real source of the vice ; for it is out of an evil *heart* that proceed evil thoughts, false witness, and blasphemies.

We fear that the purest tongue will need much purifying before it is fit to join in the celestial praises of God's upper temple. For that worship let us attune our voices by ceaseless prayers, by words of love, by earnest vindications of the right, by habitual "speech seasoned with salt" of divine grace. The melody of heaven will spring from a *harmony of hearts* ; each voice there will bear a part in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

JOHN x. 1-5.



THE beauty and force of some of our Lord's illustrations of divine truth can scarcely be fully understood in this country. We live in the west, and their imagery is that of the east. Here they seem strange, and almost unnatural ; there they are life pictures daily exhibited to the eyes of every man. The people of Palestine live far more in the open air than we do ; they are consequently more familiar with the acts and ways of the husbandman, the shepherd, the vine-dresser, and the merchant, than we are. Their eyes are ever upon Nature—Nature illumined by an unclouded sun, and seen through a crystal atmosphere. Birds and beasts, trees and flowers, mountains and plains, streams of water and parched deserts, are

all before them, subjects of constant observation. Their modes of thought and expression are also different from ours. Ours are logical and matter of fact ; theirs figurative. To them a vivid illustration, or a parable, or a proverb, is at once more intelligible and more acceptable than logical argument or brilliant declamation. In fact, as I know from experience, the ordinary style of our English theological treatises would be lost upon easterns, while such an illustration as that given by our Lord in John x. 1-5 makes the truth flash upon their minds as if written by a sunbeam.

The characteristics of the good "shepherd"—the faithful minister of the Church—and the relation between him and the "sheep"—true believers—are depicted in this passage with remarkable clearness. The faith of the minister is