

Fact and Fancy for Women.

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

ROBIN AND LARK.

"Sing lightly," the gay lark caroled
To the robin that grieved in her nest;
"Your song is sweet, but it is incomplete—
The world loves gay strains the best."

"Ah, who," the sad robin answered,
Scarce lifting her weary head,
"With an aching breast and a lonely nest
Can be gay when the heart is dead?"

"Do you, lark, sing to the millions
That are gay and happy and blessed;
I will sing to the few who, unlike you,
Hold an aching heart in the breast."

So, ever across the meadows
Gaily the lark's call rings;
But for those who mourn and by passions are torn
Ever the robin sings.

It is best to stop and think twice before you judge any one in this world. Several women were once soliciting subscriptions for a charitable institution, when one who was checking off names asked—

"Have you seen Mrs. Blank yet?"

"No," was the vehement and indignant reply, "I must say I have not, nor do I mean to see her. I would not ask for a cent if I never got one. She is not only economical and close, she is positively stingy. She says she can not afford to give to churches; she can not afford to give to hospitals; she can not afford to give to anything. I wonder that she can afford to live at all."

Oh, the bitter tongue and uncharitable mind! I chanced to know what was a secret to all save Mrs. Blank's most intimate friends—that an aged relative was dependent upon her for the necessities of life, and that she worked day and night, and denied herself not only comforts but also things that she sorely needed, that she might brighten the lonely hours and make more bearable the last days of that one whom she loved and honored. She knew her neighbors considered her grasping and avaricious, and she was too proud to explain the cause. By and by she fell away from her acquaintances and lived a lonely, companionless life. She believed that "charity begins at home;" if she gave a dollar to a church she thought, with a pang, how much more good it would have done that dear one who so needed little delicacies and luxuries. If she bought a new gown her conscience reproached her; and, although worn with the many duties of a home-maker, she made it herself that the money saved might go to that other one. I had seen her stitch and stitch, with pale face and rough fingers and aching head; I had seen great, hot tears come into her eyes and fall down upon her work—and a great pity for her silent heroism crept into my heart. She could not dress as well as her associates, so she withdrew from them and dropped out of the society she loved; she could not give freely to churches and libraries, so she stayed at home and worked and saved and waited. Yet, all that the world found to say of her was that she was avaricious and stingy.

Oh, be careful how you judge people! Some give freely with an open hand that all may see; but many a dollar is given and many a sore heart healed and many a bitter sacrifice made "under the rose." And, somehow, I think the little unknown kindnesses are the sweetest of all to God.

Is there something that you wish for with all your heart and soul? Something that you have wished for until your eyes ached with tears, and your heart grew heavy with apprehension, and your strength failed through hope deferred? Then, dear heart, buckle on your armor once more; see how blue the skies are, and how gladly the lark calls to them; make your wish all over again and tell yourself that you will wait—wait—cheerfully until it "comes true," as the merry-hearted children say. There is an old line which a poet gave us, which you and I know quite well, only we forget it so often in the course of a year—

All things come round to him who will but wait.

You may have to wait a long time for the good thing you desire, and so may I; but if it is worth having, it is worth waiting for. Do not put any faith in those sneering, cynical ones who tell you that, if you have to wait, you will not care for it when God finally puts it into your keeping. And while we are waiting let us keep a glad, sweet song in our hearts; perhaps some one who is sad and discouraged—some one who has waited even longer than we—may hear it and take courage in finding that some one else is waiting, too. Does it not lift our burden a trifle to hear the meadow larks in the morning?

This is a beautiful world; but we might make it a happier one if we would only look at it through glasses rimmed with love, fastened on with faith and tinged with lenience for the mistakes of others. Who of us lives without making mistakes? It may be we said an unkind or cutting thing thoughtlessly; that we forgot somebody, or slighted somebody, unintentionally; that we snatched the skeleton out of somebody's closet unconsciously—but, Oh, how we regretted it afterward! How we repented of it in tears and burning remorse! Then, when another hurts us, why not be quick and eager to believe that it was unintentional. It is not our own true self that is always looking for a hurt or a slight; it is our detestable self-love and vanity. Try to be unselfish; try to do something to help others to be happy. If some one does a foolish thing, do not speak of it; but if he does a good thing, tell him that you appreciate it—Oh, you don't know how much that helps! If you have been looking at the world with bare, cold eyes, put on your glasses—quick! We are not all born with them on, but if you wish for them very much you will awaken some happy morning to find that you are wearing them.

"My husband does ever and ever so many things I don't like to have him do," said a merry, little woman, laughingly, the other evening, "but he is the very best fellow in the world for bringing me handsome presents; so, of course"—and she twisted the costly bracelet on her round arm complacently—"of course, I forgive him. Now, this bracelet he gave me once after staying out nearly all night, doing heaven only knows what. Oh, but I was broken hearted about it! Never slept a wink all night, you know; but when I saw this lovely thing—pshaw! women must have jewels, so I forgave him instantly, and he said I was an angel. Another time he went to the legislature and remained a whole week after it had adjourned, and he hadn't a bit of business to detain him, positively not a bit; and O, but I had the greatest punishment prepared for him! But, if you'll believe me, the imp walked in with the