

Adverse Criticism.

As long as you live in this world you will be subjected to adverse criticism. As there are few people without some faults, so there are few people who do not lay a soothing unction to their souls by pointing out and commenting upon the faults of others. These critics never fail to find attentive listeners, and are thus encouraged to persevere in their reprehensible practice.

Adverse criticism is not necessarily an evil. It is, in fact, a blessing to those who know how to receive it. No man knows how to bear unalloyed happiness. How often would the successful achievement of some long-cherished purpose sweep us from our feet and bear us away as chaff before the wind, if a gracious dispensation of Providence did not send some breaker to swamp the ships of our vain-glory and remind us of the fact that we are but dust and ashes.

We are told that Spurgeon, the great English preacher, keeps a special scrap-book in which he pastes all the disparaging remarks which the English and American press have made about him. Whenever he feels extraordinarily elated by his success he takes this book down and reads it until every tendency towards conceit and self-exaltation is suppressed. The higher a man is lifted above his fellows, the more need is there for some such restraining influence. This is why God has ordained that care shall be commensurate with greatness. This is why

—“every victor's crown is lined with thorns,
And worn 'mid scoffs.”

But adverse criticism may be a fearful curse.—The arrow which rebounds without effect from the almost impenetrable hide of the rhinoceros can pierce to the heart the tender fawn. So the contumely at which the strong man laughs is a death-blow to his weaker neighbor. God pity the sensitive, shrinking soul who is made the butt of ridicule and contempt.—For him there is no balm in Gilead, save that which only a kindred spirit can administer. When this is wanting, the stricken one can find no refuge save, in the cold and silent tomb. This is no mere hyperbole. John Keats was not the only man who has been criticised to death: many of those who lie sleeping their last sleep a short distance from where I write, were not wounded unto death, by any mere metallic shot and shell—graves have enshrouded broken hearts as well as mangled bodies.

Some men are constitutionally morbid. They magnify the most trivial circumstance into a gross insult. By night and by day, for weeks and for months, they brood over the oft-times imaginary injury, until “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.” I knew men to-day whose dispositions have been changed and whose lives have been embittered by just such unhealthful habits—men who have sought to heal their wounded sensibilities by solitude and useless repining. Nor is this the case only with those esteemed to be naturally weak. The strongest and the best are sometimes tortured by this baleful morbidness, and writhe with bitterest anguish under the taunts and malignant sneers of their critics. How much better would it be for them if they would have recourse, to the Great Physician. He alone can

—“minister to a mind diseas'd;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart.”
—Ex.

AYER & SON'S MANUAL contains more information of value to advertisers than any other publication. Sent postpaid on receipt of 25 cents. Address N. W. Ayer & Son, Advertising Agents, Times Building, Philadelphia.

The Cat With a Broken Tail.

“She did cry—awful!”
“Oh, Jenny, how did it happen?”
“Jimmy shut the door on her tail.”
“I didn't mean to,” said Jimmy. “I didn't know your old cat was there.”

Mary and Jenny tried to fondle and soothe the poor cat; but she wouldn't be comforted. Her poor, poor tail! How could it ever wave again? It was surely broken by that cruel door.

“She can't waggle it,” said Jimmy with great sympathy.
“No,” cried Mary. “You broke it for her.”

“I didn't mean to. Perhaps it's not broken—only pinched a little.”
“Oh! it is; it is! Poor thing! Do see how it droops at the end.”

“Anyway, it didn't come off.”
“It's a mercy it didn't, Jimmy Barnes. How she would have looked if the piece had come off!”

“It would have been awfuller still,” said Jenny, with great earnestness. Meanwhile the poor old cat lay on the rug, moaning and mourning in true cat language to her blighted tail. The two girls bent over her with expressions of the warmest interest; and no doubt the cat felt very much better for their kind condolence.

“It isn't the hurting, you know,” said Mary; “though that's bad enough. It's the disgrace of the thing. How will she ever hold up her head with a broken tail hanging down behind? She'll be so mortified!”

“And the waggle won't run out to the end,” remarked Jimmy.

“No, poor thing; the 'spression will only go part way.”

“And the broken piece will hang there, so limp and awkward, just like my cuffs, when the stiffening's all gone. And how it will look! Oh, dear! I think we ought to call the doctor.”

“So we had. Why didn't we think of it before? Run, Jimmy, run for Doctor Green.”

“Oh! I guess he wouldn't come for a cat.”
“He would, if he knew how bad she felt.”

“Let's take her to him.”

They all three concluded this would be the best plan. Jimmy got the big market basket, and Mary ran for her hat, while Jenny sat on the floor with the unfortunate patient. She and the cat had their things all on and could start right away.

“Oh, Jimmy Barnes; how stupid you are! We couldn't put her in that thing.”

“Well, Mary, never mind. Let's take her in our arms.”

Shortly after this Jimmy, Mary and Jenny appeared on the street in melancholy procession. Jimmy went before; Jenny followed, with the poor unfortunate cat in her arms; and Mary, all sympathy, and with teary lashes, walked beside her in the character of nurse and general assistant.

Doctor Green opened the door himself. He was a young man and a very good doctor, and when he saw the three children on the steps he said, politely:

“Good-morning, children. What can I do for you?”

“Oh, Doctor Green! my cat has broken her tail,” said Mary.

“It didn't quite come off,” put in Jimmy.

“Meow! Meow!” moaned the cat.

“The patient speaks for herself,” said Dr. Green.

“Yes, sir; she does. And, Doctor, don't you think you could fix it for her?”

If Dr. Green had not been a wise man, he would have laughed. He did not; for he was a good surgeon and a very wise man, indeed.

“The patient has my hearty sympathy. Bring her into my office and let me see her poor tail.”

The children were surprised and overjoyed in this sudden turn in affairs, and they marched into the little office, cat and all.

“A cat with a broken tail would be a truly pitiful object,” said Dr. Green.

“Yes, sir; and think how mortify-

ing.”
“The waggle would only go part way,” added Jimmy with great solemnity.

The Doctor was ready to cry with laughter; but he did not. He took the unfortunate cat in his arms and examined her injured tail. Puss seemed to know that everything was all right and submitted to the examination with great moral courage. The children gathered round with the greatest interest; and then the Doctor said, soberly:

“It is broken; but, perhaps, if we put on a splint it will heal up again.”

“I hope so,” said Mary, with a sigh of relief.

“Let her rest on the floor,” said the Doctor; “and do you pat her gently and keep her quiet while I put on a splint.”

Mary and Jenny made the cat comfortable on the floor and tried to soothe her feelings as much as possible. Jimmy, meanwhile, stood in wide-eyed wonder by the table, while the Doctor prepared the splint. He took a sheet of very stiff cloth from a drawer, and then with a pair of long shears he cut out a piece about four inches wide and ten inches long. The cloth was dark colored and it was smooth and stiff like card-board. Then he took two little rubber rings from a box on his desk and kneeled down on the floor by the cat and gently straightened out her unfortunate tail. The poor thing “meowed” softly, but did not stir. The Doctor rolled the cloth round and with the tiny rubber rings he fastened it securely, so that the injured part would keep in place till it healed up.

“There,” said Doctor Green. “I think that will answer. Nature will do the rest.”

The girls didn't know what this meant, and Mary asked if they should put on any liniment.

“No. There is nothing to be done. It will soon heal up again, and perhaps be as well as ever.”

“And the waggle will come out all right?” said Jimmy.

“Yes,” said the Doctor, with a laugh. “The expression will run out to the very end.”

“Oh! I'm so glad to hear you say that,” said Mary. “She does wave her tail beautifully sometimes—at least she used to do so.”

“Shall we change her diet, Doctor?”

“No. Let her have as much milk as she wants, and keep her in the house for a few days.”

“So she shall not take cold in it?”

“Yes.”

“We're very much obliged, Doctor,” said Mary, taking the cat up in her arms.

“Oh! I never work for thanks,” said the Doctor, with a look of solemn grandeur. “You must pay me for my trouble.”

“Have you any money, Jimmy?” said Mary, in alarm.

Jimmy fished in his pockets desperately.

“No I've only ten cents and two glass agates.”

“I've got twenty-five cents,” said Jenny, hopefully.

“That's not the kind of pay I want,” said the Doctor, with a great flourish.

“Give me a kiss, and I'll call it square.”

“Oh!” cried Jenny. “That all? I'll kiss you. Come.”

Here the Doctor laughed heartily, and he gave Jenny a rousing smack, and they all thought it very jolly. Even the cat purred and waved her tail feebly.

“Aren't you going to kiss me, too?”

“To be sure. Twice.”

So he did; and then he opened the door, and the procession marched happily home, cat and all.

In about a week they took the splint off, and in another week Jimmy declared that now the waggle could run down to the very end.—Independent.

The most gifted of the young authors in Holland is a young lady who writes under the pen name of A. S. C. Wallis. She has just published an historical novel of the days of the Eighty Years' War.

Ministerial Backsheesh.

It would, no doubt, be grossly unjust to say that all presents from parishioners to ministers were on the same level as the Oriental backsheesh. Many of us have received gifts from our parishioners which we knew to be pure tokens of friendship, nothing more or less. And yet no intelligent observer can deny that very many of the presents made to ministers the backsheesh element is painfully manifest.

The backsheesh element is often seen, for example, in the publicity which frequently accompanies ministerial present making. A present is chiefly valuable as an expression of good will from one individual to another. When this is the chief object in the mind of the giver, it is usually sought in the most direct and simple manner possible. Anything approaching ostentation in the manner of making the gift is almost sure to throw suspicion upon the motives of the giver. The left hand is not to know what the right hand doeth. This principle is well recognized in the ordinary gift-making of private life. And yet how often when the minister is made the recipient of a gift, is his home suddenly invaded by a crowd of frolicking parishioners calling themselves a “surprise party,” whose good will for the minister seems to be overshadowed, to say the least, by their determination to have a jolly good time. Then comes the presentation speech, in which one of the party has an opportunity to display his eloquence, and—after the minister has responded, the company set themselves to work to recover in social enjoyment, so far as they can, the value of what they have subscribed to the minister's present. Nor are they satisfied with this, but take good care that the local or religious paper that represents them shall publish their generosity to the world, and give them due credit for the “elegant gold watch,” or the “fine oil painting,” or the “provisions for the larder,” or the “generous roll of greenbacks,” the exact amount of which to a dollar is frequently stated. A brother minister once told me, that on the morning after a donation party at his house, one of the donors returned and requested permission to take an inventory and make an appraisal of the articles donated, so that their value could be correctly stated.—Christian.

Iowa's Wonder.

The greatest wonder in the State of Iowa, and perhaps in any other State, is what is called the “Walled Lake,” in Wright county, 12 miles north of the Dubuque and Pacific railway, and 150 miles north of the Dubuque City. The lake is from two to three feet higher than the earth's surface. In some places the wall is 10 feet high, 12 feet wide on the top. Another fact is the size of the stones used in the construction, the whole of them varying in weight from three tons down to 100 pounds. There is an abundance of stone in Wright county, but surrounding the lake to the extent of five or ten miles there are none. No one can form an idea as to the means employed to bring them to the spot or who constructed it. Around the entire lake is a belt of woodland half a mile in length, composed of oak. With this exception the country is a rolling prairie. The trees must have been planted there at the time of the building of the wall. In the spring of the year 1850 there was a great storm, and the ice on the lake broke the wall in several places, and the farmers in the vicinity were obliged to repair the damages to prevent inundation. The lake occupies a ground surface of 2800 acres; depth of water as great as 25 feet. The water is clear and cold, soil sandy and loamy. It is singular that no one has been able to ascertain where the water comes from nor where it goes, yet it is always clear and fresh.

Precious Things.

Only a little word,
Only a word of cheer,
Only a loving look,
Only a kindly tear;
Yes oh! how precious to the heart
Are these sweet gifts, untouched by art.

To Good to be Lost.

A few years ago, the pastor and elders of a certain Pedobaptist church—Congregational, I think—were troubled in spirit by the fact that a portion of the young members of the church were in the habit of attending dancing parties. After due consideration it was resolved to discipline them, and they were accordingly summoned for trial. It so happened that these young people had been “sprinkled into the church” when infants; but having never taken any part in the church, were surprised that they were subject to the discipline of the church.

The day of the trial came, and the young people were all present. As the pastor was about to take the chair and open the meeting, one of the young men arose and inquired if it was true that they were members of the church. The pastor assured them that they were members of the church and subject to its discipline. “Then,” replied the young man, “I move that brother A. (naming one of their own number) take the chair.”

It was seconded and carried, the young people being in the majority.

The young man rose again and read a paper, stating that they had been received into the church while infants and unconscious of the fact, and many of them had never learned until a few days since that they were considered members of the church, and closed by preferring charges against the pastor and elders for their unfaithfulness in permitting them to grow up in ignorance of their relations and duties.

The charges were sustained, and the officers of the church were excluded.

Everything remained at a dead-lock for two or three weeks, when a committee from “the church” waited upon the pastor, and told him they did not wish to be too severe, and that it was an absurdity to consider them as members of the church; and if the officers would let them alone, they would meet, rescind their action, and restore them to membership, which was agreed to. The story carries its own moral.—Ex.

The Chamber Over the Gate.

Is it so far from thee
Thou canst no longer see
In the Chamber over the Gate
That old man desolate,
Weeping and wailing sore
For his son, who is no more?
O Absalom, my son!

Is it so long ago
That cry of human woe
From the walled city came,
Calling on his dear name,
That it had died away
In the distance of to-day?
O Absalom, my son!

There is no far nor near,
There is neither there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late,
In that Chamber over the Gate,
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human woe,
O Absalom, my son!

From the ages that are past
The voice comes like a blast,
Over seas that wreck and drown,
Over tumult of traffic and town;
And from ages yet to be
Come the echoes back to me,
O Absalom, my son!

Somewhere at every hour
The watchman on the tower
Looks forth, and sees the fleet
Approach of the hurrying feet
Of messengers that bear
The tidings of despair.
O Absalom, my son!

He goes forth from the door,
Who shall return no more.
With him our joy departs;
The light goes out of our hearts:
In the Chamber over the Gate
We sit disconsolate.
O Absalom, my son!

That 'tis a common grief
Bringeth but slight relief;
Ours is the bitterest loss;
Ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be
“Would God I had died for thee,”
O Absalom, my son!
—Henry W. Longfellow.

Home.

Home's not merely roof and room;
It needs something to endure it.
Home is where the heart can bloom;
Where there's some kind lip to cheer it.
What is home with none to meet,
None to welcome, none to greet us?
Home is sweet—and only sweet—
When there's one who love to meet us.