

Judge Not.

It is a gay group of young girls that I have noticed in one of our large city churches where for the time my lot is cast. Most of them are the daughters of wealthy parents, and they have received all the advantages of education, culture, and social position, which wealth can give. I found that they were members of the church and saw some of them teaching the little children in the infant class. My special opportunities for observing them were in some social gatherings where they flitted about like butterflies, in gay colors bedight, with laugh and merry jest upon their lips, and apparently with not a thought beyond the enjoyment of the present hour.

I remember going home from one such place where the young people had been specially gleeful, and moralizing sadly over the frivolity of the present generation of girls. I wondered if a serious thought ever found lodgment beneath the frizzes and ribbons that adorned their heads. I wondered if under the bodices of silk and velvet, there beat one throb of sympathy for suffering humanity. I wondered if in a single heart could be found the capability of heroism or of self-sacrifice. Could it be possible that they who spent so much time, apparently in adorning the body, could find any time for cultivating the graces of the spirit? Church members as I knew them to be, was it possible that their covenant vows had been anything but a mockery? So I sadly mused upon the evil times on which we had fallen and upon the spirit of worldliness which was creeping in and paralyzing all Christian effort, especially among the young. I thought of the wives and mothers such girls would make, and mourned yet more over the generation which they should rear.

But the other day I was invited to a home of one of these young ladies, one of the brightest and prettiest of the set. Among the three or four guests was one brilliant woman, who spoke slightly of religion and every thing connected with it. Her wit and skill of *repartee* were well-known and no one seemed inclined to measure swords with her. But Cora's cheek flushed, her eye sparkled, her breath came and went, and at last she spoke out:

"Please, Mrs. B., I cannot bear to hear you speak so of the Bible and of the Savior. I know that the Bible is true; I know that Jesus is the Savior of sinners; I know that there is a reality in religion; for I feel it."

Here she stopped abashed. Mrs. B. listened in amazement. Then tears sprang to her eyes, and she softly said:

"My dear, I would not take your faith from you for the world." And she added, in a still softer tone, "Sometimes I almost wish I had such a faith for myself."

As for the rest of us, we felt thoroughly rebuked for our indifference or cowardice, and I for one looked at this "frivolous" young girl, this "butterfly of fashion," with a curious respect.

But another surprise was in store for us. Early in the evening young ladies and gentlemen came dropping in, to the number of a dozen or so, the same ones whom a few evenings before, I had seen carrying on "flirtations," together, as I had been sure they were, at a social gathering.

As they came in they were shown into the back parlor, and the doors were shut.

"Now," thought I, "for a good time among themselves; an evening full of gossip and chatter and fun, to be finished off, perhaps, with dancing and cards."

But no; they had met to talk over a book they had been reading, and that book was not the last new novel; it was not Shakespeare even. It was Thomas Hughes' "Manliness of Christ."

I went home feeling humbled for my uncharitable judgments, and resolving never again to look upon outward appearance.—E.

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