

CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER

MARCH 12 1921

Fault-Finding

ONE day a friend came to Tennyson and pointed out a blemish in the Ode to a Nightingale by Keats, and Tennyson said:

"I wish you had not told me, for now I shall always see it."

This is one of the greatest drawbacks of real criticism, and one of the greatest condemnations of small fault-finding. There must be criticism, for true criticism is helpful; but there need not be miserable fault-finding.

The way to avoid giving pain is always to look out for what is good and splendid, both in books and people. If we have eyes only for faults, if we are for ever prying, peering, peeping to discover a blemish, we shall never get the best out of people and books, and never make a great and lasting friendship.

Mr. Austin Dobson has unearthed for our enlightenment this ancient and forgotten tale:

A Critic, presenting Apollo with a very severe Censure upon an Excellent Poem, was asked for the good Things in that Work. But the Wretch answering, He minded only its Errors, Apollo ordered a Sack of unwinnowed Wheat to be brought, and Critic to pick out and take all the Chaff for his Pains.

This story tells the truth of life. To find excellence we must look for it. A person who wants to be happy must keep his face to the sunny side of the hill, and, even when duty leads him into the dark places of life, he must look for the best and noblest in that region; otherwise he will have only chaff for his pains.

There is a well-known story of the Disciples turning their heads away in disgust as they hurried past the carcass of a dead dog, while the Master stopped, confronted the sad carrion, and said: "Pearls have not the whiteness of those teeth."

One of the greatest critics who ever lived was Diderot, and this noble Frenchman said:

I am more affected by the charms of virtue than the deformity of vice; I quietly turn away from the wicked, and fly forward to meet the good.

Someone said of him that he never encountered a wicked man or a bad book, for he always imputed to his acquaintances some good quality of his own. "We picture him (said somebody) with his head forward and his arms stretched out, always ready, if you pleased him ever so little, to embrace you at first sight."

This is the true attitude of all greatness. To be on our knees peeping through keyholes is to lose the full stature of manhood and womanhood. If we want our country to be great we must be great ourselves, looking for excellence, loving what is good, giving ourselves gladly and gratefully, not to fault-finding, but to making things better.



THE EDITOR'S TABLE

Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London
above the hidden waters of the ancient River
Fleet, the cradle of the Journalism of the world



Three Stories

IT is always interesting to have glimpses of great people in times of deep emotion, and three of these have lately been given to the world.

One of them is of Lord Kitchener, who relieved himself from the stress and strain of a crisis in the war by going down to Knole House to take impressions of the beautiful mouldings of the doors for his own house. Another is of Lord Fisher, who, while at the Admiralty, was seen one day at a registry office, interviewing parlourmaids. Those are small things, but the third picture will live in history.

It is of General Botha, who was sitting in a London drawing-room describing the signing of the Peace Treaty. He told how, at the signing, he had turned to General Smuts and said: "I am the worst speaker in this room, but on this occasion I could make a fine speech. If I were Rantzau, standing in front of those papers, I would say to my enemies there, 'The war has been fought; you have won; we have lost. You have got our ships, you have got our guns, but our people are starving. . . . I do not look at these; I sign.'"

There was hardly an eye in the drawing-room without a tear as Botha repeated this in London and said simply, "This would have touched the heart of every mother in Europe."

Again we see what a great human figure Botha was, and well may we pray that his wisdom will not pass from South Africa while he lies in its soil.

Do You Know You?

IT is surprising, says an old thinker, that the greatest part of mankind cannot be prevailed upon to visit themselves. *They are nowhere greater strangers than at home.*

What does he mean by that? Well, he is not talking nonsense. He is merely putting into new and striking words what another wise man said thousands of years before. This other wise man said, *The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth.*

Few of us ever withdraw from the crowding excitements of life, or from its daily duties, to make acquaintance with ourselves. We look in the glass to brush our hair, but we do not sit down and make a mirror for our souls by reflecting.

That is how a man can get to know himself. He must reflect on what he thinks he thinks. He must ask himself, Why do I do this? How have I come to think that? In what manner do I *superintend* my mind?

There is much to be learned by paying a visit at home. Only a fool sends his eyes to the ends of the earth.

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.

A Plea for Liberty

IT is well everyone should know that keeping a dog chained for an unreasonable length of time without exercise is punishable by law to the extent, it may be, of a £25 fine.

Every dog hates confinement to a kennel. Best of all it loves those who take it for a walk. If chained up long it grows dull, morose, and often dangerous. The watch-dog may properly be kept to a certain round of duty. It is proud of having done well the duty it understands, but every dog should have a reasonable round of natural life; otherwise it is a pitiful slave.

Unfair confinement of dogs is due, as a rule, to thoughtlessness, and the knowledge that the law does not allow harsh treatment should have a good effect by making owners feel sympathy with their dog friends.

Tip-Cat

"I was poorer when I left office," says Mr. Asquith, "than when I entered." No reflection, of course, on anyone in the office.

A MAN lives longer by growing a beard, according to a doctor. He has to. It takes him longer to attend to it.

TAKE courage from the history of the Empire, says Lord Grey. But the

Empire would have no history if we take courage away.

"I AM not, I think, exceptionally stupid," an M.P. says. But that's what we all think.

LADY RHONDDA thinks woman must come down off the pedestal. Time man had a turn on it.

THE United States has one motor-car for every fourteen people, and the fourteen people always seem in the way of the one motor-car at the street corner.

"WEST-END restaurants," we are told, "were never so empty as now." Have they caught the complaint from their customers?

Pricking the Bubble

THE French musician Saint-Saëns tells a story about himself that illustrates the contemptibleness of flattery when it stands exposed.

At the age of 20 he gave at the house of Rossini, the popular musician of the moment, a duet he had composed. The audience supposed the piece had been written by Rossini, and as he stood with the young composer by his side they crowded round him, exclaiming, that it was marvellous! A masterpiece! until they had exhausted the language of adulation.

"I agree," said Rossini; "it was written by this young gentleman"

The bubble of flattery was never more neatly and completely pricked.



PETER PUCK WANTS TO KNOW

If the Chancellor keeps the Great Seal at the Zoo

March

THE year runs out of the snow
To a rainbow arch
Whose flowers tremble and glow
With the sun's red flame,
And whose name
Is March.

THE year cries, "Here will I rest
And dream of the larch
And the primrose bright on the breast
Of the Spring's new birth."
But the earth
Says "March!"

No rest at the gate of Spring,
No halt at her arch,
The highway of Time must ring
And its dust be hurled
By a world
On march. H. B.



The Great Housing Problem
Homes for All but Him

Pooterino

By Our Country Girl

WE have a lodger. At least, he came as a lodger to wait with us till we found him a good home; but, somehow, I think that Pooterino may become a permanency.

He seems to be all ribs, like a broken umbrella, but a little chocolate-coloured hide is stretched over his skeleton. By an effort of imagination you might describe him as a dog.

One of us rescued him from a dark shed, where he was tied up by a piece of string the length of his body—there is still a great sore on his neck.

But he is looking better already. His legs do not tremble now, his eyes do not look quite so much as if they were about to pop from his skull; in a day or two he will be strong enough to take a disinfectant bath; in a week or two he will be quite debonair.

"I think," mused the head of the house—"I think there's whippet in him."

Our youngest looked up.

"What kind of a disease is whippet?" she asked.

A Prayer to the Keeper of the Stars

Father, who keepest
The stars in Thy care,
Me, too, Thy little one,
Childish in prayer,
Keep, as Thou keepest
The soft night through
Thy long white lilies
Asleep in Thy dew.

CHARLES ROBERTS