

Thimblefuls of Friendliness

ONE WOMAN'S EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY

Mary Brooks Picken

Be Grateful

Let Us Not Forget

ABOUT the only time we ever stop to realize how glorious it is to be well enough to go and come as we will is when we are indisposed for a day and have to stay at home. Funny thing the way we accept good health as a matter of course, just like good drinking water or hot coffee for breakfast! We never think how seemingly necessary it is until we are deprived of it.

It's a pity that we take so much for granted—our food, our clothes, a bed to sleep in—why, of course, we have all of them. But go roughing it some time and sleep on a sparse, ill-equipped bed for a night or two. You will then appreciate, as you never did before, your own good bed at home.

We all grow so used to having things done for us—this is taken care of, that is looked after—that we get out of the habit of doing them for ourselves. But let the paper boy forget to leave the paper just one evening, and we are lost completely. We would insistently help to get him “fired” from his route; yet day after day, sun or rain, he brings the paper, and we are conscious of its importance only when we miss getting it just once.

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Habit causes us to accept family, friends, comforts, and pleasures as a matter of course. Every now and then we should find ourselves without them all, just to learn to appreciate them the more.

I have heard it said that no girl can ever truly appreciate her mother until she has children of her own and finds herself loving, planning, sacrificing for them. Then she can understand how her mother felt and will be grateful and humble and appreciative in proportion.

I told a little nephew the other day to say a good-night prayer for a friend who was ill. The little boy, who was once very ill himself, lifted his bright, happy face and said, “Aunt Mary, there must have been a lot of prayers said for me, ‘cause see how well I am. I know mother’s prayers helped doctor because he knew what to do without anybody telling him.” It was wonderful to see the appreciation in the child’s eyes, a kind of appreciation that is even more than gratitude.

I have always felt I could be grateful for charity, but I could appreciate love and kindness. And that is what we need, it seems to me, more than anything else—to be kind, to leave folks alone who want to be alone, to help, encourage, and comfort those who need us, to say a happy word when a happy word is wanted, but never to be guilty of doling out kindness as we would plant beans, never more than the specified amount.

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Not long ago I was in Philadelphia, and I visited Independence Hall, Betsy Ross’ House, Congress Hall, and other landmarks of our great independence. Everything there reminded me of the sacrifices that were made for our freedom, comfort, and well-being, and I wondered a dozen times and more whether we appreciated it all as we should or whether we were in the habit of accepting it as we do the daily paper, forgetting how much real effort had gone before to give us our many great privileges. If, deep in our hearts, we are grateful in proportion to the good that is ours, then we are sure to know a kind of Peace and Thanksgiving that can make us kin to all the world.



Miss [unclear]