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CHARLES KINGSLEY AT HOME

All who had the pleasure of knowing the Rev. Charles Kingsley, author of *Hypatia*, *Westward Ho*, and *Alton Locke*, will acknowledge that however great he was as a parish clergyman, poet, novelist, naturalist, sportsman, he was greater still at home. And how was this greatness shewn? By his self-denying efforts to give joy to his wife and children, and chivalrously to take away from them whatever was painful. No man ever excelled him in the quality of being 'thoroughly domesticated.' In actual life we fear this is a rare attainment, for it is nothing less than the flower that indicates perfectly developed manhood or womanhood. This flower beautified and sweetened Canon Kingsley's life. He *was* a hero to those who had greater opportunities of knowing him than have most valets. Whatever unheroic cynics may say of the disenchanting power of intimacy, there was an exception in his case. How much such an example should teach us all! Not one in ten thousand can hope to become the many-sided man Kingsley was, but none of us need despair of making that little corner of the world called 'home' brighter and happier, as he made Eversley Rectory. We can all make our homes sweet if, when company-clothes are doffed, we clothe the most ordinary and commonplace duties of home-life with good temper and cheerfulness.

Because the Rectory-house was on low ground, the rector of Eversley, who considered violation of the divine laws of health a sort of acted blasphemy, built his children an outdoor nursery on the 'Mount,' where they kept books, toys, and tea-things, spending long happy days on the highest and loveliest point of moorland in the glebe; and there he would join them when his parish work was done, bringing them some fresh treasure picked up in his walk, a choice wild-flower or fern or rare beetle, sometimes a lizard or a field-mouse; ever waking up their sense of wonder, calling out their powers of observation, and teaching them lessons out of God's great green book, *without their knowing* they were learning. Out-of-doors and indoors, the Sundays were the happiest days of the week to the children, though to their father the hardest. When his day's work was done, there was always the Sunday walk, in which each bird and plant and brook was pointed out to the children, as preaching sermons to Eyes, such as were not even dreamt of by people of the No-eyes species. Indoors the Sunday picture-books were brought out, and each child chose its subject for the father to draw, either some Bible story, or bird or beast or flower. In all ways he fostered in his children a love of animals. They were taught to handle without disgust toads, frogs, beetles, as works from the hand of a living God. His guests were surprised one morning at breakfast when his little girl ran up to the open window of the dining-room holding a long repulsive-looking worm in her hand: 'O daddy, look at this *delightful* worm!'

Kingsley had a horror of corporal punishment, not merely because it tends to produce antagonism between parent and child, but because he considered more than half the lying of children to be the result of fear of punishment. 'Do not train a child,' he said, 'as men train a horse, by letting anger and punishment be the *first* announcement of his having sinned. If you do, you induce two bad habits: first, the boy regards his parent with a kind of blind dread, as a being who may be offended by actions which to *him* are innocent, and whose wrath he expects to fall upon him at any moment in his most pure and unselfish happiness. Next, and worst still, the boy learns not to fear sin, but the punishment of it, and thus he learns to lie.' He was careful too not to confuse his children by a multiplicity of small rules. 'It is difficult enough to keep the Ten Commandments,' he would say, 'without making an eleventh in every direction.' He had no 'moods' with his family, for he cultivated,

by strict self-discipline in the midst of worries and pressing business, a disengaged temper, that always enabled him to enter into other people's interests, and especially into children's playfulness. 'I wonder,' he would say, 'if there is so much laughing in any other home in England as in ours.' He became a light-hearted boy in the presence of his children, or when exerting himself to cheer up his aged mother who lived with him. When nursery griefs and broken toys were taken to his study, he was never too busy to mend the toy and dry the tears. He held with Jean Paul Richter, that children have their 'days and hours of rain,' which parents should not take much notice of, either for anxiety or sermons, but should lightly pass over, except when they are symptoms of coming illness. And his knowledge of physiology enabled him to detect such symptoms. He recognised the fact, that weariness at lessons and sudden fits of obstinacy are not hastily to be treated as moral delinquencies, springing as they so often do from physical causes, which are best counteracted by cessation from work and change of scene.

How blessed is the son who can speak of his father as Charles Kingsley's eldest son does. "'Perfect love casteth out fear," was the motto,' he says, 'on which my father based his theory of bringing up children. From this and from the interest he took in their pursuits, their pleasures, trials, and even the petty details of their everyday life, there sprang up a friendship between father and children, that increased in intensity and depth with years. To speak for myself, he was the best friend – the only true friend I ever had. At once he was the most fatherly and the most unfatherly of fathers – fatherly in that he was our intimate friend and our self-constituted adviser; unfatherly in that our feeling for him lacked that fear and restraint that make boys call their father "the governor." Ours was the only household I ever saw in which there was no favouritism. It seemed as if in each of our different characters he took an equal pride, while he fully recognised their different traits of good or evil; for instead of having one code of social, moral, and physical laws laid down for one and all of us, each child became a separate study for him; and its little "diseases au moral," as he called them, were treated differently according to each different temperament... Perhaps the brightest picture of the past that I look back to now is the drawing-room at Eversley in the evenings, when we were all at home and by ourselves. There he sat, with one hand in mother's, forgetting his own hard work in leading our fun and frolic, with a kindly smile on his lips, and a loving light in that bright gray eye, that made us feel that, in the broadest sense of the word, he was our father.'

Of this son, when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, his father (then Professor of History) writes: 'Ah! what a blessing to be able to help him at last by teaching him something one's-self.' And to a learned 'F.G.S.' he says very seriously: 'My eldest son is just going off to try his manhood in Colorado, United States. You will understand, therefore, that it is somewhat important to me just now whether the world be ruled by a just and wise God or by 0. It is also important to me with regard to my own boy's future, whether what is said to have happened to-morrow (Good Friday) be true or false.' In this way Kingsley educated his heart and became truly wise. For no matter how extensive may be our stock of information, we cannot be called wise unless heart become to head a helpmate.

And how well he used his matrimony – a state that should be to all the means of highest culture, or 'grace.' Sympathising with a husband's anxiety, he once wrote to a friend: 'I believe one never understands the blessed mystery of marriage till one has nursed a sick wife, nor understands either what treasures women are.' He believed in the eternity of marriage. 'So well and really married on earth' did he think himself, that in one of his letters he writes: 'If I do not love my wife body and soul as well there as I do here, then there is neither resurrection of my body nor of my soul, but of some other, and I shall not be I.' And again in another letter: 'If immortality is to include in my case identity of person, I shall feel to her for ever what I feel now. That feeling may be developed in ways which I do not expect; it may have provided for it forms of expression very different from any which are among the holiest sacraments of life... Will not one of the properties of the spiritual body be, that it will be able to express that which the natural body only tries to express?'

Kingsley and his future wife met for the first time when he was only twenty years of age in Oxfordshire, where he was spending his college vacation. 'That was my real wedding-day,' he used

always to say. The Cambridge undergraduate was at the time going through the crisis in a young man's life that may be called without irreverence 'moral measles.' He was then full of religious doubts; and his face, with its unsatisfied hungering look, bore witness to the state of his mind. He told her his doubts, and she told him her faith; and the positive, being stronger than the negative, so prevailed that he was no longer faithless but believing. Hitherto his peculiar character had not been understood, and his heart had been half asleep. It woke up now, and never slept again. For the first time he could speak with perfect freedom, and be met with answering sympathy. And gradually, as the new friendship deepened into intimacy, every doubt, every thought, every failing, every sin was laid bare. Counsel was asked and given; and as new hopes dawned, the look of hard defiance gave way to a wonderful humility and tenderness, which were his characteristics, with those who understood him, to his dying day. 'My memory often runs back,' writes an early friend of his, 'to the days when I used to meet dear Kingsley in his little curate rooms; when he told me of his attachment to one whom he feared he should never be able to marry.' But things turning out brighter than he expected, the same friend records how, calling at his cottage one morning, 'I found him almost beside himself, stamping his things into a portmanteau. "What is the matter, dear Kingsley?" – "I am engaged. I am going to see her *now*– to-day."'

His chivalrous idea of wedlock was only natural, for he always attributed to Mrs Kingsley's sympathy and influence his success, saying that never but for her would he have become a writer. Writing to a friend on the subject of marriage, he says that it is his duty to hold the highest and most spiritual views, 'for God has shewed me these things in an eventful and blissful marriage history, and woe to me if I preach them not.'

Writing to his wife from the sea-side, where he had gone in search of health, he says: 'This place is perfect; but it seems a dream and imperfect without you. Kiss the darling ducks of children for me. How I long after them and their prattle. I delight in all the little ones in the street, for their sake, and continually I start and fancy I hear their voices outside. You do not know how I love them; nor did I hardly till I came here. Absence quickens love into consciousness.' – 'Blessed be God for the rest, though I never before felt the loneliness of being without the beloved being whose every look, and word, and motion are the key-notes of my life. People talk of love ending at the altar... Fools! I lay at the window all morning, thinking of nothing but home; how I long for it!' – 'Tell Rose and Maurice that I have got two pair of bucks' horns – one for each of them, huge old fellows, almost as big as baby.'

Writing from France to 'my dear little man,' as he calls his youngest son (for whom he wrote the *Water Babies*), he says: 'There is a little Egyptian vulture here in the inn; ask mother to shew you his picture in the beginning of the Bird book.' When smarting from severe attacks on his historical teaching at Cambridge, he could write to his wife: 'I have been very unhappy about your unhappiness about me, and cannot bear to think of your having a pang on my account.' From America he writes: 'My digestion is perfect, and I am in high spirits. But I am home-sick at times, and would give a finger to be one hour with you and G. and M.'

From such things; which, though they may appear little, are really the great things of life, or at least its *heart's ease*, Canon Kingsley got power to do and to suffer.

Coming out from service in Westminster Abbey, he caught a cold; but he made light of it, for he could think of nothing but the joy of returning with his wife to Eversley for Christmas and the quiet winter's work. No sooner had they returned home than Mrs Kingsley became seriously ill. On being told that her life was in the greatest danger, Kingsley said: 'My own death-warrant was signed with those words.' His ministrations in his wife's sick-room shewed the intensity of his faith, as he strengthened the weak, encouraged the fearful speaking of an eternal reunion, of the indestructibility of that married love, which if genuine on earth, could only, he thought, be severed for a brief moment.

At this time Kingsley was himself ill, and on the 28th December he had to take to his bed, for symptoms of pneumonia came on rapidly. The weather was bitter, and he had been warned that his

recovery depended on the same temperature being kept up in his bedroom and on his never leaving it; but one day he indiscreetly leaped out of bed, came into his wife's room for a few moments, and taking her hand in his, he said: 'This is heaven; don't speak;' but after a short silence, a severe fit of coughing came on, he could say nothing more, and they never met again. For a few days the sick husband and wife wrote to each other in pencil, but it then became 'too painful, too tantalising,' and the letters ceased. A few days after this, the preacher, poet, novelist, naturalist died, January 23, 1875, and was universally lamented, for England had lost one of her most estimable men – not great, in the ordinary sense of the word, for Kingsley could lay no claim to be a profound thinker. His philanthropy confused his perceptions, as when in his writings he denounced large towns and mill-owners, and proposed to restore the population to the land. Such 'socialism' as this would throw us back into ignorance and poverty, instead of solving the difficult modern problem of rich and poor. Kingsley was great only as regards the feelings. There he may be said to have made his mark.

How many of Charles Kingsley's works will last? Some (with whom he himself would probably have agreed) think that *Hypatia* and a few songs, such as the *Sands of Dee* and *Three Fishers*, are his only contributions to English literature likely to endure. It may be that he had too many irons in the fire for any of them to become white-hot. We prefer to think of him as a minister of the Gospel, who not only preached piety but shewed it at home, by being a dutiful son, a wise father, and a husband whose love during thirty-six years 'never stooped from its lofty level to a hasty word, an impatient gesture, or a selfish act, in sickness or in health, in sunshine or in storm, by day or by night.'

'He was a true and perfect knight,' is our verdict, on rising from the perusal of his biography. It is surely a great encouragement to think that all who cultivate their hearts may, without his genius, hope to imitate the home-virtues of one who, however great in other respects, was, in our opinion, greater at home.

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

CHAPTER XXXVI. – WAGES

After the bride and bridegroom were gone, occurred the first slip in my behaviour. The rest of the company had returned to the house, and I suppose I must have stood in the road – gazing in the direction the carriage had taken, the sound of the distant bells floating faintly towards me in the summer air – so long as to be unconscious of the lapse of time, when gently and lightly a hand was laid upon mine, and it was drawn under Robert Wentworth's arm.

'You are wanted up there, Mary,' he said cheerfully. 'Mrs Tipper does not, I think, find herself quite equal to Mrs Dallas and Mrs Trafford; to say nothing of two discontented bride's-maids, and a father who came here under protest, and was only allowed to perform half the duty he came to perform. You took that out of his hands, you know; the giving away was virtually yours.' Going on to talk amusingly of the incongruous materials which went to make up the wedding-party, and so giving me time to recover my self-command. It was very soon put to the test. There was, to begin with, some pretty banter from Mrs Chichester to parry, when we reached the green terrace, where the guests were sitting, to enjoy the air and lovely view, and from which I suddenly remembered they could see the part of the road where I had been standing.

'We began to fear you must be ill, Miss Haddon, seeing you stand so long motionless in the road. It was quite a relief to see you move at last when Mr Wentworth joined you – it really was!'

Probably Robert Wentworth considered that this kind of thing was what I required, for he left me to it, and devoted himself to the not very easy task of trying to reconcile the two pretty bride's-maids; gravely listening to their assurances that the whole affair had been shockingly mismanaged from first to last! I soon had enough to do to reply to the patter of questions with which I was assailed from Marian and Mrs Chichester.

Where in the world had I been hiding myself all these months? Had I really come into a large fortune, and turned Mr Dallas off, as people said; or was it the other thing? As I did not know what 'the other thing' was, I could not answer for that; but acknowledged to having been fortunate; smiling to myself as I wondered what they would think of my idea of good fortune. Of course they would know what my real position was in time; but for the present I was mischievous enough to let them imagine any improbable thing they pleased. But there was one thing which they must not be allowed to have any doubt about, and that was my regard for Philip and Lilian, and hearty concurrence in the marriage.

'I am *so* glad – so very glad; because we can now speak very decidedly upon the point. People are so terribly unkind and censorious; are they not, Miss Haddon?'

'Some are, Mrs Chichester; yet I think, on the whole, censorious people do a great deal less mischief than they are supposed to do. My experience is happily small in such matters; but I believe that censorious people are generally well known to be so, and therefore they are not capable of doing much harm.'

'Then it was *not* true, Miss Haddon; I am so very pleased to be able to say so!'

'What was not true, Mrs Chichester?'

'Oh, I would rather not repeat, really.'

'Well, I only know Caroline says she's heard it said over and over again that you ran away in despair, because you found that Mr Dallas and Lilian were untrue to you,' said Marian, less scrupulous about repeating than the other.

'That is really too ridiculous!' I ejaculated. – 'But you will be able to tell your friend or friends that you did not see a love-lorn damsel to-day, Mrs Chichester;' gazing at her with steady calm eyes.

'You certainly don't look a bit love-lorn,' candidly said Marian.

'O no,' chimed in Mrs Chichester. 'If you will pardon the jest, I might say you looked a great deal more as though you had *found* a lover, than lost one!' with a meaning glance in Robert Wentworth's direction.

'Will you excuse my asking if you had that dress direct from Paris, Miss Haddon?' inquired Marian.

'Paris? No; it came from Madame Michaux,' I replied, happily recollecting that Jane had mentioned that name.

'Oh, that is the same thing; isn't it? She charges enormously; but one is quite sure of having just the right thing from her. I suppose you have all your dresses from her now?'

'No; not all,' I said, smiling at the remembrance of my every-day attire.

'They say brown is to be the new colour: the Duchess of Meck – Meck – (What's her name, Caroline? those German names are *so* absurd) – is wearing nothing else but brown at Homburg.'

'I have been wearing brown some time,' I replied, almost laughing outright.

'Some people always contrive to be in advance of the fashions,' she said a little disconcertedly. – 'Are they going away already, Caroline; just inquire if the carriage is there, will you? – I see you have drab liveries, Miss Haddon; ours is changed to claret; the Marchioness of' – Breaking off to make a reply to a few words from the little bride's-maids, who with their father were taking themselves off from the uncongenial atmosphere. 'O yes; went off very nicely indeed; did it not? I wanted them to have the breakfast at Fairview, or at anyrate to have two or three of the men-servants to wait. But the party is small certainly, and everything has been very well contrived. No one is inclined to be very critical at such times. I hope you will be able to come down to Fairview before you return to Cornwall; any time which may suit you best. You need not write; we are always prepared for visitors.'

Both sisters hurriedly explained that their stay in town would be very short, and that there was not the *slightest* chance of their having a spare day.

Then there was one other little trial of my nerves – the few words which had to be spoken to Mr and Mrs Dallas; but pride came to my assistance, and I got through it pretty well, bearing their curious looks and gracious speeches with at anyrate apparent stoicism. Under other circumstances, I might have been somewhat amused by Mr Dallas's remark, that for his part he wished I had not thrown Philip over; accompanied as it was by a comprehensive glance at 'my carriage' waiting in the road below.

As soon as they left, I felt at liberty to whisper a loving good-bye to dear old Mrs Tipper, with a promise to see her and clear up all mysteries on the morrow, and take my departure. In a matter-of-course way, Robert Wentworth walked with me down the path, talking in the old pleasant easy fashion until he had put me into the carriage. Then just as I was bending forward to say the one word 'Home,' he gave the order 'Greybrook Hall.'

'Wait, John.'

The man stood aside; and I added to Robert Wentworth: 'You know then?'

'Of course I know,' he replied with a quiet smile.

I shrank back. He made a gesture to the footman, gave me the orthodox bow, and I was driven away.

Not a little agitated, I asked myself how much more did he know – all? If he recognised me that night in the wood, he did know not only what I had done, but what it had cost me to do it! I was no heroine; I have shewn myself as I was on Philip's wedding-day; but I had not won my peace without many a weary struggle for it. Once – three months after my departure from the cottage – I had stolen down in the darkness of evening to watch the shadows on the blinds, and perhaps catch the sound of a voice still so terribly dear to me. I saw Philip and Lilian together, and recognised that they were lovers, and then I knew that the victory was not yet won.

An hour later some one stooped over me as I lay crouched in the woods. 'Are you ill? What is the matter with you, good woman?' said the familiar voice of Robert Wentworth, as he laid his hand upon my shoulder. 'It is bad for you to be lying here this damp night.'

I shrank away, drawing the hood of my cloak more closely round my face, which I kept turned away. He stood still a few moments, and then without another word passed on. I had hitherto always persuaded myself that he had not recognised me; but now my cheeks grew uncomfortably hot with the suspicion that he did know me, and that the passing silently on was the very thing which a delicate consideration for me would prompt him to do. I was only surprised that it had not occurred to me before. I never had succeeded in throwing dust into Robert Wentworth's eyes when I had tried so to do. I knew now that it was to him Jane Osborne had alluded when she jested about a certain friend of hers who was so interested in all that concerned me, and whom I was to know more about by-and-by. I had sometimes a little murmured in my heart at having to give up Robert Wentworth's friendship with other things, knowing the worth of it, and he had been watching over me all the time! He had traced me at once; but respecting my desire to be lost to them all for a time, he had not obtruded himself upon me, contenting himself with obtaining an introduction to Jane Osborne and making friends with her.

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