

DUTY'S PATH

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

OUT from the harbor of youth's bay
There leads the path of pleasure;
With eager steps we walk that way
To brim joy's largest measure.
But when with morn's departing beam
Goes youth's last precious minute,
We sigh "'twas but a fevered dream—
There's nothing in it."

Then on our vision dawns afar
The goal of glory, gleaming
Like some great radiant solar star,
And sets us longing, dreaming,
Forgetting all things left behind,
We strain each nerve to win it,
But when 'tis ours—alas! we find
There's nothing in it.

We turn our sad, reluctant gaze
Upon the path of duty;
Its barren, uninviting ways
Are void of bloom and beauty.
Yet in that road, though dark and cold,
It seems as we begin it,
As we press on—lo! we behold
There's Heaven in it.

SUNNY SPOTS FOR WORKING GIRLS

BY GRACE H. DODGE

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LAST evening a number of busy girls were having a social time in a place that might well be called a "sunny-spot." We were all workers, and had had a hard day's service in various places, for some of us had been teaching, some taking stenographic notes, others running machines

or looms in great factories; others were weary with trying to please behind counters, or tired after home cares, or perplexed in trying to solve problems affecting large movements.

The "sunny-spot" meant to us bright rooms, with books, pictures, comfortable chairs, piano, etc., for these rooms were the headquarters of our Society, paid for by our monthly dues, and arranged for, and used by the members. Here we have classes, music, laughter, books and companionship, as well as thorough co-operative sympathy.

But, to go back to last night. We were talking about various matters when, finally, some girl asked, "Have we any sunny-spots in our lives?" Quick came the replies, "We have, indeed, sunny-spots." One said, "My bright spot is this Club room, where we get new ideas, join in pleasant and instructive talk, and feel that we are worth something." "Did you ever think," said a quiet girl sitting in the corner, "what satisfaction it gives to perform duty faithfully, and to have true friends to advise and sympathize?" "Yes," said the friend beside her, "and think, also, how delightful it is to find your best efforts appreciated by your employer!" Miss F— said, "The brightest spot in my life just now is that my employer pays me my wages in full, whether he is able to give me steady work or not." "Who is he?" called out a chorus of voices. "What a splendid man he must be."

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, and discussion was again resumed, some one asked, "Is it possible to make the work-room a sunny-spot?" "Yes," was the answer given by many lips, "when we can win the good-will and esteem of our fellow-workers, and have sympathetic friends among them, and where the superintendent speaks a kind word, and seems to look upon us as something more than mere soulless and brainless automatons."

The talk drifted on, and the necessity of good health to keep one bright was discussed. Next followed remarks on the delight that comes from unselfishly doing kind actions; the advantage of good, cheap reading, and how books and papers give many happy hours. Long before we were through with our talk the clock struck for 9.30, and this was a signal for pushing back our chairs and having a little music before we dispersed.

There are many such bright, charming rooms in New York city, as well as many more in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and smaller cities. They all mean cheery, rallying places for groups of working girls, varying from fifty to six hundred in number, all animated with interest, enthusiasm and pleasure over their own special rooms. Clubs or societies are the names given to these various groups, and the very name of some suggests pleasant thoughts: thus, the Kindly Club, the Endeavor Society, the Progressive Society, the Mutual Benefit, the Steadfast Club and the Enterprise. These mean, in action as well as in name, kindness, endeavors toward steadfast progress, with the key-notes of enterprise, co-operation, education and love. The classes are appreciated, the books found valuable, the provident schemes utilized, the lectures well attended; but, above all, the sympathetic companionship and the organized opportunities to do for others, make these gathering places bright to us all.

Let us glance at one club-room that is especially sunny, in contrast to the darkness outside. Under the New York side of the Brooklyn bridge there are streets dimly lighted at night, but filled with people. Passing through the crowd one comes to a door which leads into a hallway, and going through this enters a rear yard full of children, and festooned with clothes-lines with their white burdens. About the middle of the yard wooden steps lead to the second-story of one

of the houses. Ascending these by the light of a bull's-eye lantern, we come upon a little balcony, and find a door, which, upon opening, reveals a cheery sight. A small ante-room, used as kitchen and class-room, with its bright paper, shining tins, muslin window curtains, etc.; beyond this, a long, narrow room with open fire at one end, table, lamp, brass chandelier giving brilliant light, and wall paper with pink and blue tints. These are all attractive; but not as much so as the bright, happy faces of the busy workers, who come each evening with the freedom of ownership and possession.

Sometimes all the clubs combine, and a thousand or more meet for a social reunion.

Three concerts held in the large hall of Cooper Union in New York city brought the enjoyment of charming spirited music to two thousand girls; and the anniversary meeting for business, when eighteen hundred came together, was another bright spot.

On a certain night of the week, at several club rooms, twenty or more young men come in as privileged members of a literary circle, to discuss, with as many young women, matters of interest; and the interchange of thought inspires many to more earnest living.

A sunny industrial center has grown from the clubs, viz., The Children's Dressmaking Company. The president of the company is Miss Virginia Potter, and there is no pleasanter work-room in New York than the brightly-lighted fourth-story room which the company occupies. The girls found here are mostly club members, and all are skilled workers on babies' clothes and spend the day in making the daintiest of things.

Summer brings sunny-spots of days and weeks to hundreds of working-girls. Vacations are delightful to all tired people; but who can estimate their charm when from eight to ten hours per day for the rest of the year is spent by noisy factory looms, behind counters, at cashiers' desks, or in any unceasing round of monotonous work! How we revel in the freedom of the country, the late breakfast hour, the trees, flowers, sea or mountains, and the sunshine over all. A little hamlet on the north shore of Long Island is a favorite resort for those workers who are members of the Working Girls' Societies, for here they have two houses, known as Holiday House and Holiday Harbor, which are owned by the societies. A bright, happy life goes on here, filled from day to day with country pleasures, known only to those who roam field and wood in search of nature's treasures, or sit on the pebbly shore by the "sounding sea." A pleasant feature of the day is the walk through shady paths to the beach, where bathing is entered into with zest, and good swimmers produced by persevering daily practice. Picnic parties on wooden slopes, and moonlight rides through country roads, are occasions of fun and enjoyment; but the grand feature is the weekly "barn frolic," when the big barn wears a festive appearance and is filled with a delighted audience from the surrounding villages, while the girls take part in "private theatricals," acting the part of the stage-manager as well.

The Working Girls' Vacation Society furnishes other happy holiday places. No one can hear of Liberty, Green's Farms, Farmington or Winsted, without being impressed with the charms of these localities for outings, and realizing something of what cheerful weeks working-girls must spend in these centers.

The Harper Cottage at Long Branch, and similar summer boarding-houses elsewhere, are much enjoyed, as well as the excursions to Glen Island, Central Park and the beaches.

Busy working girls!—there are bright, sunny spots everywhere for us, some small, some large, many so hidden that only a few know of them; and others conspicuous.

Each one of us can find brightness, or, what is better, create it. Few plants grow and develop without sunshine, so we cannot become bright, earnest women without letting the sunshine fall upon us. Let us try to live out of self, bringing sunshine to others, even if we have not much ourselves; and, by being sunshine-bearers, brightness will be reflected back into our own hearts. A hand clasp, a smile, a sympathizing word, or a flower, has made many of us happy for a day, and surely we can all give forth such rays as these. For the larger beams let us ally ourselves with some girls' organization, find out about the work done in it, then join it or form a society among our acquaintances. Do not let any of us feel that because we are workers—wage earners—we need do nothing but drudge from day to day. We should rouse ourselves and look around, feeling sure if we have health we can make much of our own lives and bring brightness and happiness to others.

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