

THE LADIES' HOME

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EXCUSES

By ANNETTE RITTENHOUSE

THE cries which fear wrings from the robin's breast,
But serve to show the cat where lies the nest:
Just so excuses, be they short or long,
But go to prove the existence of some wrong.



*XIX.—MRS. EDWARD BELLAMY

By FANNY M. JOHNSON

MY husband is writing a book. He has been at work upon it for a year or more. I think it an unusual book, but I do not know whether it will be a great failure or a great success."

The lady who made this remark some half a dozen years ago, was the wife of a lawyer-journalist who was then quite unknown to fame, at least outside his own town and county. The friend to whom she spoke might have forgotten the re-



MRS. BELLAMY

mark if there had not been good reason, a little later, to remember it. For the speaker was Mrs. Edward Bellamy, and the book of which she spoke was "Looking Backward."

Two years later the book had made a great literary hit and success, and as its sentiments spread it became the inspiration of the nationalist movement. As the name of Bellamy grew famous, the name of Chicopee Falls, where the Bellamys reside, became familiar to the reading public.

It is a quiet manufacturing village, a part of Chicopee, one of the smaller Massachusetts cities. The Bellamy homestead is a characteristic New England home, a modest, two-story house on an elm-shaded street, built on one of the hills overlooking the Chicopee River. From the bend of the river, around which the manufactories of the town cluster, the streets climb upward to pleasant homes built on the adjacent slopes and terraces, and by shady paths and fields where wild flowers grow blend gradually with the surrounding farm lands. The Indian name which the village once bore, Skenongonuck, still clings to it in written records and town histories. Like many of the older Massachusetts towns, its more retired streets are shaded with rows of elms and maples, which give them an air of picturesque repose.

Nearly all of Mrs. Bellamy's life has been passed in this quiet home. When she was a child she came to the village with her mother, Mrs. Sanderson. When the latter re-married and went away, the daughter Emma, then a girl of thirteen, remained with the family of Rev. Rufus K. Bellamy.

In the pure, wholesome atmosphere of a New England parsonage she grew to womanhood. There were only sons in the family, and the pleasant, sweet-faced girl soon came to be loved and regarded as a daughter. Ten years ago she became really a daughter, in fact and name, by her marriage with Edward Bellamy, now the famous nationalist. During the remainder of the father's life and since his death, the old homestead, where the widowed mother still lives, has continued to be the home of Edward Bellamy and his family. Though the greater part of the working week he is deep in business at his office in Boston, a hundred miles away, but twice a week, as a rule, and always on Sundays, he comes home to rest and for a little while forget his business cares in the little parsonage.

The fame which came to Mr. Bellamy has made scarcely any change in the unpretending manner of their living. The many callers who have sought and found him at his home have come for serious business and not to be idly entertained. So no great burden of social entertainment has fallen upon his wife. One domestic suffices for their quiet home life, and Mrs. Bellamy has always been able to give the most devoted care to her two bright little children, Paul and Marion. From their babyhood they have never been trusted to the care or training of a stranger.

Her own education was obtained in the public and high schools of the village, where her record was that of a good scholar, a sweet singer and a general favorite. During her first years of married life she could have had no idea of the stir her husband's work and ideas were to create. His fame has made no difference in her quiet, unpretending manner.

Though she has been a wife for ten years, and a mother for seven, Mrs. Bellamy's face still retains much of the delicate bloom which is the heritage of New England girlhood, and her figure the slender grace of youth. She has dark-brown hair, bright, expressive eyes, and a manner marked by quiet cordiality, devoid of either formality or effusiveness. Her musical talent is her chief personal gift, her voice being a mezzo-soprano, and considerable attention has been paid to its cultivation. For several years she has sung in the choir of the village church, only a few rods distant from her home. She chiefly prizes her musical gift, however, for the pleasure it gives her husband and children, all of whom are exceedingly fond of music. The little melodeon which she learned to play upon when a girl still stands in one corner of the family sitting-room, and no Sunday afternoon or evening would be complete or happy without her singing to its simple accompaniment. Marion and her father love best the sweet old ballads, but Paul glories in war songs, music of march and battle, and rollicking plantation melodies. So far as they can understand the matter, the children are ardent nationalists.

The chief variation in this quiet life is in the summer, when the family spend a few months at the seashore or mountains. The summer of 1890 was passed at the seaside, but was saddened by the long and serious illness of the little daughter. Last year their summer outing was spent on the highest accessible spot of the Berkshire hills, and from that airy height the children came home rosy and healthy to fill the house and grounds with the merriment of happy child life. There is ample playground for the young Bellamys in the large home garden and among the fields and hills that surround their home.

In her husband's work and aims, Mrs. Bellamy is an earnest believer and hearty sympathizer. "I am often asked," she says, "whether Mr. Bellamy seriously believed in the theories of 'Looking Backward,' or whether it was written merely for effect. I know he was, and is, thoroughly in earnest in all he has written and done. He is far more sanguine than I, but yet I feel that the ends which he and his friends are working for will be brought about, and that much sooner than people can now believe."

Such is the theory and belief of this gentle woman, into whose calm life the accident of fame has wrought little change. Wholly without ostentation or pretense, she keeps on in the quiet round of her home duties, a type of the many wives and mothers to whom loyalty and love for husband and children stand first, but whose influence is beyond all reckoning in keeping the standards of a community pure, and its home life sweet.



MARION BELLAMY

* In this series of pen-portraits of "Unknown Wives of Well-Known Men," commenced in the January, 1891, JOURNAL, the following, each accompanied with portrait, have been printed:

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