

**BRIGHT GLIMPSES FOR
MOTHERS' MEETINGS,
BY A MOTHER**

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Bright Glimpses for Mothers' Meetings, by a Mother by Bright Glimpses

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INTRODUCTORY.

ON MOTHERS' MEETINGS.

How often have these three questions been put to me!

“Have you found mothers' meetings very useful?”

“What do you read at your mothers' meetings?”

“Will you tell me how you conduct your mothers' meetings?”

I am anxious to express my views about mothers' meetings, to be followed by a series of *Readings for Mothers' Meetings*. And speaking, as I do, from a somewhat lengthened experience, and as a *mother*, (whose hair is silvered by age,) I earnestly trust I may be permitted to give my younger sisters a few hints on which they may be disposed to act.

First, “*Have you found mothers' meetings very useful?*” I unhesitatingly answer, *most useful*, and

most desirable ; would that they were more largely established throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland ! He was a great general, and a discerning one, who exclaimed, "Get at the *mothers*, and you'll get at the *men* of the nation ;" he knew full well the golden link of influence between the mother and the son. I say, too, let a minister's wife get at the *mothers*, and she'll get at the rough sons—ah ! and at the rough husbands also. No lady-worker in a parish can, I think, do otherwise than feel the great difficulty of even getting at the *mothers*. You go into a cottage, you long to have a quiet word with that careworn wife, whose husband is breaking her heart by intemperance, whose son is the rough, rude Sabbath-breaker. You find her at the washing-tub, with a crying babe in its cot, two or three dirty noisy children sprawling on the floor ; you cannot get the quiet half-hour ; you cannot speak to her with loving sympathy of her heart's grief ; you make a kind remark or two, and then you feel you have but to turn and leave the cottage, with an all but hopeless, yet longing desire that you could lift up that poor family out of its depths, but, alas ! where is your lever ? Again, your heart yearns to comfort another mother, whose daughter's conduct draws bitter tears from her weeping eyes, and makes her full heart well-nigh a broken one. You go to her—she is not alone ; her sick boy is sitting sulkily brooding over the fire, her husband smoking his pipe at the door ; you cannot violate a mother's feelings by touching on the subject

of the absent child, the erring Mary; so, after a few words, so kind that the mother "longs to have a talk with the dear lady," you again turn on your way with a sigh, and a sickening sense of a failure of object. Now then comes in the mothers' meetings; the clergyman's wife, or lady-worker in the parish, assembles those mothers at an hour when the husband is at work, the children at school; they leave the scene of their daily trials and cares for a couple of hours; the very variety cheers and "spirits them up:" they come as mothers, and mothers only, to meet the *mothers' friend*. There is almost a sacred exclusiveness about this meeting; they know it and feel it, though they cannot explain it. That young widow, with her fatherless baby at her breast, quietly takes her seat, with, oh, such a soothing sense that that very mothers' friend, sitting at the head of the table, "knows all about her," for she was by her when her husband gave his last look, and she first felt she was a widow; and when the prayer comes she knows there will be a special word for her, and her fatherless babe too, and she loves to be where she is.

That aged mother who enters gives a grateful look towards that same lady as she takes her seat, for she knows "she has been a-thinking on her boy who went to sea (bless his heart!) last week," and she knows full well he'll not be forgotten in the prayer, and that he'll be asked about before they part. Each mother as she enters has her individual history, which to her is her little world's history, and somehow she

has an instinctive sense that the *mothers' friend* has a heart large enough to take *it* in and care for *it*. And did not the sweet Psalmist of Israel rejoice, though he felt "poor and needy," that the Lord "cared for him;" and is not human sympathy, which cometh from the same God, a sweet soother to the weary heart? Then, too, the glad mother, with her rosy, healthy infant, comes in, and knows the lady will have a word for her; and notice how strong her baby's legs grow, and that it has cut all its front teeth, and is so like its father. Yes, and thus it is, the *mothers' friend* at these mothers' meetings weeps with those that weep, and rejoices with those that rejoice, and a bond of holy union is formed. She can speak to them when *collected* in a way that she cannot in their crowded homes; she can allude to their husbands, for they are wives alone, and urge them onwards by wise counsel, and direct them in their difficulties; and without personalities, she can touch on those points which come home to them; she can speak of their young daughters, and point out possible errors in their training, and the results that will follow, for they are not present to hear; she can speak of their sons, with no fear of being hushed to silence by the loud, rude whistle, or sulky scowl. And then, when the mothers all kneel together and pour out the earnest supplication unitedly—the widow and the fatherless, the drunken husband and the erring daughter, the wild son, the enlisted soldier, the sailor boy, the healthy babe, and the sickly wife are all remembered;