

OPTIMIST CLUB WRITES RECREATING FALSE PRAISE

By THE OPTIMIST.

As you will see our subject, "In the matter of praise" has called forth a fine lot of responses from the membership of The Washington Herald Optimist Club. I thought the subject would appeal to you.

Rightly to understand the true value of praise it is not amiss to consider the opposite, blame—which is the more often spoken. To be blamed for a fault which a man has committed is not any great hardship, for if a man is really desirous of living a good life and doing justice to his fellow-man he will hardly find any one to blame him for his fault more severely than he blames himself. But to be blamed for what one has not done—that is hard, although in reality it does not affect at all the person blamed, and attaches to him no wrong action at all. So it is with praise. Surely, no man could feel any glow of genuine pleasure at being praised for having written well, or for having done a certain worthy deed of which, in fact, he knows nothing. Such praise only points out, perhaps, a road we might have traveled, and if we receive it in the right spirit, justly, and not taking ourselves any part of it, that we do not deserve, we must inevitably find ourselves strengthened in our next endeavors.

But in considering this matter of praise there is nothing we should be more careful of than the praise of men whose opinions in all other matters save those of our own merits we should despise. For to accept the praise of unworthy men is to let our souls, to check ourselves and make ourselves fit subjects for the same sort of ridicule that assailed the jackdaw in the fable, strutting about in the plumage of a peacock. John Ruskin says in this danger very simply when he writes:

You who would in sight read
Praise this simple man well,
A wise man's counsel may recall,
But a fool's praise is worst of all.

The two winning contributions this week, I have devolved the honor of selecting by Mrs. E. B. Davis, 24 Harvard street, northwest, and by Evelyn Hain, 123 E. 44th street. Checks for \$5 have been mailed to each of them.

Our subject for next Sunday will be "Love Thy Land," hints on the topic were published in the first announcement last Wednesday.

The Prize Winners.

The prize-winning contributions follow: "Praise is one of the things which almost every one must utter, and be glad of, yet which is not allowable to look for as an end." Is the dictum of the philosopher.

The standard dictionary says: "Praise is always understood as genuine and sincere." Compliment is a light form of praise that may or may not be sincere. Flattery is always insincere.

It was a pleasure to me, according to Shakespeare, that led Julius Caesar to his doom for one of the conspirators assured his companions that Caesar would not be injured by the dagger which he put in the fatal hole of March by a little judicious praise of his bravery and freedom from flattery; for then he will be most flattered.

Now did not the lovely flowers their little favors raise?
In sweetest adoration with looks of silent prayer,
And did not the little birds so joyous
Their loudest song of praise bring forth
In sweetest melody?

Yes, all nature seemed to praise Him
In their own way, and in their own degree,
The birds on highest tree tops the blossoms
On the ground; a silent song went from my heart,
The lines I set did sing
When I saw on my father's brow,
Voices loud would sing:
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Rest thy praise, therefore, with wisdom
Lest it cause some worker to linger
In his own praise, and in his own
Futures when he should be plodding
upward. Failure needs words of encouragement
to try again. A task well performed
is its own reward, and "praise" is often
times superfluous.

Praise thyself not at all and thy fellow-man
with discretion for,
"There is so much good about the
best of us
And so much bad about the best of us,
That it hooves none of us."
"To talk about the rest of us."
"Forgive his crimes, forgive his virtues
too, and glory in his imperfections."
The Psalmist who sang repeatedly,
"Praise ye the Lord."

MRS. E. B. DAVIS.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
and to sing praises unto Thy name,
O most High. To show forth Thy
loving-kindness in the morning, and Thy
faithfulness every night, singing the Psalm.
Verily, if we all dwell more upon
our daily meditation and reasoning
manifestations of the Divine
goodness to His children, life would be
one long pavan of gladness and praise.

The gift of praising should figure
conspicuously in the optimistic life, for it
is the expression of an overflowing heart.
Praise is just the art of saying kind
things gracefully; of being an apt
observer to discern the best qualities in
others, and to display in an unobtrusive
manner the virtues of others, and to
detect the adverse side of things. How
much broader and nobler to see only the
bright spots of virtue for every one has
some of the unerring good in his makeup.
Just look for it and give it, and you will
be praising it. Long after the giver of the
word of encouragement has forgotten, its
glow will linger in the heart of the
receiver and perchance in him the desire
to grow more, and more worthy of that
gleam of appreciation.

It makes life so much pleasanter,
so much smoother to color it with the
radiance of praise, that it is almost
insincere because he does not fail to call
attention to some attribute worth while,
or to admire the pretty new gown,
the stately apartment, or the charming
arrangement of rooms or furniture,
it may not be conventional to notice
these things, but surely it is better to
err on the side of the heart, for after all
the courses of kindness is the highest form
of politeness.

EVELYN HAIN.

Honorable Mention.

Of self-praise we will say nothing; it
seems disgusting in the extreme. We all
know that both old and young are
always gratified by some experience of
appreciation shown them for their efforts
to please, or having done that which is
honest and right. Praise pure and
simple is only another name for gratitude
and thankfulness, whether it comes from
the employer to the employee, or from the
employee to the employer, from the parent
to the child, or the child to the parent,
or from one child to another; in fact, if
we all would show each other by look
or word, or act, our appreciation and
gratitude for what has been done for us
or others, how much happier all would
be. Many are quickly understand
when they are praised, and young are
too. To give praise unto our Heavenly
Father for all the wonderful blessings we
receive we often neglect to do.

The Psalmist has said, praise ye the Lord.
Let every thing that has breath
praise the Lord.

I can never forget a lesson learned from
a little child. I wrote down and kept and
will here relate:
It was one lovely afternoon all in a
merry mood,
We pulled our boat ashore and wandered
through the wood,
We climbed a mountain path, near-by a
babbling brook,
And plucked the fragrant flowers that
grew in a shady nook,
And we drank of sparkling water so
clear and icy cold.

PRAISE.

Praise, thou art a strong, honest man, and woman's heart, upleaping
at thy words, grows eager as a leashed hound to be worthy thy bugle notes.
Woman smiles him a glad welcome, every pulse answering the cordial
music of his voice.

Praise is a man who locks his lips too close to speak a lie, and when
he gives his words to a woman he is anointing her; he opens wide the
door of her soul and raises his hand in benediction.

"Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health
to the bones."
"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in
due season—how good it is."

Praise, I love to think of thee as one whose lightest word the angels
hear unbubbling.
Thou art balm and oil laid like a blessing on the gates of sense.
Praise—Thy notes make a golden ladder, on which souls go up into
God's presence.

Man praise me, me, and I, my knee was bowed down: 'round my brow
thou bloomed fresh amaranth; from my soul burst such transcendent
melody; the stars grew musical with its echoes, and dull earth dreamed
of it in her slumber.

For I was a-thirst, fevered, and weary of my own worn self, and Praise
strengthened me, with his strength; he drew near and laid his lips upon
my brow, and twined me with the soft movement of his arms.

Joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries he both told upon the
rosary of his years.

Sometimes Praise gives his soul's unveiled homage,
Praise, thou man of strength! Love's songs are framed for thee,
and thy midnight sleep is broken by the sound of silver tales.

Thou art the general in the fray, holding on the spear point the
trophy and wreath for thy brave men.
At his feet we are mute and listen while he tells the chastened
spirit what its pride of strength is.

Sometimes Praise whispers, "Who knows most of God and love says
least."

Praise that holds insincerity like the hollow music of a shell that
learns to mock the ocean's deeper voice.

The searching light of the professional shining athwart the fair page
of the soul of Praise shows neither blot nor blur.
It is the crown of glory man gives woman studded with jewels both
rare and radiant.

It is a strong man, hating shams, who strives with the patience and
skill of love to let his soul creep behind some dark cloud's veil and lift
it with his largesse of sympathy, mind, and manhood.

With silken saddle and stirrup of gold, he comes close and touches
Love's garment.
It is man's broad palm, holding out to warm, living hearts the drink-
ing cup, filled with the clear water from the breezy lake of kindness
and human love.

It is the honest, ringing sound of recognition of what we are striving
to do to-day.
The light from his eyes glided into my soul like bare of sunshine,
and the deep music of his voice rose and fell like the whispering of the
strong wind through blossoming trees.

ALICE SHARPE BALCH.

I thought then of enchanted spring I had
reached, and of the new life and joy as
near that above.

I thought then of our blessings—our
Heavenly Father's love.

I wondered, we thanked Him and praised
him as we should.

For gifts so freely given, did we show
our gratitude?

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favors raise?

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prayer,
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And we drank of sparkling water so
clear and icy cold.

finding and too little praise. Words of
praise, indeed, are almost as necessary
to warm a child into a genial life as acts
of kindness and affection. Judicious
praise is to children what the sun is to
flowers. Dare we withhold it?
Just praise is only a debit. All will
do much to support a character. The
world delights in sunny people. The art
of joy is very cheap, and as one who
knows says, "If you can help men on
with a garment of praise it will be better
for you than the cloths." Praise flows
from whom all blessings flow. When our
hearts are full of praise to God we can
best praise our fellow-man. An hour of
praise is worth a day of fasting and
mourning.

We should continue to practice the
grace and virtue of praise, for it is the
symbol which represents sympathy. A
great, good man says, "I know not who
we should delay our tokens of praise to
those who merit them until the heart
that our sympathy could have gladdened
has ceased to beat. As men cannot read
the epigrams inscribed upon the marble
that covers them, so the toms that we
erect to virtue often only prove our re-
pentance for what we neglected to do with
us."

R. E. ADKINS.

Praise has only one true meaning—
commendation for some excellent spe-
cimen in a kindly virtue. It is praise only
when sincere approbation of the object of
its applause is intended. Everything else
is flattery or false or empty praise.

Praise, therefore, has no degrees. It is
granted to men who are distinguished differ-
ently by different kinds of people. In
this respect it may be likened in its ap-
plication to the earth, geographically
divided into zones of climate, from a torrid,
to a temperate zone.

To those people with respect to whom
praise is like the tropics the expression
of it is a natural and necessary out-
flowing an emotional conceit. Like the
tropics, such people are picturesque,
sometimes inviting, sometimes surrounded
by all sorts of dangers, and neither they
nor the tropics have been a potent in-
strumentality in the advancement of
civilization to the position it occupies
to-day.

To those people with respect to whom
praise is like the arctic regions the laud-
ing of their acts is as so much heaped
snow falling on an already snow-capped
area. It is wasted. This type of people
are the ones immune to the pulsative
throb of the nation's heart. Such people
gather about the status quo, and neither
part and parcel of daily life. They are
the money gods, the legislators, the oc-
cupants of industry, who disregard the
welfare of the mass of humanity. They
are the social interests. These people are
not of the mass of humanity. No warm,
rich life blood courses through them for
they are dead.

But the third class of people, and those
with whom we are most concerned, and
who, fortunately, number in the vast
majority of the human race, are those
living in the temperate zone. Just as
the temperate zone has been the
potent factor in yielding the influences
which have created the modern world,
so this class of man of the high
feelings and standards for all that is
right and noble, and who are the prin-
ciples of the high state of development
at present existing.

To these people praise is not an ac-
cidental knowledge of their own individual
merit, but a warm, vital, moving, living
force. It is a stimulus, an inspiration,
a guide to further achievement. It is a
word of encouragement, and it is a
word of hope. It is a word that does
more for one man in the climb of the
race. It is a reward for faithful and meritor-
ious service. It imbues them with a sense
of duty and a sense of responsibility.
Their efforts have been recognized as an
aid and a benefit to their fellow-men.

And to these people the finest eulogy
is the word of praise. Let us give
praise, then, to those who are worthy of
it, and let us receive it with a grateful
heart.

Praise, like charity and benevolence
and many other things, is one of the
cardinal virtues. It is an encomium, an honor,
a eulogy, a panegyric, an applause,
and there is no human being who refuses
to be glorified on account of his or her
perfections or excellencies.

Praise is the other extreme of flattery,
which is false praise, or praising in
order to gratify vanity or gain favor.
Again, flattery is a debt, but praise is
not. Just praise is only a debt, but
praise is a present.

I heard one of our best actors in a cur-
rent play speak of praise. He said that
it was not a word of encouragement or
praise, but a word of appreciation. He
said that it was a word that should be
given to those who have done a good
deed, and that it should be given to
those who have done a noble deed.

Again, how much better all of us try to
do when some one whispers to us, "Well
done, thou good and faithful servant."
Whether one is at work or at play, a
kind word of encouragement or praise is
inspiring. Delightful praise! Encourage
it and accept it with thanks always, for
it is a promoter of better deeds. When
it is rightly directed we should have an
insatiable desire for praise. It is most
healthful and optimistic and encourages
others for the best that is in them. But
remember that old Latin proverb, "Laudis
propterea sordet" (self-praise debases).
Therefore beware of self-praise. Praise
is the spur of noble minds, the end and
aim of every noble man. Cooper says:
"Popular applause is a sweet, seducing
charm."
In conclusion, then, let us praise often
in the exercise of calm, good judgment.
The love of praise, however concealed by
art,
Reigns more or less and glows in every
heart.

MICHAEL T. O'LEARY.

We should appreciate that praise which
comes from men of sense and honor, who
heartily commend only those things
which are worthy of praise. To be
praised by one who is himself deserving
of praise is the highest possible form of
commendation.

"This sweet to which affection's eye,
To feel the softly breathing spirit,
When friendship's lips the tones repeat,
But oh! a thousand times more sweet
The praise of those we love to hear!
Like balmy showers in summer heat
It falls upon the greedy ear."

A. B. FITZGERALD.

To obtain the praise of the wise and
good by doing what is right simply be-
cause it is right is most gratifying and
encouraging. We agree with one of the
best men that nothing in human life can
afford us more rational and exquisite sat-
isfaction than the praise of those who
are great, and virtuous. Next to the
approval of God and our own conscience,
the satisfaction we feel in knowing that
our conduct meets the approval of those
whose praise is worth having. Sweet is
the breath of praise when given by those
whose own high merit claims the praise
they give. Praise is an incentive to right-
doing. There is no way of helping others
equal to appreciation of what they have
done. None of us ever gave any one
judicious praise without its making a
perceptible difference in his way of think-
ing without the least expenditure of
love, but optimism trains us to see all
the good in every one and everything
and to say the words of praise that cheer
the lives of others and give inspiration
and help. Parents often discover that
they are losing their hold upon their
children simply through too much fault-

THE MOTHER OF PRAISE.

Praise ye one another, with the uplift that is tender,
Speak the word that sends the thrill of hope along the veins;
Look the grateful beaming glance which alone can render
All the aid that one may need to cleanse the heart's dark stains.

Know ye not my brother that the soul is sadly waiting
For the word that builds the "castles in the air"?
Ere he can break the clouds, his walls belating,
And the eyes so human see the promised building there?

Every heart that's striving needs the kindly reassuring,
Prompted by the word of praise, giving strength to beat
On in joyful action, every weary throb enduring,
Knowing bonds of sympathy thus spoken are complete.

Add the thought "well done" to every concept of the doing,
Look the satisfaction, if words are you denied;
For your commendation, every act persuading,
May bring success as yet unknown, to one who's merely tried!

Give the smile of sanction, you will miss it never!
For the effort that perhaps cost a mighty strain,
For it often turns the tide in the Great Forever,
Bringing back to others and yourself a greater gain.

NINA VERA HUGHES.

Let another man praise thee, and not
thine own mouth; a stranger, and not
thine own lips.

Praise has different effects, says a
writer, according to the mind it meets.
It may be a stimulant, or it may be a
fool more arrogant, turning his weak
brain giddy. Praise, of all things, is the
most powerful excitement to commenda-
tion, and animates us in our en-
deavors. When you commend, add your
reasons for doing so: it is this which dis-
tinguishes the approbation of a man of
sense from the flattery of sycophants and
an admiration of fools.

"That praise contents me more which one
imparts
Of judgment sound, though of a mean
degree,
Than praise from princes, void of princely
parts."
Who have more wealth, but not more
wit than he."

LAURA V. ALLEN.

Praise is the lubricant in the wheel of
success. Without it fame would lure but
few to her blinding temple. When we are
praised, we are given a new impetus,
rounds us, and we know not where to
turn a little praise will open the path
before us and smooth our rugged way.

There are intervals when we can help
each other most by leaving each other
alone, but we always need the hand-grasp
and a word of cheer to spur us on. We
need some one to believe in us—if we do
not believe in ourselves. We are weak
and faith corroborated. The person who thinks
well of us, who keeps his mind on our
good qualities and does not look for flaws
is our friend.

"Praise is a stimulant, therefore, do
not keep it in water-tight compartments,
if it runs over a little 'twill do no harm."
TALLIAH DE SALES SMITH.

It is the benedictio, when the soul
floats and sings "Bless ye the Lord;
praise and magnify Him forever." It is
the smile of the sun, the fallow of the
field, the growth of wheat and exuber-
ant corn. It is the color of the world, the
glad hurled from the night. It is the
opening in the sky when the moon and
stars appear the darkness. It is the
burst of joy, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad,
and more for others and better work in
the future.

Just His name to cherish,
Praise Him and adore
And let the angels praise Him,
Will vanish evermore.

MRS. EMMA HUGHES.

It is as natural for a person to crave
admiration and praise of others as it
is for a wild animal to seek the confines
of its native haunts. By the power of
education the scope of our admiration
merely to being led by acquaint-
ances and friends, but it may be extended
to the utmost bounds of the world; and
it is the tenor of human nature to be
praised, and to praise others, and to
praise the person and accomplishments
of one's self.

All that is sought where praise is due is a
good thing, but false praise and lavish
flattery are conceived in sin, born in
evil, and serve no good purpose whatever.
A person should be told of the praise
worthy acts and deeds in life, and should
not have to wait for that lifeless form
to be spoken through the flowers on a
casket; for such words uttered to a liv-
ing soul would be of far more value
than tokens of respect upon the grave
after death.

No one liveth to himself nor dieth to
himself alone, and so it is incumbent
upon every man to make obligations, to
look after the welfare of others—give
help where help is needed, counsel where
counsel is sought, and praise where praise
is due; and every one should be
according to the deed done in the body.

VICTOR P. HAMMER.

It is worth remarking that praise is one
of the things which almost every one
must wish for, and be glad of, yet which
is not allowable to seek for as an end.
To obtain the approbation of the wise
and good by doing what is right, simply
because it is right, is most gratifying to
the natural and allowable wish to escape
the censure and claim the approval of our
fellows; but to make this our object,
to hold up a finger on purpose (and for
that sole purpose) to gain the applause
of the whole world, is unjustifiable.
There is a distinction between the love
of admiration, and the love of commenda-
tion, that is worth remarking. The
tendency of the love of commendation is
to make a man exert himself, of the love
of admiration, to make him puff himself
up. The love of admiration leads to fraud,
much more than the love of commenda-
tion, but on the other hand, the latter
is much more likely to spur our good
actions by the substitution of an inferior
motive. And if we would guard against
this we must set ourselves resolutely to
act as if we cared neither for praise nor
reputation, for neither will we care, and
in time the man gets hardened. And
this will always be the case, more or
less, through God's help, if we will but
persevere, and persevere from a right
motive.

Mrs. J. J. O'CONNELL.

A little praise now and then is good
and does good, but too much disgusts.
If words of praise were spoken in the
house occasionally instead of so much
fault-finding how much better it would
be. If your wife makes good biscuits,
tell her so; if she is a good musician,
tell her so. She will feel elated and play or
sing better for the compliment. The wife,
if her husband has qualities she
admires ought to let him know it once
in a while that she is proud of them and
appreciates him. In politics it is the man
who can say pleasant things that usu-
ally succeeds. A little is also good
in religion. Tell a person always of his
faults and he will never be encouraged
to do better, but praise him for some
good quality he possesses and you will
make him your friend at once. If you
own anybody any kindness of deed or any
words of appreciation let them know it
now. How much we would save our-
selves in the matter of regret if we did

member the motive that prompted the
effort and just a sincere appreciation
of a word of kindness will more than
repay for the task.

How many women who have toiled
hard all day, with perhaps nothing but
discouragements to show for their pains,
will forget all the annoyances if some
one comes in who will see some good
they have done, and cheer them by a
pleasant word, or a few words of love
and praise.

MAE H. SHAW.

From the great Ruler of the universe
to the humblest thing that creeps dwells
there a being wholly unmoved by praise:
As the great poet has said:
"The good deed, yielding to the praise,
Slaughters a thousand waiting upon thee.
Our praises are our wages;
You may ride us with one soft kiss
a thousand furlongs, and an acre."
Ere with spurs we beat an acre."

It is said love of praise is implanted
in each of us as a strong incentive to
action, and one of the things we should be
most careful to guard against is the com-
mendation of one who has witnessed the
struggle and honestly applauds the vic-
tory. Yet the individual who does the
best he can, and who is the best
words of encouragement as the greatest
hero that ever lived, and the trifling
mistakes of the moment which are un-
avoidable, and that about the man, how
praiseworthy deed? Should he not be
given the credit for the petty tasks fulfill-
fully done? It is good to commend
a well done deed, but it is better to
be partners of the deed deserving
encomium. Surely there is nothing bet-
ter in heaven or earth than the happy
recognition of a man who has done well,
of having faithfully earned "the well done,
good and faithful servant" of the Master.
"Due praise, that is the spur of doing
well."
For if good were not praised more than
ill,
None would choose goodness of his own
free will.

M. JANE MOOR.

There are some people who would much
rather give you money than to give you
praise. The old gentleman who neglig-
ed his wife in her old days, and who
broke was one of these. You will find
others everywhere, men and women, gen-
erous enough in their way, but who think
that a kind word will spoil those to
whom it is given. When one thinks of
it, indeed it is astonishing how against
the grain it goes with many persons to
utter the simple, sympathetic word,
"Well done." These are the people so little certain
of themselves that they are afraid to be
gracious. Not being big enough to give
praise freely, they are afraid to give it
unless they are sure they are not mis-
taken. The little they do bestow,
however, when one is kindly in intention
when one's praise springs straight from
the heart, it is tribute to some quality
in another that Providence has bestowed.
Even in quiet and sober moments few of
us would decline to make imposing and
well proportioned sacrifices, for some one
whom we love, and who is the little that
we find difficult of performance—the lit-
tle words that we are too preoccupied to
utter, then, who refuse to refuse
praise, and who are too busy to be
a fading glow and faltering word. We
who find the spoken word a bother and
the written word a tax must remember,
"That the spoken word is the thing that
will help us who express them as they
help those to whom they are addressed.
They keep our currents of good will flow-
ing, they keep our sympathy for God,
and unnumbered of our souls. They
help us, too, when we have dropped out
of the race; when, for one reason or
another, we have found ourselves no
longer in the race, when the word and
the successful move. The spoken
word of praise marks the meeting ground
where assurance is had that nothing
has been lost, and that the word of Him
and their indebtedness to Him for all
their joy. The angels also praise God
and serve Him by doing