

# The Family Circle

## THE COLLECTORS

I wasn't but a little boy  
When I collected butterflies;  
And next I took to postage stamps,  
And then cigar bands were the prize.

I had a lot of birds' eggs, too,  
And horseshoes—some were red with rust,  
My hornets' nests were thrown away—  
The maid said they collected dust.

But mother whispered not to mind,  
For she had a collection, too,  
And showed me just the queerest lot—  
A baby's cap—a small pink shoe.

A rubber cow, a yellow curl,  
A ragged book of A B C,  
A letter, thick with blots, I wrote,  
When she was once away from me.

I wouldn't give a quarter for  
The stuff, but mother thinks it's fine,  
And only laughed when I remarked  
It wasn't valuable, like mine.

But when it comes to keeping things  
She gives me pointers, you can bet!  
I sold or swapped mine long ago,  
But mother has her rubbish yet!

'Harper's Magazine.'

## THAT WAITER FELLOW

'A winter somewhere on the Pacific Coast,' the doctor said, and mother had caught her breath, for there was more to be thought of than the separation, which was bad enough.

'I don't see how it can be managed,' said Phil, when he was alone with her.

'It must be,' she said, recalling last winter with the weeks of grippe and pneumonia.

'There isn't much money to go on.'

'But there is enough for an investment in your health.'

'What is the trouble?' Uncle Mark, noticing the grave faces, came near to listen.

'Doctor Brand has been talking nonsense to mother,' said Phil. 'Telling her I must go to California. As if I couldn't brace up and do very well here.'

Uncle Mark looked at the boy's slight frame, unequal, he knew, to the demands upon it of the enthusiastic spirit within, and remembered that there had been consumption in the family only a little way back.

'I'll send him,' he said.

'Uncle Mark! It would be too much.'

'Oh, I don't mean that it should be so very much. I'll put you there and keep you at a good place till you are able to swing yourself. And you can pay me up when you are able.'

'In four months, certainly,' said Phil, eagerly, 'I ought to be strong enough to come home. The winter will be nearly over then.'

'Four months be it, then.'

A little later Phil Graham, rejoicing in every breath of the sun-blessed air, found himself pleasantly located in what was a half sanatorium, half boarding-house. A few invalids were there, some older people accompanied by younger ones, among whom Phil found agreeable companionship. All that he had ever heard of the land of the palm and the orange he seemed to more than realise as, wisely setting aside everything except what might tend to the recovery of his health, he gave himself up to the delights which, with least expense, came within his reach.

He continually sought the beneficent fresh air, with its blessed burden of glowing sunshine; read a little, joined heartily in all the sports of the young people, making himself liked by young and old through his genial good fellowship and readiness to be kindly and helpful to those about him.

All too soon the months flew by, and Phil was obliged to acknowledge to himself that, although his health was much improved, he could by no means yet call himself strong.

'You ought not to think of going back yet,' said a doctor with whom he had made friends. 'It would be perilous for you to encounter all the early spring-time changes of weather in the East.'

Phil felt that this was correct, but—what was he to do? Apply to his mother? Never! Apply to his uncle? Never, again!

He tried to obtain light work in the nearby town, but found that everything seemed filled by those who were, like himself, striving for a foothold for the sake of the climate.

'Well,' he said to himself, as he one day went in to dinner, 'we hear much about God's free air, but just here it seems not free to me.'

There was some little friction as contrasted with the usual smooth running of things at the table. Mistakes were made, and guests waited long to be served. At length the head of the house came and apologised for the shortcomings, explaining that two of his waiters had left suddenly, and he had not yet been able to fill their places.

As Phil waited with the others a sudden thought came to him!

'I could do that.'

He applied for a place, and obtained it.

'Now, I wonder what my friends here will think or say,' he thought to himself, as, with his white-linen apron on, the next morning he took his place in the dining-room. 'Well, I don't care much. It's so good to be where I can write to mother and Uncle Mark that I'm earning my living and a little more, that I'm willing to stand a little snubbing.'

There was snubbing—not much, but Phil was forced to own to himself that what there was could not be called pleasant. The older people, and some of the younger ones, met his services with a matter-of-course friendliness; a few others showed plainly that being now a waiter he was no longer regarded as one of them; and Mr. Frank Percival, a young fellow who was there with his uncle, stared haughtily at the new waiter, as if indignant at his having ever presumed to consider himself as his equal, and—offered him a tip.

The blood rushed to Phil's face, and he was turning angrily away when, with a swift second thought, he checked himself. 'It's a part of it,' he said to himself, as he bowed and took the gratuity.

Some of the friendly ones clapped their hands, casting indignant glances at Frank.

'Well, well—how's this?' Mr. Garde, an elderly gentleman, who always read at table, and delayed so long as to tire out the waiters, looked up in kindly inquiry as Phil brought his coffee after the other diners were gone.

'This, I mean,' he added, touching the white apron. 'A wager, or something of that kind, I suppose. You boys are always up to capers.'

'Nothing of that kind at all, sir,' said Phil. 'I want to stay out in this country. I can't let my relatives support me any longer, and this is all I can get to do.'

'That's it, hey? Well, I hope you'll make a good waiter. Be sure you always bring my plates hot.'

As there were other things connected with the duties of a waiter, Phil found it easy to keep much out of the way of those with whom he had lately consorted, as was his preference, although there were many of them who felt only admiration for a young fellow who would do what came in his way rather than be a burden on any one.

Mr. Garde appeared to take to the new waiter, to judge by a good deal of friendly chaffing and domineering on his part, and, at the end of a month or so, sought an interview with him.

'I think you are pretty capable as a waiter now, and might graduate,' he began.

'I don't see my chance for that yet,' said Phil.

'I am wanting some one to do a little overseeing on my ranch. Would you like to try it?' asked Mr. Garde.

'You could only expect one answer to that,' said Phil, the beam in his eyes emphasising his delight in the proposition.

'A few months of outdoor life might fit you for, say, a place in my bank.' And as Phil breathlessly waited to hear more, he went on: 'I like the kind that will do what they can when they can't do what they would.'

'Bank! Bank! What's this they're talking about, a position in a bank?' Frank Percival asked, it as some of the house chat came to his ears.

'Mr. Garde's going to take Phil Graham into his bank,' he was told.

'That waiter fellow! Why, my father has been trying to get me in there.'