

The Family Circle

TRY AGAIN

Try again; perhaps you may
Do better now than yesterday.

Everything is hard at first;
The first attempt is always worst.

Nothing that has merit in it
Can be learned all in a minute.

All of us have need to mend
Much before we reach the end.

None are ever like to win
Who weary when they first begin.

THE DOLL'S FUNERAL

In front of the Stoners' house two little girls, children of a neighbor, were playing with their dolls, when suddenly the younger of them said:

'I'll tell you what—let's play funeral.'

'How?'

'Well, we can play that my Josephine Maude Angelina dolly died, and that we buried her.'

'That will be splendid! Let's have her die at once.'

Immediately after the death of Josephine Maude Angelina her grief-stricken mother said:

'Now, Katie, we must put the crape on the door-nob to let folks know about it. You run over to our house and get the long black veil mamma wore when she was in mourning for grandpa.'

Katie went away, and soon returned with the long, black mourning veil. It was quickly tied to Mrs. Stoner's front door-bell; then the bereft Dorothy's grief broke out afresh, and she wailed and wept so vigorously that Mrs. Stoner put her head out of an upper window and said:

'You little girls are making too much noise down there. Mr. Stoner's ill, and you disturb him. I think you'd better run home and play now. My husband wants to go to sleep.'

The children gathered up their dolls and playthings and departed, sobbing as they went.

Mary Simmons, who passed them a block above, but on the other side of the street, not supposing the children to be playing at sorrow, was shocked. She came opposite the house to observe the crape on the door-knob.

'Mr. Stoner is dead!' she said to herself. 'Poor Sam! I knew he was ill, but I'd no idea that he was at all dangerous. I must stop on my way home and find out about it.'

She would have stopped then if it had not been for her eagerness to carry the news to those who might not have heard it. A little further on she met an acquaintance.

'Ain't heard 'bout the trouble up at the Stoners', have you?' she asked.

'What trouble?'

'Sam Stoner is dead. There's crape on the door-knob. I was in there yesterday, and Sam was up and around the house; but I could see that he was a good deal worse than he or his wife had any idea of, and I ain't much s'prised.'

'My goodness me! I must find time to call there before night.'

Mrs. Simmons stopped at the village post office, ostensibly to look for a letter, but really to impart her information to Dan Wales, the talkative old postmaster.

'Heard 'bout Sam Stoner?' she asked.

'No. I did hear he was gruntin' round a little, but—'

'He won't grunt no more,' said Mrs. Simmons, solemnly.

'He's dead!'

'How you talk!'

'It's right. There's crape on the door.'

'Must have been dreadful sudden! Mrs. Stoner was in here last evening, an' she reckoned he'd be out in a day or two as well as ever.'

'I know. But he ain't been well for a long time. I could see it if others couldn't.'

'Well, well! I'll go round to the house soon as my Mattie comes home from school to mind the office.' The news was spreading now from another source.

Job Higley, the grocer's assistant, returned from leaving some things at the house, full of indignation.

'That Mrs. Stoner ain't no more feelin' than a lamp-post,' said Job, indignantly, to his employer. 'There's crape on the door-knob for poor Sam Stoner; an' when I left the groceries Mrs. Stoner was cookin' a joint, cool as a cucumber, an' singin' "Ridin' on a load of hay" as loud as she could screech; an' when I said I was sorry about Sam, she just laughed an' said she "thought Sam was all-right," an' then if she didn't go to jokin' me about Tildy Hopkins!'

Old Mrs. Peavey came home with an equally scandalous tale.

'I went over to the Stoners' soon as I heerd 'bout poor Sam,' she said, 'an' if you'll believe me, there was Mrs. Stoner hangin' out clothes in the back yard. I went roun' to where she was, an' she says, jest as flippant as ever, "Mercy! Mrs. Peavey, where'd you drop from?"'

'I felt so s'prised an' disgusted that I says, "Mrs. Stoner, this is a mighty solemn thing," an' if she didn't just look at me an' laugh, with the crape for poor Sam danglin' from the front door-bell knob, an' she says, "I don't see nothin' very solemn 'bout washin' an' hangin' out some o' Sam's old shirts an' underwear that he'll never wear agin. I'm goin' to work 'em up into carpet-rags if they ain't too far gone for even that.'"

"Mrs. Stoner," I says, "the neighbors will talk dreadfully if you ain't more careful," an' she got real angry, an' said if the neighbors would attend to their own business she'd attend to hers. I turned an' left without even goin' into the house.'

The Carbury 'Weekly Star,' the only paper in the village, came out two hours later with this announcement:

'We stop our press to announce the unexpected death of our highly-respected fellow-citizen, Mr. Samuel Stoner, this afternoon. A more extended notice will appear next week.'

'Unexpected! I should say so!' said Mr. Samuel Stoner, in growing wrath and amazement, as he read this announcement in the paper.

'There is the minister coming in at the gate,' interrupted his wife. 'Do calm down, Sam. He's coming to make arrangements for the funeral, I suppose. How ridiculous!'

Mr. Havens, the minister, was surprised when Mr. Stoner himself opened the door and said:

'Come right in, pastor; come right in. My wife's busy, but I'll give you the main points myself if you want to go ahead with the funeral.'

For the first time he saw the crape, and, taking it into the house, he called to his wife for an explanation. Later they heard Dorothy Dean's childish voice, calling:

'Please, Mrs. Stoner, Kate and I left mamma's old black veil tied to your door-knob when we were playing over here, and I'd like to have it again.'

TENDERNESS TO THE OLD

Nothing is more beautiful or Christ-like in the character of the young than a kind and gentle regard for the old. They whose failing steps are slowly descending the sunless slope of age have but one consolation as the years speed by them, and that is the tenderness and consideration of those on whose lives the beauties of morning are breaking. Age is a season of physical infirmity, of mental retrospection, or shattered dreams and earthly disappointments. No more for the old is there a glamor in the rolling stars, no more a freshness in the spring, no more a triumph in the years. For them as in a dream the verdure blooms, the rivers flow, the birds rejoice. They are spectators of a scene whose heritage they once enjoyed, and now see passing to their successors. No longer sojourners in this pleasant world, they are lingering fondly a moment over the memoirs of the past. The thousand melodies of the present sound far off in their aged ears, and its charms are blurred in the dimmed eyes whose tears fall on the graves of old affections. Treat them gently, youth and maiden, for by their travail and their sacrifice are ye the possessors not only of existence in the world in whose splendors ye exult, but also for the prosperity and happiness ye thoughtlessly enjoy. Never mind if she and he be old and feeble and of humble garb—they look to you in their helpless years to aid with gentle courtesy their tottering steps. God's blessing will reward you if you do.

SOME MOTTOES

An Actor: 'I work when I 'play' and 'play' when I work.'