

The Family Circle

EXTINGUISHED

'The boy stood on the burning deck, whence all but him had fled'—

When Tommy Gibbs stood up to speak he had it in his head, but when he saw the schoolroom full of visitors, he knew, from his weak knees and parching tongue, the words had all fled, too.

'The boy stood on the burning deck'—a second time he tried, but he forgot about the boy, or if he lived or died; he only knew the burning deck was something nice and cool beside the rostrum where he stood that awful day in school.

'The boy stood on the burning deck'—he felt the flames and smoke,

His tongue was thick, his mouth was dry, he felt that he would choke.

And from the far back seats he heard a whisper run about: 'Come back, Tom, and take your seat, they've put the fire out!' —*Youth's Companion.*

MOTHER'S LABOR DAY

Dorrykins jumped out of the swing and ran headlong to stop Jack on his way to the gate.

'Jack! Jack! Wait a minute! I want to ask you something. What does Labor Day mean? I know about Christmas and Easter, but what's Labor Day for?'

'Why, don't you know? It's to labor in—what should you suppose? L-a, la, b-o-r, bor—labor; to work hard. There you have it.'

Dorrykins stood in the middle of the walk where he left her.

'I don't see,' she said in a puzzled voice. 'Everybody's going on a picnic or somewhere, and there's going to be a parade—I should think folks didn't work as hard—'

'Come here, Dorry!' called Jean from behind the vines on the piazza. 'I'll tell you about it. Jack was only teasing you, dear. Labor Day is just a day when all the people who work hard the rest of the year to make things for us to eat and wear—'

'Mothers?' asked Dorrykins, eagerly.

Jean laughed. 'Well, no, not mothers. Butchers and bakers and clerks and carpenters, I mean. Well, they all have a sort of celebration, a real good time, you know, together.'

'I should think,' insisted Dorry, 'that mothers would want to be in it. They work hard as anybody, an' they ought to have a good time and a celebration.'

'So they have, Dorry,' Jean agreed, adding hastily in a relieved tone, 'There is Helen coming to play with you. Run and meet her.' Dorrykins' remarks were apt to get too personal at times.

Her words stayed behind her this time after she had gone to her play. Certainly, if any one in their house belonged to the ranks of labor, it was the unselfish, patient little mother who kept the household wheels running so smoothly for them day after day.

'I suppose I ought to help her more,' Jean thought uncomfortably. 'But there is always so much going on, and she likes me to go with the girls. There isn't much time when I'm in school.'

'You're not in school now,' Conscience suggested.

'Well, there's only one more day, and that's Labor Day. I'll want to see the parade; it's to be a big one, and there's sure to be a ride or something in the afternoon.'

In the end Jean gave herself a vigorous mental shaking. 'Now, look here, Jean Westerly! You are going to try your hand on Jack's kind of Labor Day. You're going to "work hard" for—once, and mother is going to have the "celebration." So that settles it. Now go and tell Aunt Jessie that mother is coming down to spend the day Monday, if she likes to have her.'

Aunt Jessie was more than delighted.

'Send her along, bright and early, Jean,' she said. 'The parade goes right past here, you know. We will have a lovely day. It will do us both good.'

It took a good deal of coaxing before the little mother could be persuaded. It was such an unheard-of thing—on a holiday!

But Jean would have her way, and 9 o'clock Monday morning found her mistress of the situation and of the house.

With a gingham apron and tucked-up sleeves, she went to work energetically. Getting dinner was a work of time for unaccustomed hands, but they accomplished it after a fashion. They made the beds, too, and dusted the rooms, and when the house was spick-and-span and the dishes washed and put away, they hunted out the mending basket and darned a pile of left over stockings that had accumulated there.

Dorrykins helped—oh, yes! She trotted around after Jean, getting joyously in the way and saying every once in a while, 'I think Labor Days are fun, don't you, Jean? I like to work hard.'

When Mrs. Westerly came home in the early evening, a weary, happy young housekeeper sat rocking sleepy Dorry in her arms.

'My precious babies!' cried the little mother, gathering them both in her arms. 'I've had such a good time! And to think you were doing all my work for me!'

'It's my work, too, mummy dear,' Jean declared; 'and I can tell you one thing: There's going to be a Labor Day in every one of my weeks after this. Only, it will have to be divided up into pieces of days while I'm in school, with a bigger piece for Saturdays. Then you will have some pieces of days to rest and "celebrate" in. It's no more than fair, and I want to, besides. It will be a labor of love,' she finished whimsically.

'And I'm going to help,' said Dorry.

A MERRY HEART

Why do you wear a harassed and troubled look? Are you really in trouble, or are you allowing the little worries of life to grind furrows in your face? Take a glance at yourself in the mirror and reform—that is, reshape your face into the lines of comfort and good cheer which it ought to wear. Take an honest inventory of your troubles, and decide whether or not they are really worth advertising in your countenance. It may seem a little thing to you whether or not you wear a smiling face, but it is not a little thing. A serene look advises the tired and troubled men and women whom you meet that there is peace and joy in at least one heart. And there may be among them some who had begun to doubt if peace or joy existed at all. 'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.'

AN ALL-AROUND BOOK

The book agent had spent a discouraging morning, and when he had the opportunity to scan the face of Mat McGuigan at close range he felt that there was small chance of making a sale. However, he had more than one method of suggestion.

'Sitting out here on the piazza afternoons with your wife, this would be the very book to read aloud,' he said, ingratiatingly to Mr. McGuigan, taking the other rocking-chair, and opening the large red-covered volume.

'I don't read, and I haven't any wife,' replied Mr. McG., dryly.

'Dear me!' said the book agent. 'Well, if your wife is dead, perhaps there are children. Now, children find this book—'

'There are no children,' interrupted Mr. McG. 'There's nobody but myself and my cat.'

'Well,' said the book agent, 'don't you ever want a good heavy book to throw at her, just to ease your feelings.'

ROUNDABOUT BLUNTNESS

'How would you have liked it if I had come home without any moustache to-night?' Brainerd asked his wife at dinner one day. 'The barber got after me, and was bound he'd give me a clean shave.' Mrs. Brainerd uttered a sound of dismay.

'Well, what if I had?' defensively. 'Al Cooley's had his shaved.'

'Oh, Al Cooley! But that's a different matter!'

'Like to know why?'

'Why, Robert, think of the difference in your moustaches. His has been cropped and cropped until it's nothing but a little bunch of stubby bristles; but yours is silky and graceful. It would be a shame to cut yours off!'

'Pshaw!' said Brainerd, shrugging his shoulders complacently.

'Oh, by the way, John Gougar came out with a smooth face to-day,' he volunteered a few nights later.

'He did? Well, John Gougar isn't you.'

'What do you mean?'