

The Family Circle

A, B, C OF SCHOOLBOYS' QUALITIES

Attentive at both work and play,
 Busy all the livelong day;
 Courteous at home and school,
 Diligent to keep the rule;
 Earnest in whate'er you do,
 Friendly with your classmates true;
 Generous of hand and heart,
 Honest in life's every part;
 Innocent of aught that's mean,
 Jolly as a king or queen;
 Kind where'er your footsteps roam,
 Loving to the ones at home;
 Merry in the sun and rain,
 Neat in dress, but never vain;
 Orderly in desk and books,
 Pious, more in deeds than looks;
 Quiet when 'tis time to be,
 Ready others' needs to see;
 Steady in your every aim,
 Truthful, though it bring you blame;
 Untiring in the way of right,
 Vigorous in temptation's fight;
 Willing others to befriend,
 Exemplary to the end;
 Youthful till life's set of sun,
 Zealous till the crown is won.

—Ave Maria.

JOE'S VACATION

One cool summer morning an old man, bent with age, crippled with rheumatism, by both made querulous, was sitting in an invalid's chair in his library, and though his face occasionally twitched with a sudden twinge of pain it was brighter than usual as he watched his brisk little wife busying herself about the room and then lost himself in the careful perusal of a time-table.

'Well, Charles,' said Mrs. Hamilton at length, 'everything is ready, and now we have only to wait until evening. Joe's room does look beautiful. Annie has worked in it for days—she's almost as anxious to see the dear boy as we are—and I gave it the finishing touches last night. I got out the old dilapidated books he used to keep on his table and the rather shabby fishing tackle he had the last summer he was at home. My, my, that was five years ago. Do you think, father, we shall find him much changed?' she asked anxiously, then rattled on without waiting for an answer. 'He says he's thinner than when he went East; poor boy, I am afraid he has worked too hard at those dry law books.'

Her husband continued to pour over the Pennsylvania folder and apparently paid little heed to what she said. 'He must be almost to Indianapolis by this time,' he announced at last. 'He'll change cars at St. Louis at 7 o'clock this evening and get out here by 8 if the eastern train is on time. Now, I hope he won't miss his connection, he will have only a few minutes to make it,' and the old man looked up at his little wife, his face full of anxiety.

'Of course he won't,' she answered encouragingly. 'Did you ever know Joe to miss anything he really wanted? I am sure the boy is wild with delight this minute at the thought of seeing us so soon. He was always so excitable, and he's been so homesick, poor child,' she mused.

'Do you remember, Mary, how, when he was at St. Xavier's College, he used to count the days as the holidays drew near?'

'Yes, each letter would tell us whether it would be ten or fifteen or twenty days until he'd get home, and then he'd add in parenthesis, "It will be two less when you get this."'

Suddenly the invalid laughed as he had not done for many weeks. 'And Mary,' he cried, 'could you ever forget the time when he was a little fellow, that he bought a blue glass dish to give us for a Christmas present? He

got it at some country station, and just as he reached the door he dropped it on the stone steps and broke it into a thousand bits.

'Yes, and he cried so bitterly that you gave him money to get us something else which comforted him at once, though he was very much afraid he could not find anything to replace it as beautiful as the glass dish had been.'

'Mary, you have always said I have horrible taste, but even I realised that we didn't lose a treasure when that glaring blue thing was broken, though as I helped the poor little fellow to gather up the pieces he kept repeating, "And it was such a lovely color and I selected it all by myself." The old man smiled reminiscently, happily, forgetful for the moment of the pain and confinement that weighed so heavily on his spirits—and his temper—day after day.

'Where's Silas?' Mr. Hamilton asked rather crossly some minutes later. 'I haven't seen him to-day. I am going to send him to Stanley's for a box of cigars. No'—as his wife was about to interrupt—'I know all about those you have stored away for long suffering callers, but I want some of this year's. You can't impose those dry ones on a New York man like our boy,' he said with infinite scorn, then added irritably, 'I wish I knew what brand to get. If that disagreeable Dr. Masterson hadn't forbidden me to smoke these past twenty years I would be more of an authority on the matter. I notice the old fellow always has a cigar in his own mouth—but then it's all my own fault; he knows better than to pay some one to tell him that they are "poisoning his whole system,"' he grumbled.

His wife wisely made no comment, but sent for Silas and was silent until her husband's savage mood had passed; then she remarked pleasantly, 'I met Miriam Marshall yesterday and told her that Joe is to be home for two weeks. Her face flushed crimson, and she smiled delightedly. I have always thought she is very fond of him, and has been ever since they played together as children.'

'Certainly she is, everybody is.'

'But I don't mean in the way all his friends are, I imagine—' and she nodded significantly. After a pause she jumped up hurriedly. 'I'm going to the kitchen,' she announced.

'Wait a moment, Mary,' her husband called after her, and then when she reappeared at the door he went on, 'We must not have dinner until Joe gets here, no matter how late it is.'

'Oh, no, not for the world. I have ordered what he likes best, especially chicken and cherry pie, and a great deal of both. You remember, Father, that the amount of either of them he can dispose of is really marvellous!'

The day wore on as even days of waiting do, whose every hour seems made of twice sixty minutes. The invalid porèd over his time-table, noting each mile of his son's way, and again explaining to his wife exactly where he was at that moment and what the next stop would be; while the mother, usually busy and bustling and full of the joyous spirit utterly lacking in her husband, she, as each hour brought her son nearer grew very quiet and sat with her restless hands folded in her lap, too happy to read or talk or do anything but sing within her heart, 'He is coming, my child, my little Joe is coming.'

'Oh, father,' she exclaimed once, 'I don't understand now how I have lived without him these five long years. I have missed him so much, more than anyone can guess.'

About half-past 6 the bell rang long and loud, and both old people started, then laughed at their 'foolishness,' as they called it. 'It's too early, he isn't quite to St. Louis yet,' said the father.

A maid came into the room, bringing a telegram for Mr. Hamilton, and his wife leaned over his shoulder 'as he opened it, and together they read: 'Have gone to Mackinac with friends for vacation. Will write and explain.—Joe.'

Mr. Hamilton's hand fell limply to his side, and the telegram rustled to the floor. Minute after minute passed and no word was spoken.

'I think I shall go up and close his room,' said the mother at last in a low voice that trembled piteously. As she slipped away she heard one stifled sob, and glancing back saw the poor, broken, feeble father with his face buried in the well-nigh worn-out time-table.—Exchange.