

The Family Circle

DO GOOD

Do good! Do all the good you can
Go forth and all your treasures scatter
And still regard the fame thereof
A trifling matter.

When'er the nightingale pours out
A song, the listening vale surprising,
It does not give itself at once
To advertising!

When'er a rose in perfect bloom
Outvies the glory of the morning,
It does not go and boast thereof,
Its fellows scorning.

When'er a tree in garden fair,
Perfumes the breeze with blossoms tender,
It does not cry to all who pass,
'Behold my splendor!'

Ah, not the nightingale sings on;
The rose and tree just do their duty,
Content though few have knowledge of
The wondrous beauty.

POETIC JUSTICE

Father, what is a poetic justice?" asked Fred Stanley at the table.

"Bless the boy! What put that into his head?" said mother.

"Why, there was something about it in our reading lesson to-day, and when I asked Miss Thompson what it meant, she said she would see how many of us could find out ourselves, and give her an illustration of it to-morrow, but I don't know how to find out unless you tell me, father."

Mr. Stanley looked thoughtful for a moment, and then smiled, as if struck by some amusing recollection. "Poetic justice," he said, "is a kind of justice which reaches us through the unforeseen consequences of our unjust acts. I will tell you a little story, Fred, which I think will furnish the illustration you are after."

"I recall a summer afternoon a good many years ago, when I was not so large as I am now. Two other boys and I went blackberrying in a big meadow several miles from home. On our way to the meadow, as we paddled along the dusty highway, we met a stray dog. He was a friendless, forlorn-looking creature, and seemed delighted to make up with us; and when we gave him some scraps of bread and meat from our lunch basket, he capered for joy, and trotted along at our side, as if to say, 'Now, boys, I'm one of you.' We named him Rover, and boy-like tried to find out how much he knew and what he could do in the way of tricks, and we soon discovered that he would 'fetch and carry' beautifully. No matter how big the stick or stone, nor how far away we threw it, he would reach it and draw it back to us. Fences, ditches, and brambles he seemed to regard only as so many obstacles thrown in his way to try his pluck and endurance, and he overcame them all."

"At length we reached the meadow, and scattered out in quest of blackberries. In my wandering I discovered a hornets' nest, the largest I ever saw, and I have seen a good many. It was built in a cluster of blackberry vines, and hung low, touching the ground. Moreover, it was at the foot of a little hill; and as I scampered up the latter I was met at the summit by Rover, frisking about with a stick in his mouth. I don't see why the dog and the hornets' nest should have connected themselves in my mind, but they did, and a wicked thought was born of the union."

"Rob! Will! Come here. We'll have some fun." They came promptly, and I explained my plan. I pointed out the hornets' nest, and proposed that we roll a stone down upon it, and send Rover after the stone. "And, oh, won't it be fun to see how astonished he'll be when the hornets come out?" I cried in conclusion. They agreed that it would be funny. We selected a good-sized stone, called Rover's special attention to it, and started it down the hill. And when it had a fair start, we turned the dog loose, and the poor fellow, never suspecting our trick, darted after the stone with a joyous bark. We had taken good aim, and the ground was smooth, the stone went true to the mark, and crashed into the hornets' nest, just as Rover sprang upon it. Immediately the furious insects swarmed out and settled upon the poor animal. His surprise and dismay filled our anticipation, and we had just begun to double ourselves up in paroxysms of laughter when with frenzied yelps of agony he came tearing up the hill towards us, followed closely by all the hornets.

"Run!" I shouted, and we did run, and the mad-dened dog ran faster and dashed through our midst with piteous appeals for help. The hornets settled like a black avenging cloud all over him, and the scene which followed baffled any power of description. We ran, we ran, and we rolled on the ground, and we howled with agony.

"I have never known just how long the torture lasted, but I remember it was poor Rover who rose to the emergency, and with superior instinct showed us a way to rid ourselves of our vindictive assailants. As soon as he realised that we, too, were in distress, and could give no assistance, he ran blindly to a stream which flowed through the meadow not far away, and plunging in, dived clear beneath the surface. We followed him, and only ventured to crawl out from the friendly element when we were assured that the enemy had withdrawn. Then we sat on the bank of the stream, and looked at each other dolefully through our swollen, purple eyelids, while the water dripped from our clothing, and a hundred stinging wounds reminded us what excessively funny fun we had been having with Rover."

"The poor dog, innocent and free from guile himself, judged us accordingly, and, creeping up to me, licked my hand in silent sympathy. Then some dormant sense of justice asserted itself within me."

"Boys, we've had an awful time, but it served us right."

"Neither of them contradicted me, and, rising stiffly, we went slowly homeward, with Rover at our heels."

"That, my boys," said Mr. Stanley in conclusion, "is a good instance of poetic justice."

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

An observing boy will become an observing man, and as boy and man he will have an advantage over those who have not cultivated the faculty. A child may know more than a philosopher about matters which may not have come under the observation of the philosopher."

A little girl entered the study of Mezerai, the celebrated historian, and asked him for a coal of fire.

"But you haven't brought a shovel," he said.

"I don't need any," was her reply. "And then, very much to his astonishment, she filled her hand with ashes and put the live coal on top."

"No doubt the learned man knew that ashes were a poor conductor of heat, but he had never seen the fact verified in such a practical manner."

Galileo noticed the swaying of a chandelier in a cathedral, and it suggested the pendulum to him. To another inventor the power of steam and its application were suggested by the kettle on the stove. A poor monk discovered gunpowder, and an optician's boy the magnifying lens.

Two boys of my acquaintance one morning took a walk with a naturalist.

"Do you notice anything peculiar in the movement of those wasps?" he asked, as he pointed to a puddle in the middle of the road.

"Nothing, except that they seem to come and go," replied one of the boys.

The other was less prompt in his reply, but he had observed to some purpose. "I notice that they fly away in pairs," he said. "One has a little pellet of mud; the other nothing." "Are there drones among wasps, as among bees?"

"Both are alike busy, and each went away with a burden," replied the naturalist. "The one you thought a 'do-nothing' has a mouthful of water. They reach their nest together; the one deposits his pellet of mud and the other ejects the water upon it, which makes it of the consistency of water. Then they paddle it upon the nest and fly away for more materials."

You see one boy observed a little and the other a good deal more, while the naturalist has something to tell them that surprised them very much.

WHAT DO OUR BOYS READ?

Catholic fathers and mothers, how often do you stop to ask yourselves this question? Do you know what your boy is reading? Have you asked him the name of the book in which he seemed so thoroughly absorbed? Have you ever looked it over to see what it contains? We fear that too often our Catholic parents will be forced to confess their neglect of their essential duty. Think for a moment of the moral tendencies of this age of ours. We know the history of crime that is being daily recorded in each of our large cities; and it is this history of crime which is the source of much of the material for the chapters of many of our modern novels. Are you anxious to have your children feed their minds upon these husks that are unfit for swine? Perhaps you have not read these books yourself. So much the better. But this cannot improve your defence. A cursory glance at the chapters bearing the most suggestive titles, will give you an insight into the worth of the books, while, even that is not possible, there are those to whom you can always refer, not the least among whom is your confessor.

THE GILT FRAME

Sadie found a picture, a beautiful picture, and she was no picture in it. Sadie held up the frame and looked through it. The picture was so large and she could hold it quite easily.

"What do you see?" asked Fred.