

The Family Circle

EVEN WHEN YOU LOSE, SMILE!

Did you fall in the race? Did you faint in the spurt,
When the hot dust choked and burned?

Did you breast the tape midst the flying dirt,
'Tat the leader's spikes had spurned?

Did you do your best? Oh, I know you lost,
I know that your time was bad.

But the game is not in the winning, lad;
The best of it since the beginning, lad,
Is in taking your licking and grinning, lad,
If you gave them the best you had.

Did your tackle fall short? Did the runner flash by
With score that won the game?

Did it break your heart when you missed the try?
Did you choke with the hurt and shame?

If you did your best—Oh, I know the score,
I followed you all the way through;

And that is why I am saying, lad,
That the best of the fight is the staying, lad,
And the best of all games is the playing, lad,
If you give them the best in you.

A GREAT HEART.

It was the day before Easter several years ago, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. In the great department store I found my way to the counter where ribbon novelties were for sale. It had been a hard day for the salesgirls, and they showed signs of weariness. The one who turned to me attracted attention instantly, for everything about her was pleasing. Her figure was round and chubby, her pink-and-white face was round like that of a doll. Her big blue eyes were round, and her hair was a bright, light golden shade. Behind the counter, with her elbows resting upon it, she reminded one of the fat little cherubs we see in pictures.

Something aroused her interest, and she gave such a childishly gleeful laugh that it was hard to believe her a nearly grown young woman behind a counter. 'Oh, see, isn't it sweet!' she cried. I smiled into her face. 'You infant,' I said. Instantly the little figure was drawn up with dignity, and she said, solemnly, but with smiles in her eyes, 'Why, I am seventeen and a-half years old.' But in my heart, I always called her the 'girl with the childish face.' I liked her. There was a stool just around the corner from her department where one might sit and rest, and watch her as she worked.

My friends found my devotion to the girl amusing. 'Such a childish face,' they would say. 'There is no strength, no character in it.'

'I do not agree with you there,' I always answered. 'Her face is babyish, but kind—and there's something clear and honest in her eyes.'

Already I called her to myself, Greatheart with a baby face, for I found in her such strength, such courage, such sweetness, that I have always wished for a pen that might do her justice!

'Did you get the dress, Carrie?' I heard her ask another girl, working near her. This, too, was on a busy Saturday, and there were dark rings circling her eyes.

'Oh, Virgie,' cried the other, 'it is such a beautiful dress, and only nine dollars! And I did so want it to wear to-morrow. We have a special service at our church, and I sing in the choir. But it needs alteration, and I simply can't afford to pay for it. If I only had your nimble fingers I could do it myself. It would only take an hour—they all said so! And it is so beautiful!' And she sighed.

'Couldn't you wear the blue suit to-morrow?' queried my friend.

'Oh, Virgie, I've worn it for three whole years!'

'I'm to have my time off in a few minutes,' said Virgie. 'We'll see about it. If it can be fixed in an hour or so, I'll take it home and do it for you.'

'Virgie.' And Carrie's voice was rapturous.

But after Carrie had passed on, I said: 'But you're giving up your resting time.'

'Oh, that's nothing—I'm not tired. Carrie is all thumbs with a needle.'

Another hot summer morning, on Saturday, I saw her. It was during the months when the stores close at 1 o'clock to give the girls a little freedom during the oppressive heat.

'Heart-broken, Nora?' queried Virgie, smiling, but looking keenly into the other's eyes.

Nora's chin quivered. 'Oh, Virgie—my uncle was going to take me to St. Louis this afternoon—my suit case is all packed. I was so happy. But Mr. D— says there is a lot of extra marking to be done in our department, and I must work this afternoon. He says he expects us all to stand by when the pressure comes,' Nora's voice quivered on the words.

'Nora,' said Virgie, slowly, 'I worked in that department before I was transferred, and I know the stock as well as you do. Maybe Mr. D— will let me work in your place this afternoon.'

'Oh, Virgie, will you? But you want your afternoon, too?'

'But you need your trip to St. Louis far more,' said Virgie. 'I'm going to ask him now, but I know he will let me.' And away she tripped.

It was during the busy season before Christmas, when the girls were fagged and weary, many pale, many flushed unnaturally. A floorwalker stopped beside the ribbon-novelty counter and spoke to Virgie. Light flashed into her eyes, and ready smiles crossed her face. 'Yes, I am tired, Mr. S—,' she said, 'and it will be just lovely to have two whole hours to rest. Thank you so much.' The man nodded, laughed, and walked on. 'Isn't he kind?' cried Virgie. 'He says I look tired, and since we aren't very busy in this department right now I may rest for two whole hours.' Then she glanced behind her. There stood another girl, quiet, without expression, without light, color, or enthusiasm. There were lines between her eyes.

Virgie turned to her impulsively. 'You take the two hours, May,' she said, 'and I'll run the department. You look tired. Hurry now—you mustn't waste a minute of that precious time. Mr. S— didn't see you or he would have known you needed the rest more than I. You must be back at four.'

May tried to refuse, but Virgie hurried her away, and then with a smile that was half a sigh, turned to customers.

'How could you do it, Virgie?' asked another working near.

'She's so tired,' explained Virgie.

'But you are tired!'

'Not very!'

'Why do you always sacrifice yourself?' I asked her one day.

She lifted the childish blue eyes reproachfully. 'It isn't sacrifice. It's just one way of having a good time.'

What lay behind the babyish expression in the little round face, behind the merry light of the childish eyes? A great heart—heroic heart.

NOT VERY POTENT.

'How many barrels have you put up this year, Joel?' asked one farmer of another.

'Only seven, Silas,' was the reply.

'Got any handy?'

'Sure thing, Silas.' And Joel went into the house, returning soon with some of the apple elixir in a big tin dipper. 'There,' said he, 'try that.'

And Silas sipped.

'Well, what do you think of it?' Joel inquired.

Silas shook his head dubiously.

'Don't you like it, Silas?' was the anxious inquiry.

'How many barrels did you say you made, Joel?' asked Silas.

'Seven.'

'Well, Joel, if you had another apple you might have made eight.'

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