

# The Family Circle

## BIRTHDAYS.

Oh, the springtime of our birthdays  
Are the brightest days of all,  
For no cloud or lurking shadow  
O'er our young heads dare befall—  
Tender arms around us kissing,  
Loving all our childish ways—  
Yes, our birthdays in the springtime  
Are the sweetest of birthdays!

Yet, the summer of our birthdays  
And the joy that fills our heart!  
Golden dreams, and love, and laughter  
Of our life are all a part;  
Eyes like drops of dew that glisten,  
Smiles a glimpse of heaven's rays—  
Yes, our birthdays in the summer  
Are the happiest of birthdays!

Ah, the winter of our birthdays!  
The calm that rests upon our soul!  
We have braved all little trials,  
Now we reach life's truest goal:  
Should our dear ones all be near us  
And their love be ours always,  
Then our birthdays in the winter  
Will be greatest of birthdays!

May God bless us on our birthdays!  
Every milestone which we see!  
May He keep us pure and holy  
Like a child at mother's knee:  
And, oh, Mary Queen of Heaven,  
When all birthdays pass away,  
Bring us to you, dearest Mother,  
For our last and great birthday.  
— *Irish Weekly.*

## THE MORALS OF MANNERS.

'Now, Aunt Margaret, it is a rainy afternoon, and I want to have it out with you about my "bad manners," as you call them. I've been here just a week, and you have spoken to me seven times about my behaviour. Here's the list, as nearly as I can remember it.'

'You told me I mustn't whisper in church, even about something in the sermon. That was the first day I was here, and it wasn't a very good beginning, was it?'

'Monday I talked too loudly on the street. Wednesday I was scolded for eating a chocolate bonbon in a street car, though I was dreadfully hungry. Then I didn't put on my gloves to go over to Hattie's, and I didn't look up from my book or rise when you and grandma came into the room. You objected to my fixing my hair at the concert last night, and this morning you criticised my eating my cream toast with a spoon instead of a fork.'

'Now it seems to me, Aunt Margaret, that if I am to put my mind on all these trifles I shall think about myself from morning till night, and presently be the most self-conscious prig in the world. That would be worse than these lapses from your code of manners. Don't you really think so?'

That was Helen's case, and it was not such a bad one. Her pretty face looked very grave over it. Let us try to deal with her trouble as the wise Aunt Margaret dealt with it.

To think of one's behaviour all the time is a little like thinking of one's clothes or one's eyes or one's cleverness. But underneath most of these apparently arbitrary rules lies the general law that no one shall do anything in the public eye to attract attention to herself. Loud talking, eating, toilet-making are non-social acts; that is, they ignore the claim of society that

no one person shall do what would be painful and confusing if all did it at the same time.

Again, the mark of respect for age and position has a moral reason for its existence. The quick perception of the fitness of things is the mark of true breeding.

Whatever the conventional demand is—and it is substantially the same the world over—it is based on a sense of proportion, on an unselfish wish to make life easy and pleasant for others, and on a just feeling of one's own place in the general order of the world. Gloves, forks, chairs, voice, gesture are all to serve one end—the art of gentle living.

To think about that art—not about one's self—for one year or for five years is time well spent, if one may acquire it so that at the end of the time it 'comes as natural as life.'—*Youth's Companion.*

## BROKE THE RECORD.

Mr. Stretcher: 'Yes, it's cold, but nothing like what it was at Christmas three years ago, when the steam from the engines froze hard and fell on the line in sheets.'

Mr. Cuffer: 'And yet that wasn't so cold as in '87, when it froze the electricity in the telephone wires, and when the thaw came all the machines were talking as hard as they could for upwards of five hours.'

'Well, gentlemen,' said Mr. Longbow, 'the coldest year that I can remember was in the Christmas week in '84, when the very messenger boys had to run to keep themselves warm.'

But that was too much, and with silent looks of indignation the other two left to his own reflections the man who treated the truth so lightly.

## MORE THAN HALF SHOT.

The old soldier was telling of his thrilling adventures on the field of battle to a party of young fellows, one or two of whom were sceptical as to his veracity.

'Then,' he said, 'the surgeons took me up and laid me carefully in the ammunition waggon, and—'

'Look here,' interrupted one of the doubtful listeners: 'you don't mean the ammunition waggon. You mean the ambulance waggon.'

But the old man shook his head.

'No,' he insisted: 'I was so full of bullets they decided I ought to go in the ammunition waggon.'

## FAMILY SOCIALS.

Too many young folks seem to think that it is quite the proper thing to have their socials and amusements as far away from home as possible (says the *Sacred Heart Review*). Anything or any place, providing it is out of sight of father and mother.

This looks like ingratitude and lack of appreciation for those who spend themselves for the sake of their children. However, the above is not always the explanation for home desertion. Children are often thoughtless and parents are sometimes tactless. Little family fetes once a week or oftener, entered into by the whole family, would in a short time remove all of this strangeness and do much to strengthen family affection. What is done at society meetings can be done at home. Make out your programme, assign parts, invite your children's companions and you will soon find that the older ones will be entwining their arms around you while the younger ones will be climbing over the back of your chair or perched on your knees. Young men and women who act as if home were only a safe place for keeping their clothes, taking a hurried meal and stealing a few hours sleep, should consider this.

## A JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

Two brothers inherited a farm and quarrelled violently as to its division.

Now there lived in their village a certain shrewd and wise old man, noted for the soundness of his advice.

## YOUR OWN PHOTOGRAPH

Or one of the Family Group will be more pleasing than anything else you can send for Xmas, and it's time now to make an appointment with—

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