

The Family Circle

BOYHOOD'S YEARS.

Ah! why should I recall them—the gay, the joyous years,
 Ere hope was cross'd or pleasure dimm'd by sorrow and
 by tears?
 Or why should mem'ry love to trace youth's glad and
 sunlit way,
 When those who made its charms so sweet are gathered
 to decay?
 The summer's sun shall come again to brighten hill and
 bower—
 The teeming earth its fragrance bring beneath the balmy
 shower;
 But all in vain will mem'ry strive, in vain we shed our
 tears—
 They're gone away and can't return—the friends of
 boyhood's years!
 Ah! why then wake my sorrow, and bid me now count
 o'er
 The vanished friends so dearly prized—the days to come
 no more—
 The happy days of infancy, when no guile our bosoms
 knew,
 Nor reck'd we of the pleasures that with each moment
 flew?
 'Tis all in vain to weep for them—the past a dream
 appears;
 And where are they—the lov'd, the young, the friends
 of boyhood's years?
 Go seek them in the cold churchyard—they long have
 stolen to rest;
 But do not weep, for their young cheeks by woe were
 ne'er oppress'd;
 Life's sun for them in splendor set—no cloud came o'er
 the ray
 That lit them from this gloomy world upon their joyous
 way.
 No tears about their graves be shed—but sweetest flow'rs
 be flung—
 The fittest offering thou canst make to hearts that perish
 young—
 To hearts this world has never torn with racking hopes
 and fears;
 For bless'd are they who pass away in boyhood's happy
 years!

PRAYER AND TROUBLE.

Have you felt that curious unrest that envelops you when in time of distress you have tried to carry your burdens to One Who has promised us that if we ask we shall receive? Your mind whirls from one thought to another and often strange thoughts, words, and bits of disjointed sentences. You try to force yourself to calmly consider your great need so that you may the better petition the Almighty God to lift the sorrow from your soul and to give you peace. Though you desire that favor more than anything in the world, you cannot concentrate your thoughts upon it, and again your heartaching desire is buffeted about like the wisps of grass in a storm. You begin to feel that God has hid His face from you and that He has found you unworthy of His care. You feel that God has been very hard to you in denying you health and means. But if you have the will to struggle you will reach a plane of thought that is to be compared to a beautiful upland where fragrant flowers and cooling waters seem to bloom for you and those you hope to lift out of want. Some seeker of peace out of trouble has written, "The darkest hour is just before dawn." This old, old saying has comforted many a sad heart. "The severer the storm, the sooner the sunshine," bears an old and familiar bit of optimism that never fails to cheer. A less quoted saying but none the less comforting one is this: "God never shuts the door on your hopes but He opens the door to something better." All these sayings, and they are truths, show us that God loves those who persevere,

even though brought low in everything necessary to life. We knew an Irish mother who used to say in the darkest hours that fell upon her family, "God feeds the birds of the air," and those who heard her were often struck with the force of her faith, for the expression itself undoubtedly carried a prayer with it that was heard on high.—(Exchange.)

"THE BEST EVER."

Edna closed her algebra text book somewhat vigorously and shoved it to one side on the desk.

"There, that is done," she announced.

Her father, on the other side of the desk, looked up in surprise.

"Done? I thought I saw you trying to scratch out a big blot a minute or two ago, and tear a big hole in the paper in your effort. Surely you have not had time to copy all those problems, and surely you would not think of handing in such a scratched, marred paper."

Edna's face flushed, for she had not thought of copying those four sheets of problems, and she did not care to have her father know that she was so careless in her work, for she was very sensitive to his criticism.

"Why, father, it is perfectly all right, just as it is," she replied. "It's plenty good enough and just as good as the rest of the girls will have. If it were a monthly summary it would be a different matter, but it is only a daily lesson, and it would be a waste of time and paper to copy it, for all these papers will be in the waste-paper basket by to-morrow night."

"Let me see your work, Edna," her father answered.

Edna reluctantly took the papers from her book and handed them to her father. Then she lowered a flushed face.

Later she looked up and saw him looking intently at her. "Yes, this work is 'good enough and just as good as the rest of the girls will have,' perhaps, but it is by no means the best you can do, and therefore it stamps you not as the best girl ever, but merely a good-enough girl. Rather hard on a father to discover that his daughter, the pride of his heart, is only a good-enough girl when he had the idea that she was the best ever. If I made such a discovery about one of my office force I should give him just time to get his belongings and get out."

Edna was winking back the tears and made no comment. After a little pause her father continued: "The development of your character is not a monthly occasion like the monthly summary in algebra, on which you say you are more careful, but a daily coincident with the daily algebra papers. Your character develops as you do your daily work 'good enough and just as good as the rest of the girls,' or as you do it the very best you know how. There is no halfway standard for the girl who wants to be the best ever. You and your girl friends would most certainly resent having anyone describe you as 'good-enough girls,' but that is the description that will exactly fit you if you don't call a halt on this kind of work. Remember, the world needs the best-ever girls."

He laid her papers over on her book and left the room. Edna put her head down on the desk and began to cry. Suddenly she sat up, gathered together the algebra papers of contention, opened her tablet and began copying the lesson as carefully and neatly as she could. When she had finished she placed the first and second copies side by side.

"Good enough and best ever," she said aloud. "It's going to be best ever for me, and I'll tell the girls so."

THE ART OF ELIMINATION.

He had opened a fish shop and had had a new sign painted, of which he was very proud. It read: "Fresh fish sold here."

"What did you put the word 'fresh' in for?" said his first customer. "You wouldn't sell them if they weren't fresh, would you?"

He painted out the word, leaving just "Fish sold here."

TRY

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