

The Family Circle

CONSOLATION

When Molly came home from the party to-night—
The party was out at nine—
There were traces of tears in her bright blue eyes
That looked mournfully up to mine.

For some one had said, she whispered to me,
With her face on my shoulder hid,
Some one had said (there were sobs in her voice)
That they didn't like something she did.

So I took my little girl up on my knee—
I am old and exceedingly wise—
And I said, 'My dear, now listen to me;
Just listen, and dry your eyes.

'This world is a difficult world, indeed,
And people are hard to suit,
And the man who plays on the violin
Is a bore to the man with the flute.

'And I myself have often thought,
How very much better 'twould be
If every one of the folks that I know
Would only agree with me.

'But since they will not, the very best way
To make this world look bright
Is never to mind what people say,
But to do what you think is right.'

NEAL'S MOVING DAY

'If I could only live in a tent or the barn,' grumbled Neal, 'it would suit me lots better than here in the house.' Neal had been sent from the table to wash his hands and came back pouting. 'I just wish I was an Indian.'

'It would be very nice in some ways to be an Indian or a tramp,' remarked papa, pleasantly. 'I always enjoyed camping out when I was a boy.'

'I wish I could do that now,' said Neal, letting a little of the frown fade away. 'The new cornerrib would be a dandy place.'

'Why don't you try it?' asked papa, as if living in a cornerrib were an everyday affair with small boys. 'We won't put any corn in it till cold weather comes.'

'Mamma wouldn't let me,' said Neal. 'Please, please let me do it, mamma. It would be such fun.'

'Well, you might try it,' said his mother easily. 'When do you want to begin?'

'This very day,' cried Neal, hurrying down his food. 'I'll have this for my moving day.'

No one seemed to notice that he hurried through his dinner nor that he left without saying 'Excuse me.' He hurried to the playroom and began selecting things to move to his new home. It took only a little while to get all the things out that Neal wanted. By 1 o'clock all were in the cornerrib.

'I—I guess I'm hungry,' said Neal to himself after he had tried the blanket in which he was to sleep, and had arranged his playthings to his liking; 'I'll go and see if Mary has some cookies.'

'So you are a tramp, are you?' asked Mary, looking him over as he rapped at the back door. 'I never feed tramps unless they earn what they get. You carry all those kindlings, and I'll see about something to eat.'

Neal had seen the real tramps splitting wood for Mary many a time before she gave them bread and meat and coffee, but he did not know how they felt doing the work before eating. Long before the wood-box was filled he thought he must take one of the nice fresh cookies; but, when the last stick was neatly piled in the box, Mary was ready with a tin of milk and some bread and butter.

'Sit on the step,' she said.

'Please, Mary, I'd like to have a cooky,' said Neal, timidly. 'I'll wash my hands before I take it, if you'll only let me.'

'Beggars mustn't be choosers,' said Mary, grimly. 'If I fed cookies to every tramp that comes this way I wouldn't have any for my folks.'

Neal was very glad for the bread and milk, but he could not forget the smell of the warm cakes. Mary always saved the big corner cakes for him when he washed his hands particularly clean, but to-day he scrubbed and soaped to no purpose. After the little lunch he wandered forlornly to the new cornerrib and wrapped himself in his blanket to cry. It was twilight when he awoke, and he went to the house to find the family eating supper, just as if they had forgotten all about him. He could stand it no longer, but rushed in and sobbed out his troubles.

'I want to move back,' he wept. 'I—I don't like the new cornerrib a bit.'

'All right!' said papa and mamma together. 'Come right up to the table now.' But Neal would not come until he had washed his hands and brushed his hair, and from that very day there was no more pouting about being clean. Two movings in one day have been all Neal has ever wanted.

BE HONEST

Be honest, boys and girls, in all your dealings. Never let the least crookedness enter your life. Be honest with yourself. Too many people try to deceive themselves. Let there be no dark corner in your heart into which you do not wish to let God's light. Let there be no secret chamber into which you are afraid to enter to note what it contains. Young people get the habit of being untrue to themselves, of shunning whatever is painful or unpleasant. They strive to satisfy themselves that everything is all right, yet their conscience troubles them, and they are afraid to look into the matter to see how they stand. A good examination of conscience in God's holy presence would be very helpful in clearing away the cloud that may harbor a great deal of dishonesty. Be honest with your neighbor. In all your dealings be open, clear, above board.

THE MODEL OF YOUR IDEAL

A sacred thing this, approaching the uncut marble of life. We cannot afford to strike any false blows which might mar the angel that sleeps in the stone; for the image we produce must represent our life work. Whether it is beautiful or hideous, divine or brutal, it must stand as an expression of ourselves, as representing our ideals.

It always pains me to see a young person approaching his life work with carelessness and indifference, as though it did not make much difference to him how he did his work if he only got through with it and got his pay for it. How little the average youth realises the sacredness, the dignity, the divinity of his calling!

FATHER WOULD HELP

Twenty years ago a discouraged young doctor in one of our large cities was visited by his father, who came up from a rural district to look after his boy.

'Well, my son,' said he, 'how are you getting along?' 'I'm not getting along at all,' was the disheartened answer. 'I'm not doing a thing.'

The old man's countenance fell, but he spoke of courage and patience and perseverance. Later in the day he went with his son to the 'Free Dispensary,' where the young doctor had an unsalaried position, and where he spent an hour or more every day.

The father sat by, a silent but intensely interested spectator, while 25 poor unfortunates received help. The doctor forgot his visitor while he bent his skilled energies to his task; but hardly had he closed the door on the last patient when the old man burst forth:

'I thought you told me you were not doing a thing! Why, if I had helped 25 people in a month as much as you have done in one morning I would thank God that my life counted for something.'

'There isn't any money in it, though,' explained the son, somewhat abashed.

'Money!' the old man shouted, still scornfully. 'Money! What is money in comparison with being of use to your fellow-men? Never mind about your money; go right along at this work every day. I'll go back to the farm and gladly earn money to support you as long as you live—yes, and sleep sound every night with the thought that I have helped you to help your fellow-men.'

A 'MOTHER'S PET'

Recently a boy of about seventeen was noticed lying in a cluster of weeds and shrubbery at a neglected street corner. His clothes were torn, soiled, and his hands, face, and hair filthy. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and dashed away, looking back as if in fear of pursuit.

Shortly after a girl of neat appearance ran past, crying bitterly, and a little later an exhausted woman, also running, came up. 'Did you see him?' she asked.

'Whom?' we asked.

'My boy,' she sobbed.

We explained his course, but she was too broken to follow further, and the girl, too, had failed.

'What is wrong?' we asked.

'It's my poor boy,' said the mother. 'He hasn't been home for three months, and just a minute ago I saw him peeping around the corner, and I called, but he ran, and now he is gone again.'

'Why?'

'He don't want to work. His father died six months ago, and this boy was our only son, and he was petted so much, but later on his sister and I wanted him to help us make a living, but he wouldn't, and finally ran away. Oh, if he will only come back, I won't ask him to work. I'm so afraid he will go to stealing.'

'Why don't you have him attended to by the police?'

'Oh, I couldn't inform on my own son! I love him so!'

And here came in the demon and seven little witches. The boy knew that sooner or later he could loaf into a tidy home, bullyrag a doting mother and a frightened sister