

The Family Circle

A PUZZLE

It has always been a puzzle to me
 What sailors sow when they plough the sea.
 Does coffee go with the roll of a drum?
 And why is a speaking likeness dumb?
 What was it that made the window blind?
 Whose picture is put in a frame of mind?
 When a storm is brewing, what does it brew?
 Does the foot of a mountain wear a shoe?
 How long does it take to hatch a plot?
 Has a school of herring a tutor or not?
 Have you ever perused a volume of smoke?
 Can butter be made from the cream of a joke?
 Who is it that fixes the teeth of a gale?
 To a king who reigns why shout 'O hail'?
 With a powder puff is one's mind made up?
 Does a saucer go with a misery cup?
 Can you fasten a door with a lock of hair?
 Did a bitter wind ever bite you, and where?
 Who is it that paints the signs of the times?
 Does the moon change her quarters for nickels and dimes?
 What tune do you play on the feelings, pray?
 And who is it mends the break of day?
 And say—I'll admit this is quite absurd—
 When you drop a remark, do you break your word?
 Can a rope be made out of ocean strands?
 Have the silent midnight watches hands?
 Can you cut a log with a wise old saw?
 Does the cup that cheers cry, 'Hip hurrah'?
 Can money be tight when change is loose?
 Now what in the name of thunder's the use
 Of going through college and taking degrees
 When we're posed by such plain little problems as these?

THE FIRST TEMPTATION

One Saturday evening, when Susan went, as usual, to Farmer Thomson's inn to receive the price of her mother's washing for the boarders, which amounted to five dollars, she found the farmer in the stable yard.

He was apparently in a terrible rage with some horse dealers, with whom he had been bargaining. He held in his hand an open pocket-book, full of notes, and, scarcely noticing the child as she made her request, except to swear at her, as usual, for troubling him when he was busy, he handed her a bank note.

Glad to escape so easily, Susan hurried out of the gate, and, then, pausing to pin the money safely in the folds of her shawl, she discovered that he had given her two bills instead of one. She looked around—nobody was near to share her discovery, and her first impulse was joy at the unexpected prize.

'It is mine—all mine,' said she to herself. 'I will buy mother a new cloak with it, and she can give her old one to Sister Mary, and then Mary can go to Sunday school with me next winter. I wonder if it will not buy a pair of shoes for Brother Tom, too?'

At that moment she remembered that he must have given it to her by mistake, and therefore she had no right to it. But again the voice of the tempter whispered: 'He gave it, and how do you know that he did not intend to make you a present of it? Keep it, he will never know it, even if it should be a mistake, for he had too many bills in that great pocket-book to miss one.'

While this conflict was going on in her mind between good and evil, she was hurrying home as fast as possible. Yet, before she came in sight of her home, she had repeatedly balanced the comforts the money would buy against the sin of wronging her neighbor.

As she crossed the little bridge over the narrow creek before her mother's door, her eye fell upon a rustic seat which she and her mother had often occupied, and where, only the day before, her mother had explained to her these words of Scripture: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.'

Startled, as if a trumpet had sounded in her ears, she turned suddenly round, and, as if flying from some unseen peril, hastened along the road with breathless speed until she found herself once more at Farmer Thomson's gate.

'What do you want now?' asked the gruff old fellow, as he saw her again at his side.

'Sir, you paid me two bills instead of one,' said she, trembling in every limb.

'Two bills, did I? Let me see. Well, so I did; but did you just find it out? Why did you not bring it back sooner?'

Susan blushed and hung her head.

'You wanted to keep it, I suppose,' he said. 'Well, I am glad your mother was more honest than you, or I would have been five dollars poorer and none the wiser.'

'My mother knows nothing about it, sir,' said Susan. 'I brought it back before I went home.'

The old man looked at the child, and, as he saw the tears rolling down her cheeks, he seemed touched by her distress. Putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out a quarter dollar and offered it to her.

'No, sir, I thank you,' sobbed she. 'I do not wish to be paid for doing right. I only wish you would not think me dishonest, sir, for, indeed, it was a great temptation. Oh, sir, if you had ever seen those you love best wanting the common comforts of life, you would know how hard it is always to do unto others as we would have others do unto us.'

The heart of the selfish man was touched. 'There be things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceedingly wise,' murmured he, as he bade the little girl good-night, and entered the house a sadder, and, it is to be hoped, a better, man. Susan returned to her home with a lightened heart, and through the course of a long and useful life she never forgot her first temptation.

SENSIBLE

A mother was asked why it was that her girls were so proficient in home work, cooking, baking, and all that pertains to good housewifery. Her reply was: 'I have let my children work with me, from the time they were babies and sat in a high chair beside me while I baked pies or mixed bread. Of course they bothered me for dough, but that was the way they learned everything. And that is where mothers generally fail in this respect—they put the children off in another room, or send them out to play, out of their way, whereas these little ones might be taught right along. My little girls learned how to make pies in this way. They had little pie tins and a tiny mixing bowl, and their pies were made in exact imitation of mine. When I made bread they also made little loaves in their pans, and their tiny biscuits were as nice as they could be! When I ironed they also ironed on a chair beside my ironing table. So it was with all my work. They worked along with me, and it often was as much pleasure for me as for them, and they were always lively company. Among their toys for Christmas or birthday presents were these tiny imitations of my culinary tools as mentioned above; also little brooms, sweepers, tin tubs, wringers, washboards, and the like. And the nearer they were like the real article the better the little girls were suited. When I made my pudding they had to watch the proceedings; when I cooked anything, or canned or pickled they helped me to do what they could. The result of this is that many a time when "mother" is late in getting home from some meeting or call, or when she is very tired or indisposed, what a comfort it is to know that these little girls, not yet in their teens, can get a meal as quickly and neatly and deftly and as cheerfully as the most experienced and capable housekeeper of forty or fifty.'

AN ACTIVE MIND

The active mind is never lonely; it is self-sufficient. The student and the thinker revel in solitude. However, very few of us want solitude all the time. We all need good friends, the ties of family life, and give and catch conversations of the neighbor. But it is when we are quite alone that we turn matters over in our minds, when we get a big, broad view of life, when we lay plans, direct our work, dwell upon the tenderness of those we love and those who love us. A few moments of those we love and solitude, fifteen minutes with a good book, fifteen minutes with good music—these are moments spent in self-culture and education. When you grow so interesting that you like to be by yourself you will be so interesting that everybody will want you to be with them.

THE CAT AND THE MONKEY

Once upon a time a cat and a monkey lived in the same family. One day as they were talking together, they saw some chestnuts roasting in a hot fire. The monkey said:

'There, my friend, is an excellent dinner for us. It is a good thing that you have such fine paws. No animal in the world has paws so well adapted for getting chestnuts out of the fire. I am always ashamed of my clumsy claws. You use your paws so gracefully I love to watch you. Hurry and pull out the nuts and you shall have half of them.'

Pussy was very much flattered, and thrust her paws into the hot fire, burning them severely, of course.

The monkey began to eat the chestnuts as fast as the cat pulled them out of the ashes, and when pussy was ready for her dinner the chestnuts were all gone; the monkey had eaten every one of them.

What is the meaning of the expression: 'He is a cat's paw for some one else'?

COMPLIMENTARY

The company marched so poorly, and went through drill so badly, that the captain, who was somewhat of an excitable nature, shouted indignantly at the soldiers: