

The Family Circle

GOSSIP

First somebody told it,
Then the room wouldn't hold it,
So the busy tongues rolled it
Till they got it outside.
Then the crowd came across it
And never once lost it,
And tossed it and tossed it
Till it grew long and wide.
From a very small lie, sir,
It grew deep and high, sir,
Till it reached the top sky, sir,
And frightened the moon.
For she hid her sweet face, sir,
In a veil of cloud lace, sir,
At the terrible disgrace, sir,
That happened at noon.

BETTY'S ODD WISH

'Betty, what would you like to have for your birthday?' asked Aunt Mary. 'I have thought and thought and cannot decide what would do for a little girl who has so many toys and dolls.'

'Well, then, I wish you would make me some checked gingham aprons with long sleeves,' said Betty. 'I want the kind that have a strap across the back.'

'Gingham aprons! What an odd wish! Don't you like your ruffled white ones?'

'Yes, but I'd like to have a gingham one, auntie. I truly would like them better than anything else. Please don't ask me why, but I want them ever so much.'

'We'll see,' said Aunt Mary. 'That is a very modest wish for a birthday gift.'

Betty could hardly wait until the great day came, and when she ran into the dining-room the first thing she looked for was the gingham apron. Four sober little checked aprons hung on the back of her chair, and Betty squeezed them for joy. There were pretty things of all kinds, but the aprons Betty liked best of all.

That morning she set out to school with a checked apron over her pretty dress, and the children all looked to see her take her seat in the schoolroom.

'My dear, brave little girl!' whispered the teacher, patting Betty's curls.

'No one at home knew why Betty wore the checked aprons all winter, until Aunt Mary met Betty's teacher on the street.'

'I have wanted to tell you for ever so long how much good Betty has done with her little checked aprons,' she said. 'Didn't she tell you why she wanted them? That is just like her, bless her heart! There is a poor little girl in the school and the children laughed at her dark aprons, so Betty asked for dark aprons, too, and since then there has been no trouble. The children all play together as happy as birds, and poor little Jessie is not left out in the cold. I am very glad to have such a brave, sweet little girl as Betty in my class.'

'No, she never told her reason,' said Aunt Mary. 'We all thought it an odd wish, but I am glad she is so unselfish. I wish more little girls would do as she did.'

'So do I,' said the teacher; 'but I am thankful for Betty.'

THE SIMMONS' HATCHET

'Mother,' said Stella Page, 'I'm glad that new family in the cottage next door is there just for the summer. I don't like their ways. That big boy of theirs came to the kitchen door just now to borrow a broom, and what do you think he said? "It's mighty hard to wait to ask for what you want when it's right in sight!" The screen door was hooked, or maybe he wouldn't have waited.'

'Oh, I think he would, dear,' protested Mrs. Page, charitably concealing the fact that the hatchet had already been lent to the new neighbors before breakfast.

But that was only the beginning, and not even Mrs. Page's charity could cover the multitude of articles borrowed by the Simmons family during the next six weeks.

'I knew you'd have one,' Mrs. Simmons remarked cheerfully the day she came after the can-opener. 'I told my daughter I had never yet asked Mrs. Page for a thing she didn't have.'

'She's given you a wide range, too,' grumbled Stella Page to her mother, as she struggled to open a pineapple can with an old knife.

The next day Miss Simmons came for the egg-beater. 'That cottage we have rented is so poorly equipped!' she sighed on taking her leave.

'It ought to be pretty well equipped with our things by now,' muttered Stella, wrathfully beating eggs with a fork.

'Doesn't pay to buy these things just for one season,' drawled the Simmons boy, when he walked off with Mrs. Page's rake and hoe.

'It certainly didn't pay us,' was Stella's private comment. 'I want that rake this minute.'

At last one day she rose in her sixteen-year-old dignity. 'Mother,' she announced, 'they left our hatchet out in the wet grass and I've rescued it, and now if they get it again I'm just going after it. We're not going to cut another bit of kindling with a knife this summer.'

But that afternoon, as Stella lounged in the hammock, the pleasant-faced old father of all the Simmonses—the only one of the family who had never borrowed anything—came round the corner of the house.

'It's queer,' he said sociably, 'but our hatchet, that I've used every day since we came here, has suddenly disappeared. It was a rusty, dull old thing, but 'twas better than nothing.'

'Would you like to take ours?' asked Stella politely, and a minute later she handed him the 'rusty, dull old thing.'

The old gentleman turned it in his hands with a look of recognition. He opened his lips to speak, but refrained, evidently from motives of delicacy, and finally walked off with a humorous expression on his face which said as plainly as words:

'Beats all how some folks borrow and keep things! That girl honestly thought this was their hatchet.'

THE DELIGHTFUL PEOPLE

Who are the most delightful and sympathetic people you know? The ones whose lives are a part of the mainland of human life, who, when they meet you, are not so eager to tell you of their health and their affairs as they are eager to know about yours. And the most entertaining conversationalists? They are those who tell you about other people, not those who tell you about themselves they are those who interest you in things outside themselves and yourself. And the most beautiful lives? The rule applies here, too. They are those who have forgotten themselves in love for others.

YOUR HABITUAL EXPRESSION

What kind of an expression do you wear habitually? Is it sour, morose, repellant? Is it a mean, stingy, contemptible, uncharitable, intolerant expression? Do you wear the expression of a bulldog, a grasping, greedy, hungry expression, which indicates an avaricious nature? Do you go about among your employees with a thundercloud expression, with a melancholy, despondent, hopeless look on your face; or do you wear the sunshine expression which radiates good cheer and hope, which indicates a feeling of goodwill and of helpfulness? Do people smile and look happier when you approach them, or do they shrink from you, and feel a chilly, goose-flesh sensation come over them as they see you approach? It makes all the difference in the world to you and to those whom you influence, what kind of an expression you wear.

THE LITTLE KNITTER

Here is a delightful plan by which the German mothers encourage their little girls to knit. The wool is wound into a large ball called a wonder ball because it contains many little gifts hidden therein by the mother's fingers as she winds the worsted. As the gift at the centre of the ball will be found last that is usually the best, and might be a little gold ring, or any bit of child's jewellery. At another time the little knitter finds a silver coin and again something for her dolly. A silver tinkle gives great delight. The method stimulates perseverance and lessens the drudgery of learning to knit.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

In a recent issue of *Dumb Animals* the following good things to remember appeared:—

1. Remember that everything that is alive can feel. Sometimes there are too many insects, and they have to be killed. When they must die, kill them as quickly and mercifully as you can.
2. Remember that cruelty grows like other sins if not checked.
3. Remember that to take pleasure in seeing animals hurt or killed shows something terribly wrong in our nature.
4. Remember your pets—if you keep any—and see that they do not starve while you live in plenty.
5. Remember that cats and dogs want fresh water always where they can get it.
6. Boys who drive donkeys or horses should remember that they must go slowly when they have loads to drag, and that the poor animals are made of flesh and blood. Blows will make them weak and less able to work. Angry words frighten and wear them out. Use the whip as little as possible, and encourage them with kind words.
7. When you feel inclined to throw stones at living creatures, stop and think, 'How should I like to be bruised and to get my bones broken "just for fun"?''