

# The Family Circle

## LITTLE THINGS

One small stone upon the other,  
And the highest wall is laid;  
One wee stitch, and then another,  
And the largest garment's made;  
Many tiny drops of water  
Make the mighty rivers flow;  
One short second, then another,  
And the ages come and go.  
Place one bit of useful knowledge  
On another tiny mite,  
Keep on adding, time will make them  
Shine with wisdom's burning light;  
Each small ace of perseverance  
Nerves you to some greater deed;  
From one little grain of forethought  
Often grand results proceed.

## GET YOUR OWN CORNERS BRIGHT

Helen Cameron hurried into the house and up the stairs to Grandmother Cameron's room. She gave her jacket a toss into the chair, and dropped down upon the couch, over which the sun shone in a beautiful, broad slant of gold.

'I am through with the Girls' Literary Club. The girls don't seem to think they care for Carrie Elliott. They rather think she is—well, a little above them. There was no order at all in the meeting this morning. Grace Hewitt and Sarah Jennings whispered all through my solo. It almost put me out. And when the rest of us were trying to have current events, Abbie Jordau just poked fun. I could see she was doing it. They will get treated pretty cool by me the next time I meet them.'

Grandmother Cameron, by the east window, looked out at a robin chirping to his mate on the maple branch near. The sweet fragrance of lilies and apple blossoms, the faint murmur of running water, where the brook coursed near the house, the swaying leaves and the chirping birds told the story that all nature, with the return of spring, was working in harmony.

'I don't blame you for feeling disturbed, deary. I was disturbed myself this morning,' said Grandmother Cameron, turning her eyes from the robin to Helen's face.

'You?' Helen laughed. The very thought of Grandmother Cameron being disturbed in the way that she was feeling disturbed now seemed amusing to Helen Cameron.

'Well, I was,' said Grandmother Cameron. 'Jane wanted to sweep my room to-day, and I did not want my room swept to-day. I said it did not need sweeping. Mrs. Bailey sent in Joe to know why I hadn't brought the magazine over yesterday as I promised. Then your mother didn't consult me about making her new dress. I came up and sat down in this chair as stirred up and—well, as irritated as you seem to be, Helen.'

Helen Cameron shrugged her shoulders. Grandmother looked off at the robin, and smiled. Then she said, turning her eyes back to Helen:

'While I sat here thinking it over, the sun shone out, Helen. It was so warm, and bright, and cheery, coming through the window, that before I knew it I was inclined to sing. But looking around, what was my surprise to see in the corners dust and dirt that my eyes failed to see before? I called Jane and told her I was ready for the sweeping and dusting. We spent an hour putting the room to rights, and Jane laughed when I told her it was the sunshine that showed me the dark corners and the need of the broom.'

'When I took my place back here among my books and papers, the sun was so warm it seemed like a summer day. And my heart was just as warm. Love had begun to make its presence felt, and I realised then that it was the lack of love in my heart that had left dark corners, and that dark corners generally need sweeping out. I cleared up other things beside the room. I got not only the magazine for Mrs. Bailey that I thought I "didn't know where it was" when little Joe was over here, and I added the book that Mrs. Wynn brought in and I hadn't read yet, which I knew Mrs. Bailey was wanting to get hold of. I took them over with a sprig of white lilac, just out. And you should have seen how pleased Mrs. Bailey was.'

'When I came back I heard Jane singing in the kitchen. She liked it that I appreciated her wish to make my room clean. A little later your mother came up and said she had forgotten to speak to me about her dress. She had changed her mind, and was not going to have it made up until she knew better how she wanted to have it. So you see, it was just, after all, the dark corners in my heart that made the trouble.'

Helen drew a long breath. 'It seems to me, grandmother, I've wanted to help the girls,' she said.

'Well, never mind about helping the girls. Just see about your own corners. Make those bright, and then perhaps other things will brighten up, too. Be content with loving the girls. It is wonderful what love does when

it shines out, just as the sun is shining over you now. Love finds its own way of doing, and hearts are responsive to it.'

Helen rose and gathered up her hat and jacket and gloves. Then she stopped, and, placing her lips to her grandmother's soft cheek, murmured, 'You are a dear, grandmother, you are a dear!' and there were tears on her brown lashes. She passed from the room and closed the door softly after her.

After she had gone, Grandmother Cameron sat for a long time watching the robins. They were building their nest now. Had she built a nest of happiness for her granddaughter, Helen?

The next day, as Helen Cameron greeted here and there a member of the Girls' Literary Club, her manner was gracious and her words sweet. When the club was mentioned she showed interest. There was nothing said of the subject of discord, and when two evenings later they met for a short business meeting there was nothing but quiet, loving dignity in Helen Cameron's manner. As president of the club, she suggested, and then waited for response. The girls warmed under this new way of being met. They unfolded as buds unfold in the soft air. Looking upon Helen, they seemed to feel that she held strength that was helpful to them. They began putting out thoughts of their own. Then someone mentioned the name of Carrie Elliott.

Oh, yes, Carrie Elliott must join the club. This was the consensus of opinion. She would help them in many ways. At the close of the meeting Grace Hewitt and Sarah Jennings lingered half shyly by Helen's side.

'I don't know why I did it, Helen,' said Grace, her cheeks flushing. 'I thought it smart, but it wasn't. It was rude.' And Helen knew that she was in this fashion apologising for the way she had disturbed the harmony of the club during the latter's singing.

'Never mind now, Grace,' Helen said pleasantly. 'We all have much to learn. We can help each other.' And Grace went away wondering if there was another girl like Helen.

It was at the close of the summer that Helen was sitting in grandmother's shaded room.

'I can't tell you, Grandmother Cameron, how well the Girls' Literary Club is getting along,' she said. 'We have almost doubled the number, and the girls are so interested. We seem to be so united. It is just wonderful.'

A smile that was beautiful passed slowly from Grandmother Cameron's lips to her eyes, and she said in her sweet voice:

'And the secret of the change, deary, is doubtless the love-light that has shone from your heart to theirs.'

'I think it is, grandmother,' said Helen. 'You gave me so much to think about that morning when the robins were building their nest.'

'Yes,' said Grandmother Cameron, slowly, 'and you set about making your own corners bright, living your own life at its best. And the light of your bright corners helped others to see the dark corners of their own lives. Unconsciously they began measuring up to the standard you held before them.'

'Perhaps that is it. I have hardly stopped to think. I have only tried to do my own best.'

'And in doing that you have helped others to do theirs,' persisted Grandmother Cameron. 'And so you see it comes right back to "get your own corners bright" before turning to other people's.'

'Exactly,' said Helen, nodding her head slowly.

## SLOW TO JUDGE

Human nature is bound to be faulty and imperfect. The motive may be the purest, the intention all right and good, but the act, nevertheless, may have some aspect that another person, looking on, may find fault with and condemn. A charitableness in judgment is always wise; it is well to study one's self before pronouncing adversely on any fellow-being, for fear that the surface appearance may not truly express the real significance of the action. There will be some blots here and there on the otherwise fair copybook of life. It is the part of a kind and wise spirit to pass the hand over the blots and see rather what is worthy of commendation.

## THE PROFESSOR KNEW

A certain absent-minded German professor discovered the other day that he had left his umbrella somewhere. As he had visited three stores he thought it must be in one of them, so he started back, and called at all three in turn.

'No umbrella has been found here,' the professor was told in the first store. The German shrugged his shoulders and went out.

At the next store the same response was made; whereupon the professor shrugged his shoulders once more, and went to the third establishment. There he found his umbrella awaiting him.

'I must say,' said he to his family, on returning home, 'they were more honest at the last place than at the other stores.'