

The Family Circle

THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE FLY

'Don't come into my parlor,' said the Housewife to the Fly;
'There's a screen at every window and your entrance I defy.

There are microbes in your footsteps and a crust upon your head,
Which, if not so microscopic, would fill our hearts with dread.

'You carry germs of typhoid and spread consumption's bane,
And our sanitary teachers paint your crimes in language plain.

Don't come into my parlor; and for safety I would pray
If you walked into my dining room upon some sunny day.

'There are seeds of vile distempers hidden in your tiny wings,
And your feet may have travelled over nameless filthy things,
You're a menace to our safety; you are powerful though small,
And the mischief you accomplish would the bravest heart appal.

'If you enter, I have poison all prepared for you to eat,
And papers spread to tangle your germ-laden wings and feet.

I will poison, trap, and smash you if you do not leave my door:

For our modern sanitation will endure your calls no more.'

MATTIE'S 'INTRODUCTION'

Mattie uttered a dismayed gasp as she opened the door in answer to the ring of the delivery man from one of the down-town department stores. His arms were full of packages, and though Mattie had spent the morning shopping, she did not realise that her purchases in the aggregate would present so formidable an appearance.

Her brother Harold, stretched at full length on the couch, turned and regarded her lazily as she entered the library, her chin resting on the uppermost of the pile of boxes she carried. 'Been buying out the town?' he inquired.

'I must have bought more than I meant to. I can't seem to remember half of these things. That's the gingham for Nell's aprons, and that's the handkerchiefs. But I can't imagine what's in this big box.'

She leaned over the package in question, the foundation of the pyramid which the delivery man had handed to her, and uttered an exclamation so expressive of surprise that Harold seemed on the point of sitting up.

'It isn't for us at all. I thought I couldn't remember anything that would go in a box as big as that. It's for Miss Margaret Updike, 2610 instead of 2510. Quite an easy mistake to make.'

'You'd better call the man back,' suggested Mattie's brother.

The girl flew to the door, but the black and yellow delivery waggon had disappeared from view. Telephone the store,' suggested Harold, as Mattie came back to announce her lack of success.

'It's too late for that. They close at 1 o'clock on Saturdays.'

'Leave it till Monday, then.'

'But, Harold, it looks like a suit, and it would be all wrinkled by Monday. Besides, she might want to wear it to-morrow. Would you mind taking it up?' It's only a block.'

Harold sat up with unusual energy.

'Yes, I should mind,' he replied. 'I don't know Margaret Updike, but I can make a pretty good guess as to the kind of girl she is. She thinks enough of herself already, without my running around waiting on her.'

'Why, Harold, we don't know that she thinks any more of herself than anybody else does.'

But Harold was not to be convinced. 'She looks like one of the airy kind,' he replied, 'and it isn't any of our business. We didn't make the mistake. Let her settle it with the delivery man at the store.'

That was one way to look at it. Of course, it wasn't Mattie Merritt's business to walk a block to carry home Margaret Updike's new suit. But, on the other hand, one girl has a fellow-feeling for another who is waiting for a new suit on Saturday afternoon. Without stopping to take Harold into her confidence, Mattie slipped out of the front door, with a big package under her arm, and hurried on to the next block.

She was in the midst of explaining the situation to a solemn-faced maid when a girl not far from her own age made her appearance in the hall. 'Why, it must be my new suit!' she cried. 'How does it happen that you—' The question ended there, but the blue eyes regarding

Mattie's were so friendly that the other girl's last trace of hesitancy vanished.

'It was very kind of you to take so much pains for a stranger,' said Margaret Updike when Mattie had made her brief explanation. 'I'm going out of town to-night to spend Sunday with my aunt, and I was watching for that suit pretty anxiously. I think we ought to regard this as an introduction,' she went on gaily, 'and get real well acquainted. Don't you?'

And as Mattie turned her face homeward she had the pleasing conviction that her little act of kindness was to prove an opening wedge in a pleasant friendship.

THE JOY OF LIFE

Life is not enjoyable if there be no duty, no work, no occupation, no serious employment. Life's highest ideals, noblest pleasures, sweetest enjoyments are missed by the idle, who are often dragged down into the lowest currents. In food and play, slumber and holiday, the industrious and laborious experience the keenest zest and deepest joy, while to the idle these are spiritless and tasteless. It were not the best aim in life assuredly to do without work—not the noblest to pose for admiration or to waste the precious moments in pursuit of dreams for pleasure. The most miserable are they who have nothing to do. They are miserable themselves, and render all around them miserable.

THE RIGHT START

'Isn't it funny,' said Belinda, practising at the piano; 'you start playing a thing wrong and you play it all wrong?'

'Why, not at all,' said Belinda's wise brother. 'That is true of many things besides playing a piano. Did you never hear it said of a man who seemed to be making heavy weather of it in some undertaking who seemed to bungle and take wrong steps and not to be sure of what he was doing, who was struggling along and trying hard, but not to very good purpose—did you never hear it said of a man in such case that he got in wrong?'

'Why, certainly; everything depends on making a good—that is to say, correct—start; on knowing your ground and being sure of yourself, on starting right.'

'That's one sort of a good start. When we say of a man that he had a good start in life, we mean that he started with advantages, in favoring circumstances or with friendly surroundings, under conditions likely to promote his success; but when we say of a man that he made a good start, we are speaking of what he did himself; we mean that he was alert and keen, looking out for things, seeing that things were right and making sure; knowing the course, so that he could keep in the channel and go ahead without doubt or confusion.'

'The man who makes a good start can go ahead with confidence and certainty, without fear and consequently without danger of getting twisted and tangled up on the way. It's just the same as it is with your practising. See?'

Belinda didn't say whether she did see or not, but her brother's discourse having here apparently come to a full stop, her fingers fell heavily on the keys of the piano.

CHINESE MANNERS

The Chinese are as fond of sending presents as we are, but not in the same manner. They send a number of articles, but the receiver is expected to take only one; and if an ignoramus should happen to keep the whole collection, the donor would be greatly annoyed at his want of good breeding. With them the left hand, and not the right, is the place of honor. The host must never sit down before his guest is seated, which, of course, is etiquette all over the world. But a Chinaman must get up every time his guests do, if it amounts to a dozen times a minute. Nor must he sit while anyone who is his equal is standing. Inquiries concerning a stranger's personal affairs, a thing we consider the height of vulgarity, is with them the very essence of courtesy. To ask your age and your business and how much money you have, and how much you make and what you intend to do with it, and how much you paid for an article of dress is the polite thing among the Celestials, but it is shockingly impolite to wear spectacles in the presence of a guest or a superior, and the most near-sighted man would never violate this law of etiquette. An English traveller gives a very amusing account of a lawyer in Canton who apologised to the court for daring to put on his spectacles in order to read an official document.

TOMMY'S LOGIC

'Thomas, you have disobeyed your old grandmother.'

'No, I didn't, ma.'

'Yes, you did. Have you not been swimming?'

'Yes, ma.'

'Didn't I hear her say to you not to go swimming?'

'Oh, she didn't tell us that! She only came out and said, "Boys, I wouldn't go swimmin'," and I shouldn't think she would, an old rheumatic woman like her. But she didn't say anything about our goin' swimmin'.'