

The Family Circle

SCHOOL DAYS

Where's my coat? Where's my hat?
Where's my 'rithmetic?
Wonder where my grammar's at?
Help me find it, quick!
Where's my jog'fy lesson, pa?
Where's my new foot rule?
Hurry up an' help me, ma,
I'll be late to school.

Johnny's throwed my tie away—
Yes, you did! It's gone.
You wuz playin' yesterday,
An' you had it on.
Help me try to find it, ma,
T'other one's too red—
Here it is. I found it, pa,
Underneath the bed.

Here's my jog'fy, anyway,
Here's my coat and hat—
Wonder why my things can't stay
Where I put 'em at?
Ouch! I hit my head a knock,
Gee! I got to fly,
Pretty nearly nine o'clock—
All right, ma. Good-bye.

STORY OF TWO GIRLS

Nella was sure she had passed the same girl the day before, walking in the same direction with a steady, plodding gait, which seemed to speak equally of weariness and determination. She looked back over her shoulder just before she turned the bend in the road, at the square little figure trudging patiently through the dust, and nodded. 'It's the same girl,' she said; 'I know I wasn't mistaken.'

When she passed her for the third time in a week, she drew rein. 'You and I always seem to be going in the same direction,' she said pleasantly. 'Won't you get in and ride with me?'

The girl looked down at her bare, dusty feet, and her color rose. 'If I'm going to sit beside you,' she replied, 'maybe I'd better put on my shoes.'

'Why, no! It doesn't matter,' Nella answered, with difficulty suppressing a smile. But, after the stranger was seated beside her, curiosity got the better of her. 'Why do you carry your shoes?' she inquired. 'Don't the stones hurt your feet?'

The other girl chose to answer the first inquiry. 'Count of wearing them out,' she returned laconically.

'Oh! Nella blushed high, and hastened to cover her slip by asking another question. 'Is it far to your school? You see I know you're a schoolgirl by your books.'

'Five miles.'

'Five miles!' Nella repeated the words with a little gasp between. 'You don't mean—you can't mean that you have to walk five miles each way?'

The girl nodded.

Nella waxed indignant. 'It's a shame! Hasn't your father any horses? Isn't there any school nearer? Why, you must be tired when night comes.'

'There ain't no school nigher than that one,' said the other girl with grave dignity. 'Pa's got a team of mules, but they've got all they can do, bless you, without taking me to school. It seemed a right smart way at first, but I don't think much of it now. You can get used to heaps of things.'

'Do you like school?'

The girl drew a sharp breath. Her eyes shone.

'I love it—the learning things. Sometimes when the girls do well at this school they let 'em go to another, or beyond the mountain, and there they learn to be teachers. I'd like that.' Her voice vibrated with the intensity of her emotion. 'I'd like to help other folks. And it's nice to know things, too.'

'Nella touched the pony with the whip, thinking hard. She had found her lonely drives something of a bore, and had kept them up because her father insisted on her spending as much time as possible in the open air. Why shouldn't she help out this plucky little scholar? It would make her drives all the pleasanter to have an object.

But her thoughts did not stop with this. When the family went south for the winter her father had suggested that she should give up some time every day to study. A trained French teacher was within call. He himself could superintend her work in mathematics. Nella had shrugged her shoulders and frowned. 'It's hard enough studying at school,' she said, 'where everybody else does it. But here I couldn't stand it.' When she compared her own reluctance with the girl's eagerness and ambition, she was forced to acknowledge that the contrast was not in her favor.

Nella's father looked at his daughter with interest that night. It struck him that it had been a long time since he had seen her so eager and full of life. 'You must have had a pleasant drive,' he said.

'Oh, I did, papa! And I found the bravest girl, who walks ten miles a day to and from school. I'm going to meet her and drive her part way every time I can. And papa, I think I'm ready to begin the French lessons.'

The chance meeting on the lonely road had helped two girls.

BOASTFUL SANDY

We once had a cat named Sandy, who was large and yellow and had a long, bushy tail and silky ears.

He was indeed ornamental, much more so than useful, for as a mouser Sandy was not a success.

Yet, in spite of other people's opinion, in his own eyes Sandy was the terror of all the mice in the State. To watch him at work was a treat. He set about mice-catching with much style, such as 'see the conquering hero comes' air. And when he lost his mouse, as he nearly always did, he always assumed a bored attitude, as if to say, 'Pray, don't imagine I really wanted to catch that mouse; it was merely for practice!'

At last, discouraged with Sandy's achievements, we bought a trap.

Sandy was delighted with the trap, for he found a mouse in it nearly every morning, and he took to lying in wait and watching it.

One day as he waited he saw a gray mouse steal from a hole in the corner and approach the trap. Nearer and nearer he crept, but instead of getting himself caught, he sprung the trap.

Like a gray streak the mouse made for his hole, and like a yellow streak Sandy followed him. But, as usual, the cat was too late, and the mouse got safely inside.

But now that he knew where the mouse lived Sandy determined to have him. So he sat very quietly by the mouse hole until the mouse should come out of his front door again. But the mouse did not come, and at last Sandy grew very weary of waiting. He wanted to go to sleep, and he did not want the mouse to get away, so he solved the problem by crossing his paws over the mouse hole and going comfortably to sleep.

Then the artful mouse stole out of his back door, ate the cheese from the trap, and stole gleefully back, while Sandy still slept on.

WASTED TIME

The other day a well-dressed stranger, carrying a hand-bag, called at a life insurance agent's, and inquired if the agent was in.

The agent came forward rubbing his hands, and the stranger asked:

'Do you take life insurance risks here?'

'Yes, sir. Glad to see you, sir. Sit down, sir,' replied the agent.

'What do you think of life insurance?' inquired the stranger, as he sat down and took off his hat.

'It's a national blessing, sir—an institution which is looked on with sovereign favor by every enlightened man and woman in the country.'

'That's what I've always thought,' answered the man. 'Does your company pay its losses promptly?'

'Yes, sir—yes, sir. If you were insured with us, and you should die to-night, your wife would have a cheque within a week.'

'Couldn't ask for anything better than that.'

'No, sir; no, sir. The motto of our company is, "Prompt pay and honorable dealings."'

'How much will a policy for one thousand pounds cost?' inquired the stranger, after a long pause.

'You are—let's see—say thirty-five and in good health. A policy on you would cost twenty-four pounds a year.'

'That's reasonable enough.'

'Yes; that's what we call low. But ours is a strong company, does a safe business, and invests only in first-class securities. If you are thinking of taking out a policy, let me tell you that ours is the best and safest, and even the agents of rival companies will admit the truth of that.'

'And when I die my wife will get her money without any trouble?'

'I'll guarantee that, my dear sir.'

'And I'll get a dividend every year?'

'Yes; this is a mutual company, and part of the profits come back to the policy holders.'

'And it won't cost me but twenty-four pounds for a policy of one thousand pounds?'

'That's the figure, and it's as low as you can get safe insurance anywhere. Let me fill you up a proposal. You'll never regret it.'

'Them's the blanks, I s'pose?' said the stranger, pointing to the forms.

'Yes,' replied the agent, as he drew one to him and took up a pen. 'What do you say? Shall I fill it up?'

'No, I won't take any to-day,' replied the stranger, as he unlocked his bag. 'But if you want something that