

The Family Circle

VACATION'S OVER

The sun shines with more sober light,
The bells ring out from belfry towers,
The streets fill up with faces bright
Like dusty roads with fairy flowers.
The little shoes go hurrying past
That scarce have lost the scent of clover,
The old schoolhouse awakes at last,
Vacation's over.

Like some great hive of busy bees,
The schoolhouse starts its drowsy humming,
And curls that danced 'neath summer trees
Now softly droop o'er slates and summing.
The sun-paint tanned on each wee hand
Of mountain lass and seaside rover
Is lost beneath an inky band.
Vacation's over.

When school-time comes the street and parks—
With no small tongues to be disturbing—
Seem strangely lonesome with their marks,
Of pencils sharpened on the curbing.
And oh, these little folks, as yet
About whose hearts no shadows hover,
Are not the only ones regret
Vacation's over.

BABY ABBOT

'Baby! Baby!' called a quavering thin voice from the porch, 'Come in, Baby! Dinner's ready!'

John Abbot, aged six and one-half years, rose up from the sand pile with a frown on his face. 'I do wish Great-Grandmother wouldn't call me that,' he sighed. 'All the boys will be calling me Baby if she keeps on.' He knew it would be useless to answer, as Great-Grandmother Abbot was very hard of hearing, so he ran hastily to the house to get ready for the old-fashioned midday dinner.

'Mama, won't you persuade Great-Grandmother to stop calling me Baby?' he asked, as he hastily scrubbed his hands at the kitchen sink. 'Please do, mama. You said I was too big to be called that, and you and papa never do.'

'Dearie, Great-Grandmother is a very old lady, and besides she is so deaf I couldn't make her understand. Isn't my boy big enough and manly enough to bear a little teasing for her sake? She doesn't know how it troubles you.'

'I'll try, mama, but it's very hard.'

'That's my big boy!' said Mrs. Abbot, proudly. 'You'll succeed, too, I am sure.'

'I had Betty make apple dumplings and chocolate custard for dinner because Baby likes them,' said the dear old lady.

It wasn't so hard to hear the offending name just then with a big puffy white dumpling surrounded by yellow cream before him, and John ate and ate until he could hold no more. He was just quietly slipping back to his play in the sand pile when a boy passed and called, 'Hello, Baby!'

An angry reply rose to John's lips, but he thought in time and set his teeth tightly, 'I promised I'd try,' he said to himself, 'and I'm going to do it.'

Before a week all the boys and girls in the village called him Baby Abbot, and John would not play with them. They did not mean to hurt his feelings, but it seemed so absurd to call a big, strong boy such a name that they all took it up. John never replied, but his mama knew what it cost him to keep his promise. Great-Grandmother Abbot knew nothing of what was going on, and every day she would go on the porch and call him if he ventured out on the lawn or in the garden. Many a tear the little boy shed, but he never let them see him crying, and when his mama said they would soon go home he was very much relieved. He loved the big house, and the dear old lady

who did so much for him, but he wanted some playmates and he did not want to be teased all the time.

'Runaway! Runaway! Look out!' That was the cry that echoed down the quiet village street one afternoon and the frightened children turned and ran in all directions to get on porches and in houses. Maggie Elder quite forgot her little sister sitting in the go-cart under the elm tree, as she scampered up on Mrs. Kile's porch for safety.

John was standing forlornly in the garden watching the children from behind the lilac bushes, where they could not see him, and he ran as fast as he could to rescue little Emily. He had just time to drag the go-cart into the yard when the madly galloping horse dashed down the street right over the place frightened Maggie had left the baby.

'Nobody shall ever say Baby Abbot again!' said Mrs. Elder, clasping her baby in her arms as she heard the whole story. 'John is the bravest boy in the whole village, and I'm proud of him.'

John had plenty of playmates, and the week's visit lengthened out into a month and still he was not anxious to get home. 'I'm having such a good time, mama, that I really wouldn't care if everybody called me Baby, but I'm glad that is all over now.'

THE GIRL WHO WORKS

The girl who works is brave and true and noble. She is not too proud to earn her own living or ashamed to be caught at her daily task. She smiles at you from behind the desk or counter or printer's case. There is a memory of her sewed up in the silent gown. She is like a brave mountaineer already far up the precipice—climbing, struggling, rejoicing. The sight should be an inspiration to us all. It is an honor to know this girl and be worthy of her esteem. Lift your hat to her, young man, as she passes by. Her hand may be stained by dish-washing, sweeping, factory grease or printer's ink, but it is an honest hand, a helping hand. It stays misfortune from home; it supports an invalid loved one, maybe; is a loving, potent shield that protects many a family from the almshouse. All honor to the brave toiler!

JOHN'S EXCUSE

John's mother asked him if he had gone on the errand she had mentioned half an hour before. As she had suspected, John was ready with his regular form of excuse.

'Well, there, if I didn't forget all about it,' he exclaimed in vexed tones. 'But if Bess had not bothered me to help her with that example I'd have gone back long ago.' His reproachful glance fell upon the offending little sister. An older sister looked up and laughed.

'John,' she said, 'you use excuses just as some people use an umbrella. They shield you splendidly, but the nearest one to you usually gets the share you escape.'

There was a general laugh, and even John grinned sheepishly, for he saw the point.

THE POLITE CONDUCTOR

'Conductor!' exclaimed the irate woman who carried many bundles, as she paused on the platform of a crowded tram car in Wellington. 'I thought I told you that I wanted to get off at Constable street.'

'But, madam—'

'Don't say a word! I know all about your car being very full, and not being able to remember where everybody gets off. I've heard all that before.'

'But, madam, I—'

'You may be sure that I shall report you, sir; and for your impudence, too!'

She alighted, the conductor rang his bell, and as the car started he said politely, as he touched his cap:

'I'm very sorry, madam, but Constable street is half a mile further on.'