

# The Family Circle

## WHO WAS IT?

Once there was a maiden who wouldn't be polite;  
Wouldn't say 'Good morning' and wouldn't say 'Good  
night!'  
Felt it too much trouble to think of saying 'Please,'  
Slammed the door behind her as if she'd been a breeze;  
Wouldn't ask her mother if she could take a run;  
Ran away and lost herself because it was 'such fun.'

Merry little maiden! Isn't it too bad  
That, with all her laughter, sometimes she was sad?  
But the reason for it isn't hard to find,  
For this little maiden didn't like to mind;  
Wouldn't do the things she knew she really ought to do.  
Who was she? Oh, never mind; I hope it wasn't you.

## DICK SUNSHINE

Grandmother and Grandfather Smith sat in their cosy living room, grandmother knitting and grandfather looking steadily into the fire which burned so brightly in the grate.

At length grandfather sighed and spoke:

'Mother,' he said, 'I was just recalling our past New Years—so many of them that I have lost count. And I was thinking how nice it was when our son Tom and our girl Stella were at home, for then we had some young life in the house, someone to plan for and to make merry over.'

'Yes,' said grandmother, her voice low. 'Yes, father, it is very sweet to have children about—and young folks. Old people like you and me need a bit of sunshine now and then, the sunshine that comes from a child's face. I, too, have been recalling the old days—when Tom and Stella were at our fireside, two happy children. But, dear, we should be more happy to know they are grown to manhood and womanhood, and have homes and children of their own.'

'Yes,' murmured the old man in a dreamy way. Then he brightened up. 'And Tom's children are such dear little things,' he went on. 'That plump, pink baby, named for his grandpap.' And the old grandfather smiled. 'And Tom's girl—Margaret, why, there isn't a nicer child in the whole country than our Margie. Although she is but five years old, she has the intelligence of a child of twice that age. She is a marvel, bless her dear heart.'

'Yes, we have two dear, loving children and four sweet little grandchildren,' said grandmother. 'But they are so scattered that we can see them rarely. There's Tom, away out West, and Stella is in the Far East. But—I am so happy that they are so well fixed in life; that Tom and Stella are so happily married and have such promising children. I would not have kept them with me if I could. It is God's law that each man and woman shall be the centre of a little household of his own and her own.'

Then grandmother dropped her knitting in her lap and sat dreaming. Grandfather's eyes had again sought for fire in the grate, where pictures of the past flitted before him. Suddenly they were aroused from their reveries by a sharp peal of the doorbell. Grandmother got up, saying as she did so: 'I'll answer the door, father. You know I gave Susan the day off; she was so good to remain here on Thanksgiving and Christmas, so I gave her New Year to visit with her home folks. Susan is a most deserving servant, father. She has grown old in our service.'

'Yes, we are an aged household, mother,' said the old gentleman. 'But there goes the bell again. I'd better go to the door, mother. Your back is a little lame from that last spell of rheumatism.'

'No, don't trouble to put down your pipe, father. I am already up, and shall see who is ringing. Oh—it's our morning paper, I guess! And Grandmother Smith opened the big hall door. As she did so a young, happy face looked into hers. A boy—perhaps ten years

old—stood there, holding a roll of papers under his arm. As grandmother looked down into his eyes the boy smiled brightly, saying: 'Are you Mrs. Smith, mum?'

Grandmother returned the smile and replied: 'Yes, I am Mrs. Smith, little man. What is wanting?'

'W'y I'm your paper boy, mum, an' I've got your paper here.' And the lad held up a paper to grandmother. 'An', since you are Mrs. Smith, I want to thank you for your patronage durin' the past year, and beg you to continy takin' papers from me this year. An' I want to wish you an' Mr. Smith a most prosperous an' happy New Year, mum.'

Grandmother Smith took the proffered paper and stood looking into the bright face of the little news-boy. His eyes were round and blue, sending out gleams from a pure soul. His cheeks were like two ripe apples, his teeth shining between a pair of smiling lips. Everything about the rugged little chap denoted happiness and health.

After delivering himself of his speech the little paper vender was about to depart, when grandmother suddenly thought of something. 'Wait a minute, little man. Won't you come in and have a cup of hot chocolate and a slice of cake?'

The boy hesitated, then looked down at his poorly shod feet. 'I'd hate to soil your floor, mum,' he said. 'My clothes ain't fit, you see.'

'Come right in, child,' said grandmother. 'Never mind about your clothes. It is you we want.'

The boy took off his ragged cap and followed grandmother into the cheerful living room. There he was greeted pleasantly by grandfather, to whom he was introduced. 'Now, sit there till I fix the chocolate,' said grandfather, designating a comfortable chair beside the glowing grate.

Within a few minutes grandfather, grandmother, and Dick—for he had told them his name—were chatting pleasantly. And to their many questions Dick told the story of his young life. He was an orphan, without a living relative in the world that he knew of. He lived at the Newsboys' Home, over the viaduct. He managed to get enough to pay his two dollars a week at the home and went to a night school three nights of each week.

Grandmother looked at grandfather. Then she arose and beckoned to the old man to follow her into another room, telling Dick to excuse them a minute. In the dining room the old folks had a whispered consultation. Then, with beaming faces, they returned to the living room. And there they explained to Dick a new plan they had conceived. And the plan was for 'Dick Sunshine' (for that was what the dear old grandmother called him) to come and live with them—make their home his home, and to give up selling newspapers and go to day school.

Their plan was too lengthy to be given here, for it embraced many things—such as the future for Dick Sunshine and many, many incidents pertaining to the present, such as new clothes, a nice, clean room, with bath, etc.

Dick's face was radiant for a moment. Then he hung his head. 'I can't do it, mum and sir,' he said. 'I'd be gettin' everything and givin' you nothin' for it. It wouldn't be a fair bargain.'

'A perfectly fair bargain,' declared both grandmother and grandfather. 'You'd be giving us that which we most need—a child in the house, sunshine, gaiety, the love of a grateful and considerate boy. Oh, please come!'

So it happened that Dick Sunshine became one of Grandfather Smith's family, and in course of time was lawfully adopted as their son. And he fully repaid them for all they gave him, for he brought back to them the days of youth, the days when their own children were growing up about them, and their home once more rang with the laughter and shouts of a happy child.

## A NOBLE DEED

Among the Alban Hills, some miles from Rome, a little boy was tending his father's goats, when his