

The Family Circle

'I'

The person nearly always right
And very seldom in the wrong
Is found 'neath leaden skies and bright,
And 'mid the weak and 'mid the strong.

Of either sex, rude or polite
The person is—all ranks belong—
The person nearly always right
And very seldom in the wrong.

'I' is the name so oft in sight,
Told near and far in prose and song,
Of one who in the dark or light,
Is always foremost in the throng:
The person nearly always right
And very seldom in the wrong.

—Ave Maria.

WHAT A SPANISH LADY BROUGHT TO ENGLAND

When the unfortunate Katharine of Aragon first came to England, she brought with her from Spain an article which was quite unfamiliar to English eyes. This small but necessary article had been manufactured in France, and was sent from that country to Spain as a part of the elegant trousseau prepared for the bride of the King. Walking down one of our busy streets, you might pick up a hundred perhaps, and not a few on any country road. But in the days when Henry VIII. ruled England it was an expensive luxury. And what do you suppose it was? Only a pin!

Previous to that time, the fastenings in general use consisted of clasps, ribbons, strings, loopholes; skewers of bone, silver, gold, brass, or wood, and crudely formed hooks and eyes. But the simple pin, with its solid head and sharp point, was unknown. France claims that all new ideas came into the world through her, however well they may afterward be developed and perfected by other nations. In the evolution of the pin, France deserves the credit. She made the best pins long before they could be made in other countries; and it was a Frenchman, Fournier by name, who went to Nuremberg and taught the wire drawers and makers of that city how to improve their machines and thus draw the wire finer for the manufacture of pins with solid heads. This improvement was a much-needed one; for an act had been passed in England prohibiting the sale of pins unless they had solid or double heads which did not come off. For a long time, then, pins in England belong to the list of imported articles; but in 1626 a manufactory was started in Gloucestershire by a man named John Tilsby, who operated so successfully that he employed as many as fifteen hundred persons.

Pin-making was for a long period a tedious labor, and sixteen individuals were employed in the eighteen processes of the manufacture of a pin. Now machinery has made the operation so simple and so rapid that pins can be bought for a trifle. They are manufactured only in small quantities in France, Germany, and Austria—formerly the great seats of pin factories; while England and America have all the large pin manufactories of the world, and furnish annually hundreds of tons of them to civilised nations.

THREE CHINESE FABLES

Chinese literature, almost unknown to Western peoples, is rich in parables and fables. Dr. W. A. P. Martin in his book, *The Love of Cathay*, gives several which may not be as good as Æsop, but are greatly superior to those of some of his modern imitators.

A tiger who had never seen an ass was terrified at the sound of his voice, and was about to run away, when the donkey turned his heels and prepared to kick.

'If that is your mode of attack,' said the tiger, 'I know how to deal with you.'

In another fable the donkey gets even.

A tiger captured a monkey. The monkey begged to be released on the score of his insignificance, and promised to show the tiger where he might find a more valuable prey. The tiger complied, and the monkey conducted him to a hillside where an ass was feeding—an animal which the tiger had never before seen.

'My good brother,' said the ass to the monkey, 'hitherto you have always brought me two tigers. How is it that you have brought me only one to-day?'

The tiger fled for his life. Thus a ready wit wards off danger.

The principle of the next fable the Chinese always apply to their European instructors in the art of war.

A tiger, finding a cat very prolific in devices for catching game, placed himself under her instruction. At length he was told there was nothing more to be learned.

'Have you taught me all your tricks?'

'Yes,' replied the cat.

'Then,' said the tiger, 'you are of no further use, and so I shall eat you.'

The cat, however, sprang lightly into the branches of a tree and smiled at the tiger's disappointment. She had not taught the tiger all her tricks.

A CUSTOM OF OLDEN TIMES

The origin of the phrase 'he can't hold a candle' to another, doubtless comes from the fact that it was the custom, in olden times, before the small light-stand had been devised, to have a servant hold a light by his master's bed in order that he might 'read himself to sleep.'

One can hardly understand in these days of electric light how the employer could gain much pleasure in this manner, but there is everything in habit.

THE KING AND THE SPIDER

The Scottish people tell how the courage and hope of King Bruce were revived by the example of a spider. He had lost many battles and was discouraged. Sad and almost desperate, he went to a quiet room in his castle to ponder over the situation. As he meditated he observed a spider hanging from the ceiling by a single filament, and began to watch its struggles to rise. Again and again it attempted to mount by the slender cord, and every time it failed. The King continued to watch, and the spider to slip back. An hour passed, then the little insect finally succeeded and reached the ceiling.

Here was a lesson for the King. 'Shall I,' he said, 'be discouraged by a few failures, when this little crawling thing was not daunted by many? I will try once more.' So he made a great rally against his foes, routed them, and has handed down to us the saying, 'If at first you don't succeed, try again.'

THE POET'S ANSWER

Thomas Moore, the poet, was the son of a Dublin grocer. Without the slightest 'pushing' on his part, his genius and the unaffected charm of his manner made a host of friends for him in the highest circles of English society.

When he was at the very height of his fame, when all London went mad over his ballads, and his personality, an envious snob undertook to humiliate him one evening at a banquet. After a brilliant repartee of Moore's had been applauded by the diners, the cad, fixing his monocle in his eye, leaned across the table and drawled impertinently, in a voice meant to 'carry' his meaning well around the table: 'Pray, sir, was not your father a grossah?'

Moore smilingly responded: 'Ay, sir, my father was a grocer.'

'Then, pray, why deed he noat make a grossah of you?'