

The Family Circle

THE COMMON MAN

Once on a time—no matter when—
 There lived a man—no matter where—
 His name, it might be Jack or Ben,
 But which I really can't declare.
 His age, I think, was—I don't know—
 I somehow quite forget how old!
 He died, well, several years ago;
 At least that's what I have been told!
 He had a son I'm almost sure,
 And naturally he had a wife.
 He had, it may be, several more,
 I do not know, upon my life!
 Who, when, or how, or where, or what
 It's quite impossible to say;
 There is no record of his lot;
 At all events, he had his day.
 My friend, this tale to you appears,
 No doubt, ridiculous and tame,
 But probably in after years
 Of you and me they'll say the same!

THE TRUE HEIR

Julian was the child of very humble parents. First his mother and then his father died, and Julian was left all alone. He was a little fellow, and a rich man said to him: 'Poor child! You have lost father and mother, you are an orphan, you are all by yourself in the world; and I pity you.' So the rich man placed Julian with a good family, undertook to pay for his schooling, and, when the boy grew big enough, apprenticed him to a useful trade.

When his apprenticeship was finished, Julian said good-bye to his benefactor, and started out on a tour of France. Five years afterward, he returned to his old home. He had travelled a good deal, and worked pretty steadily; but had not made, or at least had not saved, much money.

On arriving in his native city, his first thought was to pay a visit to his rich friend and protector. Alas! the good man had died only a day or two before. Julian found his heirs in the house. They were all furiously angry because their uncle had not left anything like the great fortune which they had expected would be divided among them.

The disappointed nephews and nieces auctioned off all the effects in the deceased man's house. Julian went to the sale, and observed with surprise that the heirs showed no respect whatever to their uncle's memory. They sold everything. At last he saw them put up even the dead man's portrait, at which heartless action he became really indignant.

Naturally Julian had bought the objects which his protector had been fond of, and of course he purchased also the portrait; but it exhausted his purse to do so. He took the picture to his room—a miserable little chamber in a lodging-house—and hung it on the wall by a piece of string. The string was rotten, however, and the portrait fell to the floor.

Julian picked it up and saw that the frame was broken. Wishing to repair it, he examined it carefully, when he received a great surprise. In a hole in the stout frame were a number of diamonds and a paper on which was written: 'I am sure that my heirs are an ungrateful lot. I am sure they will sell even my picture. This portrait will perhaps be purchased by some one whom I have helped. These diamonds are for the purchaser; I give them to him.'

The paper was signed, so there was no disputing Julian's claims to the gems; and he accordingly became the true heir to his benefactor's fortune.

He was now rich instead of poor. He took pity on the orphans of the city; he built them a big house, where they were well looked after, and where he often told them the story of his protector's picture.—Ave Maria.

HOME MANNERS

Parents (says an exchange) might well insist upon brothers treating their sisters with a good deal more of the superfine politeness which they bestow on other people's sisters; and young ladies might beam on their brothers considerably more, with immense effects in the way of promoting joy at the household hearth. It is a sham politeness which is not sufficient to 'go round' to one's own sisters and brothers,

and which is only reserved for strangers. Besides, it never fits one properly when one puts it on for a special occasion. Home manners are worthy of a good deal more attention than many people are apt to believe. The world outside is made a much more agreeable place by the exercise of them. Inside the home there is plenty of scope for them. No one need be afraid of wearing them out. People who feel any alarm about that, and who think they are more polite outside for being ill-mannered inside, might ponder on what happened to Snell's parrot that Max Adeler tells of. Snell taught his parrot some beautiful phrases for public recitation, but, someone suggesting that the parrot might get tired of their constant repetition, Snell taught him some sailor language for his private use. The worst of it was that the parrot always forgot when he was in public and when in private. People with one set of manners will find them become second nature. People with the two sets will forget, like Snell's parrot.

A NEW USE FOR THE COW-CATCHER

Of the stories attributed to Artemus Ward, the best one, perhaps, is one which tells of the advice which he gave to a railway conductor soon after the Civil War. The track was in a wretched condition, and the trains, consequently, were run at a phenomenally low rate of speed. When the conductor was punching his ticket, Artemus remarked:

'Does this railway company allow passengers to give advice, if they do so in a respectful manner?'

The conductor replied in gruff tones that he supposed so.

'Well,' Artemus went on, 'it occurred to me that it would be well to detach the cow-catcher from the front of the engine and hitch it to the rear of the train; you see we are not liable to overtake a cow, but what's to prevent a cow strolling into this car and biting a passenger?'

AN APOLOGUE

Content and Discontent started off one morning, both having been bidden to take a flask of water to the palace of the king.

Discontent glanced with scorn at the scorched land around her.

'You may do better on the hill,' said one whom she met on the road.

But on the hill all things looked dry and parched to her disdainful eyes.

'There is a big river down there in the valley,' said another guide, and Discontent hastened on.

In the valley a little water stagnated in a muddy bed. 'It is not good enough,' grumbled Discontent, as she hurried past.

When Content started, she found a tiny broken jug by the roadside, and in the jug a very little water. 'It is always a beginning,' said Content, as she emptied the water into her flask.

Then she climbed the hill. It was very bleak and barren, and only a few drops of water trickled slowly among the stones. 'Even this is better than nothing,' said Content, while she carefully caught the drops in her flask.

When she reached the valley the mud of the stream had quite dried up, but a little dew lay in the chalice of the flowers. With infinite patience Content emptied the flowers one by one into her flask.

The night fell, and the palace of the king stood white and beautiful in the moonlight. At the entrance Discontent lay dead, with empty hands. Content passed in with timid steps. Her flask was not quite full, nor was the water quite clear, but she had done all she could, and the guardians of the palace bowed down before her, and the king, rising from his throne, stretched out his hands in welcome.

SOME PROVERBS ABOUT WOMEN

An obedient wife commands her husband.
 A man's best fortune—or his worst—is his wife.
 Every man can tame a shrew, but he that is married to her.

Ladies may pardon want of sense, but never want of manners.

Many men blame their wives for their own thriftless lives.

There is many a good wife who cannot either sing or dance well.

She that has a bad husband shows it in her dress.

There is only one good wife in the country and every good husband thinks he has her.