

The Family Circle

ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

Sometimes when I've been very bad,
My mother looks at me,
And I can see she's just as 'sad
As ever she can be.
And then she says: 'To-night I'll tell
Your father what you've done;
When he comes home he'll whip you well!—
And then I want to run.
About a thousand miles away,
Or else drop out of sight—
It's awful waitin' round all day
—To catch it hard at night.
A boy can't always just be good
Or always act just so,
Or always say just what he should,
Without mistakes, you know.
If I'd a little boy like me
And I was big and strong,
I'd let him off sometimes when he
Just happened to do wrong.
I don't like whipping anyway,
I don't believe it's right,
But worst of all's to wait all day
For one you'll get at night.

BERCITA'S HOUSE-CLEANING

Bercita Hepburn, soft, golden tendrils of hair, framing her flower-like face, was a 'thing of beauty,' but there were moments when hearing Bercita was scarcely a 'joy for ever.' Since her class in high school had taken up the study of domestic science, Bercita, its most enthusiastic member, had aired her views at home on every possible occasion. Returning from school one afternoon, Bercita found her mother seated in the library re-arranging her desk.

'Beginning house-cleaning already?' Bercita smiled, bending her slight, graceful figure to press a kiss on her mother's cheek. She sank down beside her, adding, 'I wish, mamma dear, it need not be the upheaval this year that it has been other years. It may really be an enjoyable period if we undertake house-cleaning in the practical way suggested by Miss Milburn in our domestic science class.'

'Tut! tut, Bercita,' chimed in Judge Hepburn from his chair. 'Your mother's way of doing things is all right, and beats the new-fangled ways.'

'Do you know, papa, my one desire matrimonially is that I may get a husband as loyal to me as you are to mamma?' Bercita laughed. The dimples showed themselves daringly in her cheeks, and she looked so winsome and mischievous that the judge and his wife might be pardoned for the indulgent look each flashed upon her.

'What is the matter with your mother's way?' the judge asked severely, albeit the tender look.

Bercita considered. 'Miss Milburn says it is not wise to attempt cleaning more than one room at a time,' she began.

'Neither do I, as a rule,' Mrs. Hepburn answered smilingly. 'But one cannot arrange things exactly as one pleases, when the convenience of outside workers has to be considered.'

'Miss Milburn says it can be done,' Bercita asserted calmly. 'And, anyway, I don't think that house-cleaning should be allowed to interfere with the everyday comforts of the family, particularly the serving of regular meals. So many people, Miss Milburn says, live in a catch-as-you-go way at house-cleaning time.'

The judge looked at his wife, a twinkle in his eye. 'Polly,' he said, 'perhaps it is fortunate for Bercita that the summons came for you to go to grandmother. Bercita doubtless will be glad to undertake the cleaning during your absence.'

'Why, Nathan! The child is too inexperienced!'
'Oh, mamma, dearest, do let me!' Bercita pleaded. 'What's the use of having a fine education if one never has a chance to put it into practice?'

Mrs. Hepburn looked undecided. The judge urged: 'Come, mother, let the fledgeling try its wings.'

It was finally agreed that Bercita should undertake the cleaning of the house during her mother's absence, with the assistance of Nora, the maid, paper-hangers, painters, and so forth.

Two days after Mrs. Hepburn's departure, the judge called his daughter over the telephone.

'Bercita, I'd like you to come down town and take dinner with me, and go to the orchestral concert afterward,' he said.

'Oh, papa, I'm so sorry I can't accept,' Bercita answered regretfully. 'The fact is, I had to let the paperhangers begin to-day or wait for them till next week. Ask Cousin Loretta in my place. And don't come home to dinner, papa. Nora and I haven't a minute for cooking. Good-by, dear.'

It was well for Bercita's pride that she did not see the twinkle in her father's eye as he hung up the receiver. When the judge let himself indoors with his latch-key that night, it was well again for Bercita that she did not see her father's face as he groped his way through the piled-up furniture in the hall.

Early next morning, the judge was routed out of a sound sleep by unwounded sounds in the next room. He arose hurriedly, slipped into his bathrobe, and stepping into the hall, encountered his daughter enveloped in sweeping cap and huge checked gingham apron.

'Good-morning, papa, dear. Hurry and get dressed, won't you? I'm having the calciminers come early, because—' Bercita's voice died away, as she dived into a closet, from which she presently emerged, her arms laden with clothes. The sight of his dress-suit trailing on the floor induced the judge to make a hasty movement to rescue it. But his daughter whisked it out of his reach, tossing it over her shoulder as she disappeared in the next room.

'Thank you, I don't need any help. Do hurry, papa. Breakfast will be read in ten minutes—just coffee and toast this morning.'

The judge gasped. When had his absent housekeeper ever suffered him to depart on a breakfast of merely coffee and toast, even in the thickest of house-cleaning time? The judge dressed and went down to the mockery of breakfast and then beat a hasty retreat.

For two days, when at home, the judge lived, breathed and had his being in house-cleaning activities. Belated meals, 'pick-ups' at that, disturbed papers, mislaid books, appeals for assistance with refractory nails and hooks that his daughter's fingers could not conquer, were only a few of the minor discomforts he was made to endure. But the third day, the enemy was routed. The judge came home to find his daughter lying on the lounge, her head tied up, two of her fingers swathed in cotton, and her right foot bandaged.

'Don't be alarmed, papa,' said a voice that vainly strove to be cheery. 'I've only sprained my ankle, hammered two fingers and worked up a headache. You've been very patient and—the voice trembled and broke. Bercita pushed the bandage higher. 'Papa, why don't you pronounce judgment, and tell me I've made a fool of myself, going at things in such hammer-and-tongs fashion? You must, when you think of mamma's gentle—'

'Poor little girl!' the judge said, in his least judicial voice.

And then Bercita broke down entirely. Presently she said:

'It all comes of my setting up to know more than mamma. And what hurts most is to think I can't set foot on the floor, and she'll be so disappointed when she comes home and finds such a house.'

'She sha'n't, dear,' the judge said. 'We will get Mrs. Moloney to come and help Nora put things straight. I shouldn't wonder if we could get Latham's man to lend a helping hand, too, with the rugs and windows.'

'Papa, I've had my lesson,' Bercita said solemnly. Then she added the next minute, the old mischievous look in her eyes as she reached up and patted her father's cheek. 'And I'm more resolved than ever that he'll have to be a man exactly like you.'

THE COLLECTOR SCORED

The football party were returning from a match many miles from home. On the train arriving at a certain station, where tickets were collected, one of the team discovered that he had lost his return 'half.'

He paid his fare under protest, and made a few sarcastic observations at the ticket collector's expense.

'Come, come,' said the collector good-humoredly. 'As a footballer you should be the first to acknowledge that I have done right.'

'How's that?' hotly retorted the other. 'Well, since I couldn't take your "pass," it was the correct thing to charge the "half"-back, wasn't it?'