

The Family Circle

MOTHER

What sweeter words at close of day,
When little ones just tucked away,
Look into mother's eyes, and say
I love you.

O! how that heart so full of care,
So anxious, watching, waiting there,
Hears in those words God's message fair,
I love you.

When little eyelids close in sleep
She prays that angels guard and keep
Her darling safe, while breathing deep
In dream-land.

O world! O time! what wealth can buy
The mother's love, the mother's sigh?
O God! our ruler from on high
Thrice bless her.

—Rev. P. T. O'Reilly.

WHILE THERE

'There's father, girls.'

'Yes, and he looks tired.'

'We'll soon get him out of that. Poke up the fire, Marg.'

Hester ran to the door, and it was open before her father began to feel for his latchkey. Margaret had stirred up the coal in the grate, coaxing it into a cheery blaze by the time father was kissed and helped off with his coat and hat.

'Well, well, this is good,' He came in the door rubbing his hands, his face reflecting the brightness of the fire. 'Miss Emily,' he said, turning with a cordial handshake to a young girl who had come in from a neighbor's; 'I sometimes say that four girls are just enough—exactly fitted into my needs; but if you belonged to me, I am sure I should feel that I couldn't get along with less than five. But I shouldn't want to steal you away from your father.'

'There comes Uncle George,' said Janet. She handed father the slippers she had been holding to warm and went to open the door for him.

'Dear me! Dear me! Now, if this isn't home-like! You would realise it, Allen, if you were a desolate old bachelor like me. Always being waited on. Happy man,' he said with a laugh, as a younger girl came carefully carrying a glass of hot water.

'Oh, yes, yes,' father's face beamed as he took it, 'it's all nonsense, you know, the rankest kind of nonsense. But these silly girls and their mother have lately built up a theory about me that I am not quite as strong as I used to be, and need a most ridiculous amount of coddling. Nothing at all in it except that in these years you have been away we have both been getting older, and—with a laugh and a pat on the head of the daughter who chanced to be nearest him—'I must say I rather like it.'

'No wonder. It is better than the cold comfort of a boarding-house,' said the visitor, looking around on the bright room and the bright faces with a half sigh. 'I declare, Allen, I used to feel sorry for you in the old times, when I thought you had such a tug of it with family cares. Bread and butter, shoes and stockings—why, I thought myself a lucky and wise fellow in having steered clear of such burdens. But in late years I seem to have awakened to a sort of a fear that I have made a mistake. You are getting paid up for it now.'

'But,' said father, with a glance of sympathy at his brother, 'it is you who are making the mistake in thinking it ever was a burden. The "paying up," as you call it, has kept along with it all the time.'

'I dare say,' agreed the other.

'Janet,' said Emily, as the two friends were seated together a little later, 'hasn't it been rather a new thing with you, this waiting on your father, petting him up and taking such good care of him? Seems to me you didn't take him so much in earnest until lately.'

'I think you are right, Emily; shame be to us that it is so. Well—after a little hesitation—I might as well tell you a bit of sad experience that came before me and set me to doing some thinking. I was making a visit to Helen Ward, when her father was brought home after an attack of apoplexy.'

'I remember.'

'He was still living, but died soon afterward. I came away at once, but not before seeing and hearing enough to open my eyes to something to which I had been blind before. It took me a good while to get over the misery of those poor girls. "He's been working for us all these years," was their cry. "Thinking and striving for us, and we have taken it as a mere matter of course; never tried to make him happy or show how we do love him. Oh, if only we may have a chance yet!" But they never had, poor things! I came home with a heart full of thankfulness that the chance was still left to me.'

'And to me,' said Emily. 'I will take the lesson, too. I don't want to lay up a heartache to last all my life with the thought of lost opportunity.'

A STORY OF DR. STAFFORD

Many stories are being told in the Washington papers of the late Very Rev. Dr. Stafford. One of the best relates the manner in which he came into possession of a cherished edition of Shakespeare.

Several years ago a man visited St. Patrick's rectory, having with him a Boydal edition of Shakespeare.

'I am in great want,' he said, 'and I have come to beg you to buy this book for a hundred dollars.'

The priest looked at the book and answered:

—'My friend, do you know that this edition is worth several thousand dollars?'

The man admitted that he knew its value, but that he was in such immediate need that he would be glad to sell it for even half the sum he had asked, if only the doctor would want it.

'Oh, yes, I want it. I want it as a starving man wants food. I have for many years longed for just this Boydal, and I expect to long for it until I die, but I should be a thief to take it at your terms. If I were rich I would buy it, but it is utterly beyond my means.'

The man insisted that he must sell his book that night, no matter who was the purchaser.

'In which case,' the priest said, 'I should be a mean thief indeed to take advantage of your stress of mind.'

Dr. Stafford lent the man money for his immediate wants, and told him to take his book to two friends of his, one a Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and the other a Senator from the West. Both, he explained, were wealthy men, and each loved the bard well enough to want so rare an edition of his works.

It happened that the man took his book first to the Senator—Cushman K. Davis—and told him of Dr. Stafford's refusal to buy the book at the offered terms.

The Senator considered it a good story, and that night at a large dinner party he repeated it to a group of fellow-Senators and a Justice of the Supreme Court. They, too, considered it a good story, and, as a result, a few nights afterward Dr. Stafford was amazed to receive the book, bearing the names of the Senators and the Justice, all of whom had subscribed and made him a gift of his longed-for "Boydal."

THE AMATEUR CHAUFFEUR

One of the directors of the American Automobile Association tells the following story:—A friend of mine owns a small car. He has no chauffeur, and every time he goes out a breakdown occurs. No wonder. He said to me the other day: "I took my run about all apart yesterday." "Did you?" said I; and, knowing his impracticability, I added seriously: "Well, when you do that you must always be careful not to lose any of the parts." "Not to lose any of them?" said he. "No fear. Why, when I put that machine together again yesterday I had nearly two dozen pieces left over."

A HAT CHASE

A man, whose word is generally to be relied on except on his return from an angling expedition, states that he witnessed an amusing little incident in Wellington the other day. One windy afternoon, which is not an unusual occurrence in the Empire City, a neatly dressed young man was walking along Lambton Quay. He seemed to know that he was worth looking at, for he kept glancing at himself in the shop windows and pulling down his cuffs. At the corner, one of those sudden gusts of wind which seem to come from nowhere blew off his hat.

Away it went, careering along the street, through every bit of mud and dirt visible. Of course, he hurried after it. But the hat had a long start. Once he