

The Family Circle

BY AND BY

'To-morrow I'll do it,' says Bennie;
'I will by and by,' says Seth;
'Not now—pretty soon,' says Jennie;
'In a minute,' says little Beth.
O dear little people, remember,
That, true as the stars in the sky,
The little streets of To-morrow,
Pretty Soon and By and By,
Lead, one and all,
As straight, they say,
As the king's highway,
To the city of Not at All.

AN ADVENTURE IN A STAGE-COACH

The Emperor Joseph II. had been visiting, as he often used to do, the environs of Vienna. A misunderstanding had separated him from the two officers whom he had chosen to accompany him, and he was somewhat at a loss to find means of rejoining them. He was about seven miles from his palace; and, as he did not care to make all that distance on foot, he inquired at the village inn whether he could not procure a carriage or at least a horse to take him into the city.

The innkeeper did not know that the inquirer was anything higher than an ordinary gentleman, and accordingly told him that the only conveyance to be had was the village diligence, or public stage-coach. That vehicle was not a very comfortable one, and was of course quite beneath the dignity of a sovereign; but Joseph II. was a man of simple tastes, so he did not hesitate to take his place in the diligence. And his place chanced to be alongside a little scullion, or kitchen-boy of the inn, who was going to pay a visit to his grandmother in Vienna.

'Nobody knows me here,' said the Emperor to himself, 'and 'twill be dark when we get to the city, so my equipage won't count.'

Then, being pretty tired with his day's travelling, he grew drowsy and dozed off, his arm resting in a few minutes on the scullion's shoulder.

He was suddenly aroused by the voice of the stage-driver, who had discovered that the number of fares he had received did not correspond with the number of his passengers.

'There's some one here who hasn't paid me!' he cried, unable to tell in the gathering obscurity just which of the travellers had or had not handed him his passage money.

The Emperor turned toward the boy and remarked quite innocently:

'It seems this good man hasn't been paid.'

'Well, I'm all right,' said the scullion. 'The driver even suspected the piece of silver I gave him, and rapped it on the wheel to see whether 'twas good or not.' Then, with a slight wink, the lad added: 'But you, sir,—it seems to me you were pretty sound asleep when the fares were taken up.'

The Emperor started and rubbed his eyes.

'Why, of course! That's true. I didn't even think of the necessity of paying. My friend,' he called out to the driver, 'how much do I owe you?'

'A shilling, sir. I have to be careful, if I don't want to be cheated by a lot of tricksters.'

Joseph II. was not offended by the implied rebuke; he was, rather, amused by the adventure. All at once, however, his expression changed, as he remembered that his pockets were empty. He had given his last coin to a poor fellow who had asked him for an alms in the early afternoon.

'Confound it!' he exclaimed, 'I have no money. I've forgotten my purse.'

'Oh, yes! We know all about that,' said the driver, furious at what he believed an attempt to cheat him. 'Well, just you wait till we get to the next village. I'll yank you out pretty lively, and turn you over to the magistrate. We'll see then who you are.'

'Yes, you'll see who I am,' thought the monarch, repressing an inclination to burst out laughing.

'And I'll be paid too, willy-nilly,' continued the driver. 'I'll have my money, even if I have to take the matter to the Emperor himself.'

'You'll be doing perfectly right, my man,' answered Joseph, who had no desire to disclose his identity save as a last resource.

The other passengers, having nothing else to do, took the driver's part against their penniless companion. The little scullion, however, rather sympathised with his neighbor, and he said to the driver:

'Oh, come now, Father Hans! It's hardly worth while making so much fuss about a shilling. And it isn't quite fair to torment this citizen, who maybe doesn't lie, after all. A purse can be forgotten, you know.'

'Well, then, you young imp, you pay for him!' responded Hans, with a growl.

The lad hesitated between the wish to be obliging and the fear of not being repaid. His kindness prevailed; after taking a quick look at the 'citizen,' who was watching him with a smile, he threw a white shilling to the driver, saying to himself, 'I'll risk it, anyway. He doesn't look like a dishonest man.'

Jokes on his innocence, simplicity, and foolishness were showered on him by the other passengers for a time; then, growing tired of their sport, and drowsy as well, these latter gradually subsided into silence.

'So you have no fear of being deceived?' asked Joseph II. of the little scullion.

'No, sir,' replied the boy, after a moment's hesitation. Then, growing confidential, he went on: 'You see, sir, it won't do to play me a trick like that, for I'm not rich. Just as you see me, at fourteen years, I earn absolutely nothing.'

'And yet you paid for your place and mine.'

'Yes, because I saved up for my grandmother a little sum from the pennies given to me now and then by guests at the inn. Outside of that, as the cook's apprentice, I get no wages at all.'

'You'll get them later on, if you like the business.'

'But that's just what I don't. I don't like it all.'

'Perhaps you are a little lazy?'

'Oh, my, no! On the contrary, I'd like to study, but at something else than roasts and sauces. Only it costs; and grandmother is so poorly off that, as you see, I'm obliged to help her with the pennies. I get as tips.'

'You are a fine little chap,' said the Emperor, considerably affected, but not yet making himself known to the boy. 'You are a good lad, and I'm sure Heaven will reward you. As for me—well, I assure you I'll pay you back the shilling you paid for me.'

Quite tranquil and confident, the scullion sank to sleep in his turn, after giving his name and address to his neighbor.

The very next forenoon there appeared at his grandmother's lodging one of the Emperor's couriers, who brought him, in the first place, a well-filled purse of gold, and then a sealed envelope whose contents proved to be Joseph II.'s orders that the kindly scullion should give up his kitchen trade and receive a thorough education in one of the best colleges of the city.

The delighted lad could not sufficiently felicitate himself on having proved serviceable to a stranger; and all his acquaintances were also pleased at his good fortune. All that is, save one, Hans, the driver, who was not only astounded but utterly discomfited when he discovered that his penniless passenger was the Emperor of Austria.—Ave Maria!

CONSIDER WELL BEFORE CHOOSING YOUR FRIENDS

'Associate with the good,' says an old proverb, 'and you will be esteemed as one of them.' A girl cannot be too careful about her companionships. If she is careless in this matter she is sure to deteriorate herself in the estimation of others. Friendships that are quickly formed rarely ripen with the years and are frequently the cause of much unhappiness. The thoughtful girl chooses her friends carefully and cultivates their society in such a happy, well-bred way that her friendships are always a source of real pleasure. Just as the least blemish spoils the beauty of the lily, so the little mistakes that the careless girl makes rob her character of its charm, and leave her with a name that does not stand for much in the estimation of others. 'Opinions rule the world,' says Carlyle, and happy, indeed, is the girl who has made only good and sweet ones.

COLOR-BLINDNESS DEFINED

A well-known man had been lecturing upon color-blindness, and at the conclusion of his remarks a workman, who had evidently not grasped his lucid explanations, came to him and asked if he would solve the mystery.

'Certainly,' said the professor.