

# The Family Circle

## AT CLOSE OF DAY

A little man, in garments grey,  
Goes through the land at close of day,  
And in each trembling, wrinkled hand  
He holds a bag of glistening sand.

From whence he comes, or near or far,  
The children always wondering are  
He travels at a rapid pace,  
And no one ever sees his face.

But come he does and scatters sand,  
One moment only does he stand;  
Quick through the lamp-lit room, it flies;  
They feel it in their blinking eyes.

And hardly have they rubbed them twice,  
Before mamma says: 'In a trice  
Be off now, children, up the stairs;  
Now wash your hands and say your prayers.'

'O, little man, so queer and grey!  
Why do you come?' the children say.  
'How very queer the sand must be.  
That we can feel but never see!'

—Ave Maria.

## ESTHER'S WAY

Everyone was full of sympathy for the Fuller twins when their mother was taken ill. The door-bell rang so often that either Janey or Bess had to be on duty most of the time to answer it and give the latest report from the sick-room. Mary, the maid-of-all-work, had no time for answering the bell, for sickness in the house made a great deal of extra work, and Mary declared that she was never finished; she only stopped when she was too tired to do any more.

Claribel Hughes was especially sorry for Janey and Bess, who were two of her most intimate friends.

'They're so worried, poor dears!' she told herself. 'I'm going in as often as I can and cheer them up.'

As a matter of fact, she went nearly every day, and stayed anywhere from one hour to three, chattering gaily of her various good times. The girls sometimes gave abstracted answers. Claribel took it for granted that this was because they were so anxious about their mother.

But when Esther Corrigan came she slipped in at the back door, and glided noiselessly as a shadow. Bess found her one afternoon when one of Claribel's long visits had come to an end, in the little sewing-room upstairs, darning away for dear life.

'Stockings will wear out, even when there's sickness in the house,' she remarked, smiling up at Bess. 'Inconsiderate of them, isn't it? By the way, I woke up in the night, and the light in your room was burning.'

'We didn't get through with our work till very late,' Bess admitted. 'I don't know why we are so slow.'

And then the bell rang, and she hurried down to receive another caller, who wanted to know just how her mother was, and to tell a long story of illness in her own home the previous winter.

Some of Claribel's friends were enthusiastic over her devotion to the Fuller girls. 'She's been there nearly every day,' they said. 'Wasn't it sweet of her? It must have done them so much good. Claribel is so bright and full of fun.'

As for the backstairs visitor who had done the darning and the dusting and had slipped away without asking anyone to entertain her, no one thought of her at all. No one, that is to say, except the Fuller girls.

## DID YOU EVER THINK

That a kind word put out at interest brings back an enormous percentage of love and appreciation? That though a loving thought may not seem to be appreciated, it has yet made you better and braver because of it? That the little acts of kindness and thoughtfulness day by day are really greater than one immense act of goodness once a year? That to be always

polite to the people at home is not only more ladylike, but more refined than having 'company manners?' That to learn to talk pleasantly about nothing in particular is a great art, and prevents you saying things that you may regret? That to judge anybody by his personal appearance stamps you as not only ignorant, but vulgar.

## A TONGUE FABLE

A tortoise, dissatisfied with her lowly life, had a great desire to see foreign countries. On informing two ducks of her wish, they said: 'We shall be happy, for a fair price, to transport you to any country you please.' The passage money having been agreed upon and paid, the ducks said: 'You must take this narrow piece of stick in your teeth and hold it fast, and we will take hold of it at each end and carry you between us, and as you value your life be sure to keep your mouth shut.' The journey began, and wherever they went there was a large crowd of people, who exclaimed in astonishment: 'What a wonderful sight! The queen of the tortoises with her house at her back!' 'Yes, yes,' said the tortoise, 'you are quite right, I am the queen.' But it would have been better if she had held her tongue, for the moment she opened her mouth she let go the stick and was dashed to pieces on a rock.

## NOT CLAPTRAP

Tomas Salvini, the great actor, although he gave every assistance to his son when he had proved his ability on the stage, was averse at first to his becoming an actor, and would not help him to obtain a hearing. The young man's first appearance was made by favor of Clara Morris, his good friend, at a charity entertainment in Yonkers, where he recited 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'

He was then very young, very eager, and still delightfully queer in his English. A few days before the great occasion some one used in his presence the word claptrap.

'What's that?' demanded young Alessandro at once. 'Clap is so—he struck his hands together; trap is for rats. What, then, is claptrap?'

'It is a vulgar or unworthy bid for applause,' his hostess explained.

'Bah!' he rejoined with contempt. 'I know him—that cheap actor who plays at the gallery. He is then in English a claptrapper, is he not?'

On the night of his debut, although the poor fellow declared he was 'sick with the scare,' he pulled himself together in time and delivered the poem most strikingly.

'With a bound he was on the scrap of a stage,' records Clara Morris, 'and his high, clear "For-w-a-r-d, the Light Brigade!" must surely have been heard down in Broadway. It really was a clever bit of work, a trifle too florid; but that was the result of nervousness. The instinct of the actor was twice plainly shown—once when on making a mistake, instead of stammering or going back, he swiftly "jumped" the faulty lines and dashed on securely with the others; and again when at the close he read with much feeling the words—

"Honor the charge they made,  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!"

Standing as if looking into an open grave, he plucked the white flower from his coat and cast it down—a bit of business that caught the house instantly. While the people maltreated damp umbrellas and kicked out their gum shoes in giving him a recall, he was clutching his hair and wildly protesting to me:

"Madame Clara, I have never meant that for a claptrap! Never! Never! Just if I came to me that moment to throw the flower to the dead. Think me a fool—but not—oh, please not!—a claptrapper!"

## WHERE THE WIND COMES FROM

How many boys and girls know how to find the direction of the wind? Of course, if it were blowing a gale any one could tell, but suppose only a gentle breeze were stirring—hardly enough to make the fickle weathercock decide which way to point—then what would you do? In such a case a woodsman or hunter will thrust one finger into his mouth, wetting it well, and then hold it up in the air. The side which feels coldest shows from which direction the wind comes. The reason of this is plain: the more rapid movement of the air from one direction causes the moisture on that side of the finger to dry more quickly, thus giving the sensation of coolness.