

The Family Circle

TOIL

To work for those we love, with hand and brain,
To spend ourselves, unstinting, day by day,
And see the years slip, one by one, away,
While we no store amass nor guerdon gain;
To count the night hours pass in restless pain.
And watch impatient for the sun's first ray—
All this till youth be passed and we grown grey,
Yet is not toil if only Love remain.
While eye meets eye, and gentle hands caress,
And tender word lifts off the weight of care.
The heaviest load will not too hardly press
If loving heart will still the burden share.
But when Love goes—ah! then we toil indeed,
And, toiling, find our labor all our meed.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS

'Oh, no,' Amy said, with a little tilt of her chin, 'we don't call them neighbors, though they live next door. I suppose they're good enough in their way, but they're very ordinary. I speak to Laura when I meet her on the street, but I'd never think of going to see her.'

It was less than a week later when she woke to find her room filled with smoke. It was almost by a miracle that all the members of the family escaped. And it was to the home of the next-door neighbors that they hurried, shivering as they ran barefooted across the snow. Such a welcome as they received! If they had been dearly-loved friends, coming in after a long absence, they could not have met with a more generous hospitality.

The girl who had made the disagreeable speech about her next-door neighbors ate her breakfast next morning dressed from top to toe in Laura's clothing. 'It's lucky we are so nearly the same size!' Laura said delightedly. 'Mamma's things are so much too large for your mother, and really I had to laugh when I saw your father in papa's coat!'

Amy's mother was half sick from the excitement and exposure, and the host and hostess refused to let her leave till she was well again. 'What's the use of having neighbors,' the head of the house demanded, 'if they can't help you a little in a tight place?' And Amy, overhearing, hung her head, remembering that she had said that she did not count these people as neighbors.

It was a hard lesson surely—the dear home a blackened heap of ruins, her clothing gone, all the treasures she had been accumulating from her baby days. Hardly a day passed but her heart was wrung by the thought of some irretrievable loss. But, after all, it was worth the cost to Amy. The fire, which had burned up her false ideals and given her a new standard for judging those about her, had brought something worth far more than it took away.

A CHAMELEON GIRL

Ray had passed the chameleon on one of the palm trees which ornamented the dining-room of the big Southern Hotel half a dozen times before she discovered its existence. The grotesque little creature was a brilliant green, almost the exact shade of the broad leaves against which its flat body was pressed. When one of the waiters took it in his hand that Ray might examine it more closely, a curious change at once became noticeable. The brilliant green faded till the little animal presented no startling contrast to the hand that held him.

'What strange, strange things there are in the world!' was Ray's philosophical observation, as she ate her soup. 'To think that any creature should be made so as to change color when it changes surroundings!' It never occurred to her that some human beings have the same peculiarity, much less that she was one of them.

When Ray is at home with the modest, ladylike girls who have been her friends since childhood, she is a girl of the quiet manners which show good breeding. But when she spent a part of the winter at a Southern resort, she met at the hotel a girl of a very different stamp, and it was strange how, after a little time spent in her company, Ray's voice was shrill, her laughter loud, and something indefinable in her manner seemed to invite attention. At home Ray attended church and Sunday school regularly. While away she seemed reluctant to bear her mother company. 'Hardly anybody goes!' she objected. 'Why should we?' Just as if a girl could do nothing better than take color from her surroundings!

The chameleon's changes are the provision of wise nature for the protection of a creature otherwise defenceless. But the chameleon girl has no such excuse. In changing her principles when she changes her environment, she finds not safety, but danger.

WHEN SILENCE IS GOLDEN

When our houses take fire, says Dr. Cuyler, the first impulse is to go after a bucket of water. But if temper takes fire, the first impulse is to throw on more fuel. Now, the best bucket of water for a roused temper is resolute silence. If, whenever an irritating act were done, or an injury struck us, we should firmly seal our lips for even ten minutes, we would save ourselves many a quarrel, many a disgrace to our religious profession. Speech is often explosive and shattering. Silence is cooling. It cools us off and cools other people. One of the calmest men I ever knew told me that he used to be violently passionate, but he broke his temper by resolutely bridling his tongue until his anger died away.

THE SMART EMPLOYER

Rudyard Kipling ended his recent address to the students of McGill University with an attack on 'smartness.' He said:

'Whenever and wherever you find one of your dear little playmates showing signs of smartness in his work, his talk, or his play, take him tenderly by the hand, by both hands, by the back of the neck if necessary, and lovingly, playfully, but firmly, lead him to a knowledge of higher and more interesting things.'

Afterwards Mr. Kipling told a story about a smart man.

'This man,' he said, 'owned a dry-goods store, and one day, to his great disgust, he heard a new clerk say to a woman:

"No, madam, we have not had any for a long time."

'With a fierce glance at the clerk, the smart employer rushed up to the woman and said:

"We have plenty in reserve, ma'am; plenty upstairs."

'Lady and clerk looked dazed, and afterwards the smart proprietor learned that the clerk's remark had been made in answer to the woman's "We haven't had any rain lately."

SOME TONGUE TWISTERS

The sun shines on the shop signs.

She says she shall sew a sheet.

She sells sea shells.

The sea ceaseth and it sufficeth us.

A noisy noise annoys an oyster.

Peers peer from the pier perusing penny papers.

Fighting fever's feverish fight fighters feverishly fear fever.

HE COULD NOT FIND MOSCOW

'What makes you late?' asked Tim's father, who in the boy's absence had to see to the evening jobs himself.

'Teacher kept me in.'

'What for?'