

The Family Circle

A SECRET

It isn't in doing your work, my boy,
It isn't in doing the thing you must,
That you win the honor and gain the joy,
Or claim the profit or earn the trust,
It isn't in laboring long and late,
And it isn't the hurry and noise that tell;
The smallest thing that you do is great,
If you do it well.

It isn't in getting it done, my boy,
It isn't in getting it out of the way;
It is not in the methods you may employ,
And it's not in the price that your masters pay;
It isn't in squandering precious time,
And it isn't in rushing ahead pell-mell;
If the thing that you do is to be sublime
You must do it well.

Sacred Heart Review.

THE ODD ONE

'But, mother, there won't be a single girl of my especial friends in school after this year!' Lucie paused to allow her mother to grasp the full significance of this fact. 'Not one!' she repeated, impressively.

Mrs. Campbell did not seem as overwhelmed as Lucie had expected. 'Indeed, dear,' she said quietly, 'that is unfortunate. But does that necessarily make a difference as to your plans?'

'No difference, mother?' Lucie cried. 'Why, I don't want to be the odd one! Grace and Elsie are going to finish at Miss Partridge's school,' she added, suggestively.

'Yes, dear. But the yearly tuition of that school amounts to two-thirds of your father's salary. It would be out of the question, even if we felt certain that the influences there would be best for you.'

'And the others are going to drop school,' continued Lucie. 'Caroline's father says that there are plenty of things a girl can learn right at home.'

'That is true, Lucie. But at the same time, the demand for trained brains is constantly increasing. A girl can learn the arts of homemaking without neglecting her education, and that is something I am not willing you should do.'

That should have settled the question. But, as a matter of fact, it did not. When the school year opened and Lucie was the only representative of a little circle of girls who had been fast friends since their kindergarten days, her interest in her work seemed to vanish. She had not learned that numbers do not decide questions of right or even of expediency. And she was foolishly ambitious to be on the side of the majority. Her listlessness and indifference showed in her class standings. She welcomed every excuse for absenting herself from the sessions of school. Her father and mother began to realise that the situation was more serious than they had supposed.

'It isn't merely that she is missing her chance for an education,' Mr. Campbell said to his wife, 'but she is getting the wrong education. She is learning half-hearted methods. She is becoming a shirk.'

But his expostulations and her mother's remonstrances had strangely little effect on Lucie. She wanted to do as the other girls had done, and felt ill-used and unhappy when the opportunity was denied her.

Discontent has an unfortunate effect on the health. Lucie was taken sick, and the doctor advised her parents not to send her back to school that year. When the question was broached the following fall, she pleaded so piteously to stay at home that, almost against their better judgment, the perplexed parents yielded. At fifteen Lucie's school life had come to an end, and she was perfectly satisfied, because she was no longer 'the odd one' of her little circle.

Three years passed before anything happened to make her doubt the wisdom of her choice. Then came the financial panic, which affected the business of the entire country, and worked havoc in the little city of Bruxton. Failure followed failure. One afternoon Lucie came in from a walk to find her father at home. He was leaning back in the big chair looking very white, and his eyes were closed. His wife sat beside

him, passing her hand gently over his contracted brows. Lucie uttered a startled exclamation. 'Is father sick?'

'Not sick, only tired,' Mrs. Campbell answered, and she made a gesture which Lucie understood to mean that no more questions were to be asked. It was a full hour before she found a chance to give Lucie the explanation she wanted. 'Westcott and Clark have failed. Your father is without a position.'

'But of course he can get another!' Lucie cried, with the buoyant optimism of inexperience.

Her mother checked a sigh. 'We will hope so,' she said. 'But it is a bad time for that just now. Firms are discharging their men instead of taking on new ones. For a moment her anxiety betrayed itself in her face. Then, by a resolute effort, she regained control of herself and went smilingly back to her husband, as if her heart was light.

But Lucie, who had seen the momentary betrayal, thrilled with sudden womanliness. She would help. She was young and strong, and there must be a chance for her. An unspeakable tenderness for the father who had worked for his home so unremittingly since her first recollections welled up in her heart. Now it was her time to work for him.

The next day, without speaking of her purpose to anyone, she went to the office of the chairman of the school board. He was a friend of her father's, and had known her since her babyhood, and she felt sure of his sympathetic interest. 'Yes, that's right,' he said, when she had told her errand. 'You feel as if you wanted to be a help in this crisis. I think perhaps we can do something for you. Let me see, what year did you graduate?'

'I—I didn't graduate,' explained Lucie. 'I left the high school the first term of the second year.'

'Indeed!' The hope in Lucie's heart dropped like the mercury in a thermometer at a blast of a chilling north wind. 'I'm sorry to hear that,' said the gentleman, gravely. 'That makes a difference. We're particular about our teachers nowadays, Miss Lucie. A high school course is the least we can possibly accept.'

A sudden dryness of Lucie's throat made it impossible for her to reply. She pushed back her chair and made an effort to rise. But the chairman of the school board was knitting his brows over some mental problem. 'Wait a moment,' he exclaimed. 'I know of a position of bookkeeper which will be vacant in about two weeks. Possibly I could get you in there.'

The girl moistened her dry lips and answered with an effort. 'But I don't know anything about bookkeeping. It came later in the course.'

'I see,' said the chairman of the school board with kindly regret. 'Well, my dear young lady, this is one of the times when even experienced workers are likely to be without positions. And I need not tell you that one who has no definite training for any especial work may expect a hard time.'

He did not need to tell her, indeed! But though she went out from his office with a sense of humiliation and discouragement, new to her experience, that was but the beginning. For weeks she continued her search for employment. She inserted advertisements in the daily papers. She studied the column, 'Help Wanted, Female,' at first eagerly, later with the dogged persistence that would not give up. Her father was at work again, though in a position inferior to that he had formerly held, before Lucie was engaged to read three hours a day to an invalid. She was paid for this service the sum of three dollars a week. 'I wouldn't mind paying more to the right person,' the old lady told her frankly, 'but you read so badly, my dear.'

It is a long lane that has no turning. The reaction from the business depression came at last. Industries which had lain dormant for months woke up and pushed ahead. Lucie's father secured a position at a better salary, and Lucie's three dollars a week was no longer necessary to eke out the family income. The invalid parted with Lucie reluctantly. 'You're a nice, amiable girl,' she said. 'And you've improved in your reading. I wouldn't mind paying a dollar more to keep you.'

'I shan't be able to do it any longer,' Lucie explained, the color rising in her cheeks. 'I'm going back to school.'

Her mother looked at her hard when Lucie announced that determination. 'It will be a trying place for you, Lucie,' she said. 'Your old acquaintances will have graduated. You will be much older than the majority of your classmates. You will seem the odd one.' She had a purpose in answering as she did. She was anxious to see what her daughter had really learned from the experiences of those trying months.

Lucie smiled. Her eyes met her mother's frankly.