

The Family Circle

BABY HAS GONE TO SCHOOL

The baby has gone to school; ah me!
What will the mother do,
With never a call to button or pin,
Or tie a little shoe?
How can she keep herself busy all day
With the little 'hindering thing' away?

Another basket to fill with lunch,
Another good-bye to say,
And the mother stands at the door to see
Her baby march away.
And turns with a sigh that is half relief,
And half a something akin to grief.

She thinks of a possible future morn,
When the children one by one
Will go from their home out into the world,
To battle with life alone,
And not even the baby be left to cheer
The desolate home of that future year.

She picks up garments here and there,
Thrown down in careless haste,
And tries to think how it would seem
If nothing were displaced;
If the hours were always as still as this,
How could she fear the loneliness?

ADA'S LESSON

'We have drawing and music and writing and spelling and arithmetic and ever so many other things in our school,' said Ada, who was checking them off on her fingers as she spoke. 'What do you and Fred study at your school, Ella?'

'We've never been to school,' said Fred and Ella together. 'Mama teaches us at home.'

'Never been to school and you're eight years old!' said Ada in surprise. 'Isn't that awful?'

'Our schoolhouse burned down just before school commenced,' said Ella. 'We'll go next term.'

'I suppose you don't know very much, then,' said Ada. 'Of course your mama hasn't much time to hear your lessons. We have a drawing teacher and a regular teacher and a music teacher, besides a superintendant. It keeps us just awful busy.'

Fred and Ella looked very sober after that. They loved their mama and thought she knew everything without looking in any book, but she was very busy, and some days they had very short lessons. They had no drawing nor music, and they did not even know what Nature study was that Ada talked about. They were sorry their mama had said the lessons should go right on during their cousin's visit, for now she would find out how little they knew.

'Mr. Masters wants six and one-half dozen of eggs at sixteen cents a dozen,' said Mr. Forbes, coming in just then. 'Which of you children can tell me how much that would be?'

'Where is a pencil?' asked Ada, looking around for a piece of paper. 'I know I can tell quicker than anybody.'

'One dollar and four cents!' cried Fred, and a minute later Ella said it too.

'How do you know?' asked Ada, in surprise, dropping her paper. 'You have had that problem before.'

'No, we haven't,' said Fred, 'but every time we gather the eggs mama asks us how much they will bring in market. She makes problems out of everything, and won't let us take a pencil to work them.'

'I never get my highest grades in arithmetic,' said Ada, 'but in Nature study I often get one hundred.'

Fred and Ella asked what Nature study meant. 'Why, it's about trees and flowers,' said Ada. 'It shows how to tell trees and plants.'

'Oh, is that it?' cried both children. 'Can you tell me what every tree is by looking at it?'

'Our book shows every tree,' said Ada positively. 'I know them all.'

'What is that one out there?' asked Mr. Forbes.

'I—I guess I'd have to have my book to tell,' said Ada. 'Anyway, it's got the leaves all off and our book shows the leaves. I think it must be an oak tree.'

'That's the tree we get our hickory-nuts off of,' said Ella.

That day Mrs. Forbes cut her hand, and Fred and Ella got dinner. They had baked potatoes, fried eggs, baked apples, and fried sausage all on the table when their papa came in, cold and hungry. Ada wanted to help, but she did not know how, so she could only look on and wonder how her cousins had time to learn so many things.

When her mama came for her, Ada had learned many things. 'Mama,' she said, 'Fred and Ella have never gone to school, and they know lots more than I do. And the worst of all is that I told them how much I knew. I've told them how sorry and ashamed I am, and they forgave me, but I wish I hadn't talked that way.'

'My dear, you have learned one lesson to last you all your life,' said her mama. 'The people who really know a great deal are the ones who never boast about it.'

THE RIGHT KIND OF CHARITY

A thoughtful woman asked the other day, in the course of conversation, 'Are we charitable enough? Not the charity that consists in almsgiving, do I mean, but the charity that thinketh no evil and speaketh none. Are we not too prone to judge our fellow-travellers on life's highway? And do we not credit too readily the whispered reports of evil concerning our neighbor? Now,' she continued bravely, 'I am not trying to condone the faults of this one or that one, nor asking you to accept as your associate one who you are convinced is not worthy of your regard. But, good friend, I would rather be imposed upon and trust an unworthy person than to charge with evil, even in my heart, one who is, to all intents, trying to live right.'

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

There were once six blind men who had often heard of elephants, but who had never seen one for, being blind, how could they?

It so happened one morning that an elephant was driven down the road where they stood, and they asked the driver to let him stop so that they might see him.

Of course, they could not see him with their eyes; but they thought that by touching him they could learn just what kind of animal he was.

The first one happened to put his hand on the elephant's side. 'Well, well!' he said, 'now I know all about this beast. He is exactly like a wall.'

The second felt only of the elephant's tusk. 'My brother,' he said, 'you are mistaken. He is not at all like a wall. He is round and smooth and sharp. He is more like a spear than anything else.'

The third happened to take hold of the elephant's trunk. 'Both of you are wrong,' he said. 'Anybody who knows anything can see that this elephant is like a snake.'

The fourth reached out his arms and grasped one of the elephant's legs. 'Oh, how blind you are!' he said. 'It is plain to me that he is round and tall like a tree.'

The fifth was a very tall man, and he chanced to take hold of the elephant's ear. 'The blindest man ought to know that this beast is not like any of the things that you name,' he said. 'He is exactly like a huge fan.'

The sixth was very blind indeed, and it was some time before he could find the elephant at all. At last he seized the animal's tail. 'O, foolish fellows!' he cried. 'You surely have lost your senses. This elephant is not like a wall, or a spear, or a snake, or a tree; neither is he like a fan. But any man with a particle of sense can see he is exactly like a rope.'

THE REASON WHY

An old plasterer is called upon to give evidence for the plaintiff. Counsel for the defendant tries to bully him.

'Your name is John Dobbs?'

'Yes.'

'Are you the same John Dobbs who was sentenced to eight days' imprisonment for using bad language?'

'No.'

'Are you the same John Dobbs who was sentenced to a couple of years' hard labor for theft?'

'No, that wasn't me, either.'

'Then you have never been in prison?'

'Yes, twice.'

'Ah! and how long the first time?'

'One whole afternoon.'

'What!—and the second time?'