

# The Family Circle

## FOUR TO ONE

'I'm sorry,' said Mary, 'it's rainy to-day;  
When I want it pleasant it's always the way;  
It rains, rains, rains!'

'To-day I can finish my book,' said Dean;  
'It's the jolliest one I ever have seen;  
For it rains, rains, rains!'

'It will fill up the swimming hole, p'r'aps,' said Ted,  
'I can dive like a frog if it's over my head;  
Glad it rains, rains, rains!'

'To-day,' said Herr Steuber, 'my plants I'll set out;  
I feared they would die because of the drought.  
Ha! it rains, rains, rains!'

'The weather'll be cooler, and Aunt Polly Haynes  
May get over her fever,' said Lou, 'if it rains—  
If it rains, rains, rains!'

'I am so glad since such good can be done,'  
Said Mary, her face bright as yesterday's sun,  
'That it rains, rains, rains!'

—Exchange.

## AUNT HETTY'S GIFT

It had been understood for years that when Margaret had finished school her room should be refurnished, and, moreover, that she should furnish it according to her own taste, within the limits set by her father's modest income. She had accepted the responsibility with mingled trepidation and delight, and now that the process was almost completed, the former sensation was swallowed up in wholesome satisfaction.

It was certainly a fact that more pretentious rooms often lack a charm which Margaret had succeeded in imparting to this. The delicate shades of the wall-paper blended perfectly with the deeper browns of the rug. The light furniture brightened the effect of the whole, and the photographs and engravings hanging about were neither too many nor too few. Margaret had a right to take credit for the work of her hands, and she rejoiced over it all in outspoken girlish fashion.

Aunt Hetty had watched the progress of the work with a satisfaction second only to Margaret's own, and had admired unstintingly everything that was done. On questions of taste Aunt Hetty's approval was not worth much, to be sure, but her great, loving heart more than made up for such minor lacks. At least so Margaret thought till one morning, when her aunt dropped in flushed and smiling and out of breath.

'Almost done, aren't you, dear?' she said, looking around the room with a beaming smile. 'Well, everything is perfect. No, thank you, I can't sit down. I just stopped in long enough to leave this little package. I don't want to have this pretty room quite finished without some contribution from your old auntie.'

She was gone as soon as the fond speech was spoken, and Margaret, not without some apprehension, began to open the package, which was tied with provoking security. It was not so very little, after all, and the shape was unpleasantly suggestive. When the wrappings were fairly off, Margaret gave a despairing little cry. Just then her mother came in.

'Where shall I put this thing, mamma? I never could have imagined anything so bad. Those glaring colors and that cheap gilt frame spoil everything in the room. I simply can't hang it. I suppose Aunt Hetty will be hurt and offended, but I can't help that. It's like a big trumpet blaring out in the middle of a Mozart sonata.'

It was evidently a case for sympathy, and Margaret's mother never failed in this. But the girl's quick ear detected something else behind the pitying words.

'Mamma, I should almost think you wanted me to hang it—only that's impossible.'

'Why impossible?' asked the mother, smiling a little. Margaret answered with a gesture, as if the matter were beyond words. Then she said:

'You haven't really looked at it. A cheap, gaudy chromo! It's an insult to good taste.'

'Good taste applies to more than the furnishing of rooms, Margaret,' the mother reminded her. 'It surely demands courtesy and kindness toward one's friends.'

'But, mamma, it will spoil everything in the room. All my work will go for nothing.'

'The friendship between your Aunt Hetty and yourself has been almost ideal, Margaret. She certainly loves you dearly, and I have never known you to do or say anything to wound or grieve her. It seems to me it would be a sadder thing to spoil such harmony than to spoil the harmony of a pretty room.'

She went away, leaving her daughter to think over the suggestion. When she entered the room again, Aunt Hetty's picture was hanging on the wall, opposite an engraving after Corot, while on the right Raphael's cherubs turned up their eyes disapprovingly. There could be no doubt that it was a false note. Margaret's mother felt a little pang of sympathy in the midst of her gladness.

For a day or two Margaret's face was very sober, but into her heart was stealing something better than her old-time elation. Sacrifice has joys all its own. The sight of Aunt Hetty's beaming face gave her a sense of having had a narrow escape. If she had cast a shadow over that kind face, and wounded the heart that loved her so loyally, the pang in her own heart would have outlived the impossible flowers blooming in the gilt frame upstairs.

She came in from a walk one afternoon and went directly to her room to lay aside her wraps. Then she gave a startled exclamation. The cherubs had lost their disapproving air, and the statuette of Minerva on the mantel seemed positively smiling. 'Where is it?' cried Margaret, looking about her wildly; 'who took it away?'

Her mother had followed her upstairs, and she gave the girl's arm a loving pressure. 'Aunt Hetty took it. She came in this afternoon, and said she'd been thinking about that picture, and it seemed as if it didn't quite belong with the rest of the things in the room. She wants you to go with her to Burdette's to-morrow and pick out something that will harmonise better.' She seemed as happy and excited about it as a child.

There were tears in Margaret's eyes as she listened. 'It seems strange that I could have put the little thing so much before the greater, and cared more for my pretty room than for Aunt Hetty's happiness. Mamma, dear, what would girls do if they didn't have good mothers to keep them from making mistakes?'

## THE POWER TO PLEASE

If you wear a bulldog expression, if you go about looking sour and disagreeable, you must not wonder that you are not popular. Everybody likes pleasant faces. We are always looking for the sunshine, and we want to get away from the clouds and gloom.

If you want to be popular you must assume a popular attitude. Be sunny and cheerful, helpful and kind.

The great thing to draw people to you is to make them feel that you are interested in them. It is useless to do this for effect. You must be really interested, or the deception will be obvious.

If you avoid people you must expect them to avoid you; and if you always talk about yourself you will find that people will move away from you. You do not please them. They want you to be interested in them.

The power to please is a great success asset. It will do for you what money will not do.

It is astonishing how much you can learn from people in social intercourse when you know how to look at them rightly. But it is a fact that you can only get a great deal out of them by giving them a great deal of yourself. The more you radiate yourself, the more magnanimous you are, the more generous of yourself, the more you will get back.

## VOLTAIRE AND THE BURGOMASTER

Voltaire was one day dining with the King of Prussia in his castle at Cleves. During the repast the French atheist, as was his wont, lost no opportunity of scoffing at religion and its votaries. The guests listened at first in silence, but at last one of them, a stout burgomaster, filled with righteous indignation at hearing all he held most sacred thus turned into ridicule, could restrain himself no longer.

'As for me,' Voltaire was saying in a sneering tone, 'I would sell my place in heaven for a Prussian thaler.'

'Monsieur de Voltaire,' observed the burgomaster, 'in Prussia we never buy costly goods without feeling sure of the owner's right to them. If you can prove your right to a place in heaven I will buy it for the sum of ten thousand thalers.'

'Bravo, burgomaster!' cried Frederic the Second, who, although he shared many of Voltaire's opinions, could not help enjoying his discomfiture. For once the quick-witted atheist had no reply.