The Family Circle

TALKS WITH NATURE

'I think you're quite funny,' I said
To the River, 'for while you've a bed
You're awake night and day,
And run on, yet you stay;
And your mouth is so far from your head.'

I said to the Hill: 'I'll allow
You have a most wonderful brow,
But you've such a big foot
That you never can put
On a shoe of the style they use now.'

I said to the Tree: 'You are queer;
Your trunk is all packed, but I fear
You can't leave until spring
When—a curious thing!—
You must still remain standing right here.'

CLIFFORD'S NEW GIRL

'The old dishes to wipe,' whined Clifford. 'I never saw one little supper make so many. Rob White never wipes dishes, and I think it's hateful that I have to do it.'

Mrs. Fagan looked at him in dismay.

'Why, Clifford, I thought you enjoyed helping mother,' she said.

Clifford felt sorry about the pained look on his mother's face. 'I do like to help you, mother, and all that, but dishes are girls' work. I wish I didn't have to wipe any more for a month, anyway.'

'Well, you need not,' said Mr. Fagan, who just came into the room.

'Why needn't I?' questioned Clifford.

'I had a letter from Cousin Helen Webb to-day, and she wants you to visit her for a month. She says she wants some life in the old home,' explained Mr. Fagan.

Clifford danced in glee. 'May I go?' he questioned. 'I never saw Cousin Helen, but I know she would be fine. It will be great fun to visit in a little town.'

So it was arranged that the visit should be made, and Clifford spent the week intervening in making plans. He arrived at his cousin's in a state of great excitement. He could hardly go to sleep that night for thinking of what he would do the next day.

His cousin rapped on the door at half-past 5 the next morning.

'Yes,' called Clifford, drowsily, and he immediately went to sleep again.

At 6 Miss Webb opened Clifford's door. 'Breakfast is ready,' she said quietly. 'I am surprised that you are so lazy. A big boy should be up early. I am ashamed of you.'

'Mamma lets me sleep until 9 o'clock,' he answered, in surprise. 'She says a growing boy needs lots of sleep to make him strong.'

At breakfast Clifford's table manners were criticised. His cousin was shocked, later, when he slid down the banister. She was greatly amazed when he went up town without asking.

'Why, Cousin Helen, a fellow must do something for amusement,' he explained.

'Well, walk in the garden, or read. I don't like anyone to tear about the house. How do I know who you would talk to up town? I want you to have proper company while you are here. And I may as well say I don't want boys coming here to play, either; they make too much noise.'

At the end of three days Clifford longed for home. There he had some liberties; here it was always 'don't.' He had never realised how nice home was before. That evening out of sheer loneliness he offered to wipe the supper dishes.

'No, thank you,' said his cousin. 'You would break one the first thing.'

'I wipe my mother's dishes and they are just as nice as yours.' Clifford knew the remark was impolite, but he didn't care.

'I am going home to-day,' Clifford the next morning announced at breakfast.

'Going home!' his cousin exclaimed. 'Why, you came to stay a month, and a week is not gone yet.'

'I don't care. It seems that I would just die if I didn't see my father and mother to-day. I'm going home at 1 o'clock.' And go he did.

Mr. and Mrs. Fagan were surprised just as they sat down to supper by a 'Hello!' followed by Clifford.

'Why, Clifford, what is the matter?' his mother exclaimed.

'Nothing, I just got homesick. I thought I would just die. I guess Cousin Helen don't understand boys; she never wanted me to do a thing. I am so glad to be home. I won't even complain if I have to wipe dishes.'

'So there are worse things than wiping dishes, are there, son?' his mother asked, smiling.

'Yes, and I'll tell you what it is. It's to live with someone who don't understand a fellow like his mother does. Mothers don't mind a boy's noise and fun,' and Clifford gave her a resounding kiss.

LETTER WRITING

If people are known by the company they keep, a girl is certainly judged by the kind of a note she writes. Vulgar stationery, incorrect expressions, carelessness of any kind, will do much toward making her appear ill-bred, and a stranger receiving such a note gets a more positively unpleasant idea of the writer than maybe would ever be made by word of mouth. Note paper of a pronounced color is bad form, and should never be used. Colored inks, highly scented papers, or too lavish use of any of the fads along these lines, are the greatest evidence of bad breeding that a girl can show. Any appearance of haste is inexcusable in letter-writing, all numbers, including the date, should be written out. In formal writing, the entire name should be signed; except amongst absolute intimates the signing of a 'nickname' is atrocious form.

A MOTHER'S GREATEST REWARD

A certain boy matriculated in one of the Catholic universities of the United States. He was poorly clad. When this boy paid the board, tuition, and the price of the second-hand books, he had just five dollars left.

At the end of the fourth year he took the M.A. degree. His poor, old, widowed mother sold one of the plough horses to pay him through the fifth year. But at the end of that year he sat among the graduates in his plain brown linen coat and trousers and no vest. But he was the honor graduate, and at the head of the class.

When a beautiful gold medal was handed to him he stepped from the rostrum and walked straight to the back of the room, where right by the door sat a homely old woman in black, and tied the blue ribbon with the great glittering medal around her neck.

She buried her wrinkled face in her old drawn hands, and wept like a child. It seemed the applause would never die away. And now he has a high position at £1500 a year, his mother sits happily in the gloamings of a beyond, and the picture of her noble son hangs on the wall of his *alma mater*.

THINGS WHICH MONEY CANNOT BUY

A boot to fit the foot of a mountain.
A heel on which to place the spur of the moment.
A collar for a neck of land.
A bit for the mouth of a river.
Teeth for the jaws of death.

A KNOWING DOG

'Now,' said the narrator, 'I've got a dog here I would not take £20 for. You can believe me or not, but what I am going to tell you is truth. In the early part of last spring I lost about a score of very valuable ewes, until one day as I was looking across from my house to the edge of the range opposite, about two miles away, I noticed some sheep. I got my telescope, and assured myself that they were mine. I placed the telescope in a suitable position, and made Bob, our best collie, look through it. After about a minute the dog wagged his tail and made off. In less than two hours he brought the sheep home safe and sound.'

NO CHANCE

'And where is Carlyle's house?' asked an American tourist strenuously 'doing' Edinburgh.

'Which Carlyle?' said the policeman to whom the question was addressed.

'The man who wrote *Sartor Resartus*,' said the American, 'but he's dead.'

'Oh!' said the constable; 'if the man has been dead for a few years, there ain't much chance of finding out anything about him in a big place like this.'