

The Family Circle

SMILE ALWAYS.

Start the day with smiling, and it will not seem so long;
Start the day with music, and the heart will join the song.

Start the day with sunshine, and the clouds will soon depart—

There are no clouds or shadows where there's singing in the heart.

Start the day with kindness, and the toil will not be great;

Start the day with blossoms, and the rose will deck your gate.

THE PREFECT WHO UNDERSTOOD.

Father Aloysius gazed sadly at the stubborn little figure before him. Defiance was stamped on every feature of the round, boyish face. The blue eyes were half closed, and the lips tightly compressed as the culprit stood sullenly facing the window.

Father Aloysius sighed.

'Arnold, if you would only go and apologise to Father Ignatius he would understand—go and tell him you are sorry.'

'I'm not sorry, Father: I can't say so unless I am, can I?' the boy asked, never shifting his gaze from the window.

'But why aren't you sorry, Arnold?' Father Ignatius—

'He's a German, and he don't understand Irish boys,' the lad burst forth hotly. 'He's no kind of a prefect—he isn't fair—and he don't care a thing about any but the German fellows. If Joe Miller or Hans Ahrens did what I did this morning he'd have never said a word. He ain't fair—that's why I'm not sorry. I'm glad.'

'If that is the way you feel,' said the priest slowly, 'I think I will have you repeat what you have just said to the rector. He will not be in his office for a half-hour yet. Sit over there by the window for the present. I am sure he will be glad to know your opinion of the system of discipline in the junior department,' he added as he turned back to his desk and drew his cassock over his knees.

Arnold kept his outward show of indifference, but he was inwardly agitated. Tell the rector that he did not approve of Father Ignatius' system of discipline! Tell the rector he was not fair? Never! He would be sent home, no doubt, for the rector would be angry. Desperately he clinched his hands on the low window seat as shouts rose to him from the playground below. They were cheering Joe Miller—he must have made a home run, from the sounds. Below, all the juniors were playing on the campus, all but himself—and he in disgrace and yet to face the rector. It was all wrong. Father Aloysius continued opening the pile of mail that lay on his desk. After covertly watching Arnold for half an hour, he sighed again.

His offence was serious. He had broken one of the rules early in the day, and had been reproved by Father Ignatius, prefect of the junior department. Arnold had so far forgotten himself as to answer the priest boldly and disrespectfully. Father Ignatius, surprised and pained, perceiving that he was making no headway, sent him to Father Aloysius, prefect of the seniors. Arnold had a deep respect and much admiration for Father Aloysius. He had often envied the seniors their possession of him and felt that he was indeed a priest who would 'understand a fellow,' German or Irish. Previously he had admired him from afar; now actual contact revealed a firmer nature than that of Father Ignatius—a man who did not hesitate to send one to the rector! It was hard to believe.

Father Aloysius turned to the lad suddenly and held out a letter.

'Your mail,' he said. 'Father Ignatius sent it over.'

Arnold took it with fast-beating heart. That was good of his prefect anyway—he might have kept it. The boy's heart sank when he read the familiar writing. A letter very similar to it in contents was lying on Father Aloysius' desk. It was signed by Mrs. Mitchell, and stated that the lady was coming to St. Martin's College on Thursday afternoon and hoped to hear a favorable report of her son.

Why, this was Thursday, and it was nearly four o'clock. She must be here even now. Perhaps they would not let him see her. Perhaps they might send him home with her. Suddenly it flashed over him—all that it would mean to leave St. Martin's. How grieved his dear mother would be—and his hearty, kindly father. He turned a shade whiter and dropped a few hot tears on the letter, but he did not look toward the desk.

After a few moments had passed a knock was heard at the study door and old Brother John announced that Mrs. Mitchell was in the parlor and wished to see her son.

Arnold waited breathless. Father Aloysius would go down first and tell her.

'Arnold,' said the priest, swinging around in his chair, 'you may go down and you may go with your mother to the guests' dining-room for some tea.'

The boy sprang up with a choked 'Thank you, Father,' and tore like a young cyclone out of the room and down the stairway.

When he reached the parlor he hesitated. He would have to tell her, but perhaps it wouldn't sound so bad if he told it first. She would hear it anyway, so better from him from the first. As he stopped outside the door he heard voices—his mother's and Father Ignatius'. It was all up—he would surely tell. Unconsciously he listened:

'Yes, he is a good lad, very good and pious; he will make a fine man.'

'But, Father, he isn't always good, I know.'

'Oh, boys will do things—yes—but not bad things. Youth and mischief, you know; but he has a temper I am praying he will learn to control—and he tries very hard.'

Now it was coming sure.

'He has one very good quality: he is quick to say "I'm sorry." When a boy will do that, Mrs. Mitchell, he is pretty safe.'

And this from the man who couldn't understand. Arnold did not wait for his mother's answer. He wanted to see her and, most of all, he wanted to see his prefect. He knocked softly and entered. He embraced his mother warmly, and during the greeting the young priest slipped away.

After they had talked a long time Mrs. Mitchell said:

'Well, son, how's the temper?'

'Oh, it's bad, mother, lots of times—and it gets harder and harder to say "I'm sorry," but I do, though. I had an awful time to-day—' And then he told her.

'I'll go to him right after studies to-night,' he promised when his mother kissed him good-bye.

It wanted eight minutes to supper time when her carriage had rolled away down the broad road. Arnold thought he would run and take a look at Brother Peter's rabbits to try and forget how he missed his mother. Somehow that lump in his throat would come whenever they parted. All the other fellows were in the study hall, but he had been excused for the whole hour; so to the rabbit hutches he went. In the garden walk he came face to face with his prefect walking with Father Aloysius. It was now or never.

'Father,' he said bravely to the young priest, 'I am sorry I lost my temper this morning and said those things. I didn't mean to—'

Father Ignatius' arm was around the lad's shoulder. 'That's all right, my boy. I made a mistake, too. Why didn't you tell me it was Hans Ahrens that was talking in ranks instead of yourself?'