

The Family Circle

UNINVITED GUESTS

I wrote the invitation and I pinned it to the tree. It said, 'Dear Mrs. Robin, bring your family to tea.' Then I made the table ready in the orchard's pleasant shade, The cloth a pie-plant leaf, the cups of acorn shells were made. Some cookies and some bread-crumbs, and the party was complete. How happy would the robins be, with such good things to eat! So then, behind the largest tree, I hid as best I could, And watched to see my company come hopping through the wood, When there! all in a moment, down swooped upon the ground A host of greedy sparrows, and took everything they found. As off I drove these sparrows, all dressed up in their best, I saw the robins coming, each in his scarlet vest. I almost cried—I was so vexed—to invite these friends to sup, And have some other people come and eat the party up.

GETTING A JOB

We had occasion at one time to see the effect of a 'Boy Wanted' ad. in the city newspapers. This employer advertised for a bright intelligent young boy, to report at eight o'clock the following morning.

The first boy showed up somewhere about 6.45, and boys kept steadily coming until the hall outside the door was crowded. The elevator worked overtime carrying the youngsters up to the top floor where the office was situated. By the size of the crowd we thought that all the bright, intelligent boys in Massachusetts had gathered to apply for this particular job.

At eight o'clock, the genial 'boss' put in his appearance and in order to get to his office had to go in a side door. He could not suppress an amused smile as he saw those earnest, eager-looking boys, ranging from twelve to sixteen years of age, as each tried to push the other aside and so be near the entrance.

When all was ready the 'boss' opened the door and allowed the nearest boy to enter. The 'boss' looked him all over, asked him a few common-place questions, and told him he would not do. This process went on, right down through the line. Some he told to stay out in the hall and be interviewed again, some didn't get over the threshold, but were sent away at sight; others were put through a lot of questioning and then let go.

Out of all that large aggregation, nine were all that were brought back and lined up side by side. These were put through a series of very hard questions, and finally all were turned off with the exception of one little chap whose face shone with all the radiance imaginable at his good luck. He was told to report the next morning for work, and as he hurriedly turned to go, the good-natured 'boss' stopped him and said: 'Where are you going now?' He turned, but hardly stopped, saying, 'I am going home to tell my mother I landed the job.' 'I guess I got the lad all right,' exclaimed the 'boss.'

We asked the 'boss' what his method was in hiring boys.

'Their general appearance and the way they come into the office,' was his reply. 'I look at their hands, and any trace of nicotine dooms that fellow. I ask another some questions to find out how he answers; if he is "fresh" in his answers, he goes. I try to find out what he does in his leisure time; that is the vital question with me. If he is industrious—he is the lad I want. Clothes make no difference to me. I remember when I had to wear patches, but I do look for neatness. A neat-appearing boy will keep a neat office. You will notice that that particular lad answered all my questions in an upright, straightforward manner; he is not a dandy, but he is very neat, and what is more he did not spend his time at the street corner.'

What is the moral?

THE SIMPLE PLEASURES

There is good in everything. One of the useful results of the recent discussion of great wealth is the proof and the acknowledgment that money is not the chief thing in life. The possessors have testified unanimously that it has its limitations, and that one thing luxury cannot bring is happiness. We find Mr. Rockefeller, the richest man the world has ever known, pursuing the simple pleasures as though his total fortune were a hundred instead of a billion dollars. Mr. Carnegie, who is unable to give as much as he makes, seeks the plain joys as modestly as the humblest of his workmen. The men who have reached affluence beyond even their own dreams, have to return

to the small and cheap habits and recreations for the pleasures that make their old age comfortable.

Suppose we should approach the finest and costliest palace ever erected by man for the joy of himself and his family and friends. Then let us place it beside the rag-doll familiar to every cottage and every tenement. Which would represent the larger total of human happiness? The palace would sink into absolute insignificance in comparison with that homely little bundle. The rag-doll has brought more pleasure to the human heart than have all the mansions in the world. What memory lingers longest and warmest in your heart? Is it grand opera, or a society reception, or a great gathering of any kind? Or is it a sweet tender day in the woods, or a curiously pleasant recollection of a little picnic or of some other simple time when all the circumstances seemed tuned to content?

Men and women make their greatest mistake when they think that happiness may be found in society. There is no tragedy more pitiful in modern life than that error of pride which leads one to wish for the so-called fashionable life. Here we have a sure road of gilded misery leading amid tinsel joys to an orchard in which the only harvest is Dead Sea fruit.

We do not sufficiently appreciate the simple pleasures that lie about us. There is a familiar story of a vessel's crew almost dying of thirst off the coast of Brazil. Another vessel passing near was hailed, and implored to 'Send water or we perish.' The quick reply was that if they would dip down they would get all they wanted. The fresh-water current of the Amazon had projected itself far into the ocean, and for days the men had suffered for fresh water when abundance was all about them. It is that way in the affairs of humankind. We search the far-off horizon for that which is within our reach.

A little patience, a little surrender of pride, a little interest in others, a little trying to do good, will make the whole outlook of life radiant. Try it, and see how rich and how prompt will be your return.

SOME YOUNG HEROES

What boy or girl does not admire persons performing deeds of great courage and daring sacrifice, for the good of others, in times of danger and peril? It will certainly be interesting to all to read of the heroic conduct of a child during the earthquake in Messina.

Luigi Gabi, a twelve-year-old boy, was awakened from sleep by a great crash and rumbling. He felt the floor rock beneath him and heard a noise as if the whole sea were pouring in upon the land. Beams and plaster had fallen all about him, but he himself, by a happy chance, escaped without a scratch. He rushed out in his night-clothes into the open air. He was all alone. The shrieks of the injured rose above the roar of the falling buildings. He called vainly for his father and mother. No one paid any attention to him. It was impossible to get back into the house, for a second earthquake had tumbled a great mass of wreckage across the door.

All night long Luigi waited. When morning came clouds overspread the ruins of Messina, and rain began to fall in torrents. Unable to find any trace of his father and mother, he at last decided to try and make his way back into the ruins of his home. Wet and shivering, he clambered carefully through the debris, and at last reached the room in which his father and mother had slept. The door opened outward, but against it were now piled great beams fallen from the floor above. The window, which opened on the street, had been blockaded by the wall of the house opposite, which had toppled clear across the narrow street.

'Father!' Luigi called at the full strength of his lungs. Although the roar of the rain all but drowned his voice, the cry must have penetrated the blockaded door, for he heard a faint sound, which told him that his parents still lived, and were tightly imprisoned in their sleeping-room.

Luigi tried to get help, but everybody seemed quite distracted by the terrible calamity which had befallen the city, and they paid no attention to the pleas of the boy. Seeing that if anything was to be done he would have to do it himself, he returned resolutely to the wreckage at the door, and began to tug and strain at the heavy beams and mass of plaster and stone. Little by little he cleared it away. By nightfall, although weakened by hunger and exertion, he had the satisfaction of seeing all but the heaviest timber moved enough to open the door a crack. He called through the door to his father, and the combined efforts of the two were sufficient to free the nearly suffocating parents from their prison, and bring Luigi again to his mother's arms. Only the most persistent courage and devotion could have made it possible for a twelve-year-old boy to accomplish this deed.

SCHOOLBOY HOWLERS

The following collection of schoolboy 'howlers' is from an English publication:—

Panama is a town of Colombo, where they are trying to make an isthmus.

The Pyramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.