

The Family Circle

THE ATTIC

Up in the attic where mother goes
Is a trunk in a shadowed nook—
A trunk—and its lid she will oft unclose,
As if it were a precious book.

She kneels at its side on the attic boards
And tenderly, soft and slow,
She counts all the treasures she fondly hoards—
The things of the long ago.

A yellowing dress, once the sheerest white
That shimmered in joyous pride—
She looks at it now with the girl's delight
That was hers when she stood a bride.

There is a ribbon of faded blue
She keeps with the satin gown;
Buckles and lace—and a little shoe;
Sadly she lays it down.

Up in the attic where mother goes
Is a trunk in a shadowed place—
A trunk with the scent of a withered rose
On the satin and shoe and lace.

None of us touches its battered lid,
But safe in its niche it stays
Sacred to all that her heart has hid—
Gold of the other days.

THE HAPPY TODD CHILDREN

'Mamma, I just wish you would let us be as happy as the Todd children,' said Fanny Train very suddenly one day as her mother reached a snarl in her hair.

'Who are the Todd children, dear?'

'They live in the house across the way, mamma. You know they moved in last week.'

'Oh, our new neighbours! How do you know the children, Fanny? I have seen them a few times, but never outside their gate,' said Mrs. Train.

'I have never talked to the children, but they seem so happy,' exclaimed Fanny. 'They wear their old clothes all day and play at anything they like and don't have to bother about being cleaned up at all. I wish we could do like that.'

'So do I,' said Bennie, who was struggling with his stockings. 'They do have the best time with their dog and everything. They make mud pies and their mamma never comes out to say a word to them,' he added. 'They don't have to worry about their clothes at all.'

'So you think that makes them happy?' asked their mamma. 'Maybe if you knew them well you would find they were not content all the time any more than other boys and girls are.'

But the children were sure they were right. Day after day they watched the two little boys and the little girl in their old clothes playing with their dog, and every day they felt sure they were the happiest children in town.

One day Bennie called to the little boy across the way, and he ran down to the iron gate to answer. 'You have awful good times, don't you?' said Bennie wistfully. Bennie had a nice yard to play in and a dog to play with, too, but the children across the way had so much better times, he thought.

'Indeed we do,' said the little boy, 'and to-day we are the happiest children in the whole world.' Just then somebody called him to come to the house, and he could not tell why that day found them so much happier than usual.

But that afternoon a wonderful thing happened. A gentleman came up to the iron gate, which was open by this time, wheeling an invalid's chair with a very pale lady in it, and three little children met them with shouts of joy.

'Our mamma is home from the hospital, so that's why we are so happy,' said the little boy. 'She isn't well, but she soon will be.'

'Then it wasn't because you could wear your old clothes every day and play in the dirt that you had such good times?' said Fanny, in surprise.

'Of course not. Mamma said if we kept well and happy it would help her get well, and we did. We had to wear our old clothes, because Mary wouldn't clean us up and let us wear our good ones. We're going to have better times.'

And after that Fanny hadn't so much to say about snarls in her hair, and Bennie didn't look across the way so much and pity himself, for the children across the way were clean and well cared for after their mamma got home, and all together they had many joyous times that summer.

TO MAKE LIFE HAPPY

Here is something we all should bear in mind. 'The way to make friends is to be friendly; the way to promote

fraternity is to be brotherly; the way to secure harmony is to yield pleasantly to the will of the majority; the way to secure forgiveness is to be forgiving; the way to be happy is to make others happy; the way to regard an enemy is to return good for evil; the way to secure the respect of your brethren is to show deference to the opinion of your brothers and, instead of kicking at everything that is done, put your shoulder to the wheel and help roll it along; the way to make yourself a useful member of the world is to be useful, not fly off at a tangent in the showy procession, in the sickroom and every place where anyone is in distress; the way to make your life bright is to carry sunshine with you; the way to be a true friend is to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

WHAT BOYS SHOULD KNOW

A philosopher (remarks the *Catholic Sentinel*) has said that true education of boys is to 'teach them what they ought to know when they become men.'

First—To be true and to be genuine. No education is worth anything that does not include this. A man would better not know how to read and be true and genuine in action rather than be learned in all sciences and in all languages and be at the same time false in heart and counterfeit in life.

Second—To be pure in thought, language and life—pure in mind and body.

Third—To be unselfish; to care for the feelings and comforts of others; to be generous, noble, and manly. This will include a genuine reverence for the aged and for things sacred.

Fourth—To be self reliant and self helpful even from childhood; to be industrious always and self-supporting at the earliest possible age. Teach them that all honest work is honorable; that an idle life of dependence on others is disgraceful.

When a boy has learned these things, when he has made these ideas part of him, however poor or however rich, he has learned the most important things he ought to know.

FOLLOWED INSTRUCTIONS

News agency companies play an important part in the production of the daily press. The manager of a new company applied to the editor of a leading newspaper, and solicited his patronage. The editor replied that he had special correspondents in many parts of the world, and also employed the services of two other news agencies.

The manager was persistent, and the editor yielded to his persuasions, but added:

'You must take care that your news is always authentic, and you need not trouble to send us trivial "copy," and leave out all "sea serpents" and such things.'

The manager, of course, agreed. Presently he sent to the newspaper the tragic announcement:

'The Bishop of Java found dead on the seashore.'

This statement duly appeared.

The friends of the Bishop were much startled and grieved, telegraphed expressions of sympathy to his relatives, and inquired further details of his death. Replies speedily came that the Bishop was alive and well.

The editor received abusive letters, and, much annoyed, sent for the manager of the agency, demanding an explanation of this false intelligence.

The manager replied:

'Well, I don't see you have anything to complain of. The full message which we received was, "The Bishop of Java found dead a sea serpent on the seashore"; but you told us always to leave out sea serpents, and so we did. We only carried out your instructions.'

LETTER-WRITING

The first step in learning to write letters is to devote time, thought, and attention to what may be called the technical and elementary rules in correspondence—legible handwriting, grammatical language, correct spelling and punctuation—and to see that one's letter is dated, signed, and addressed with care.

Letters that are neat in appearance and easy to read always commend the writer and are pleasant to receive, while those that are untidy, with slovenly handwriting, produce a bad impression as to the characteristics of the sender. Good manners in correspondence mean not only polite expressions, but an intention not to give trouble in the perusal of one's letters.

Plain note-paper, rather thick and unruled, is correct. It is folded once and enclosed in an envelope to fit. Black ink is used. It is inexcusable to write in pencil. Write straight across the page, and allow plenty of space between the lines. There should be no crowding of words; liberality in the use of paper is a rigid rule. The address is written at the top of the page, towards the right. The date is beneath it in numerals.

A dictionary should be at hand if one is not sure of spelling. There must be a careful regard for commas, periods, and capitals.

A letter to an acquaintance may begin, 'My dear Mrs. Brown,' or 'Dear Mrs. Brown.' A business letter to a stranger should begin, 'Mrs. James White. Dear Madam;'