

The Family Circle

RICHES

A rusty nail, a bit of string,
Keys that won't fit anything,
A spinning-top, a piece of chalk,
Peppermints, a broken cork,
A jew's-harp, and a postage stamp,
A wick that once burned in a lamp,
Shotgun pellets, two cents in cash,
One-half of a false moustache,
A broken knife, a piece of wax,
Two bullets, and a carpet tack—
These things, together with a rag,
A ring, a comb, a little tag,
Rubber bands, an empty locket,
I found in Dicky's little pocket!

'A LIBERAL REWARD'

'Here it is!' Ione's voice was shrill with excitement as she read, 'Lost—On Jefferson street, between Eighteenth and Thirty-second, a locket set with diamonds. Liberal reward if returned to 2020 Spring street.'

'That's nice,' her mother said, as she poured the coffee. 'I felt sure it would be in the "Lost and Found Column" this morning. People who lose diamond lockets aren't going to give up without making an effort to find them.'

'And a reward for anything like that ought to be pretty liberal, too,' declared Ione's brother, Jack. 'What are you going to do with your wealth, Ione? Whew! weren't you lucky, though, to stumble on that on your way from school?'

'Wasn't I!' Ione's face glowed. 'I could hardly believe my eyes, when I saw it there right at my feet and not a soul in sight. I'd love to have a pretty locket like that, but, of course, I'd rather the owner got it back. And besides, there's the reward.'

'And a liberal one, too,' Jack reminded her. 'Don't forget that! And don't forget your needy relatives, either.'

As soon as breakfast was over, Ione started out to find the number indicated in the advertisement. She did not think Spring street quite deserved its name. Instead of suggesting the freshness and charm of the favorite of all seasons, it was dingy and unattractive. And number 2020 was the shabbiest in all the shabby row. As Ione read the number, she felt convinced that there must be some mistake. Certainly no one who owned a diamond locket would be likely to live in a house of this kind.

The little old lady who answered her ring seemed as difficult to associate with jewellery as was the shabby house she lived in. Yet, in spite of her cheap dress, she was unmistakably a lady, and her greeting showed refinement unobscured by age or poverty. Ione came to the point at once.

'Did you lose a locket?'

'Oh, the locket!' said the little old lady, and put her hand against her heart. 'Come in, my dear; come in.'

Ione followed her in silence into the plain little front room with the faded carpet and worn furniture. 'It is a heart-shaped locket,' said the old lady, standing before the young girl, her voice vibrating with eagerness, 'and there is a monogram in the centre, made of diamonds.'

'Yes, that's the one I found.'

Ione produced it from her purse, and the old lady pounced upon it. After a moment she pressed a spring, and beckoned to the girl. 'That,' she said softly, 'is the precious part.'

Ione advanced and looked down. The face of a little boy smiled up at her from the interior of the locket, wreathed about by a tiny golden-brown curl.

'It was my only child,' said the old lady softly. 'It is forty years since I cut that curl from his head, dearie. A great many things have gone since then—money and my home, and some of those whom I called my friends—but all my troubles together were nothing to the loss of him. It's the only picture I have of him, the one in the locket. You can guess what it meant to me when I came home and found it gone from the little chain where I always wear it.'

She went out of the room, her eyes still on the pictured face in the locket. When she returned her pocketbook was in her hand—such a lean, shabby, pathetic pocketbook! The very sight of it made Ione uncomfortable.

'Oh, no!' she exclaimed, jumping to her feet. 'I don't want anything.'

'But, my dear,' the old lady remonstrated, 'I promised a liberal reward and I am glad to pay it. I haven't a great deal of money left, but I would spend it all gladly to get my locket back.'

Ione looked at the old face, transfigured by joy. There was a color in the withered cheeks which had not been there when she entered, a new light in the faded eyes.

'I've had my reward already,' said the girl gently, 'and it was a liberal one.'

ANIMALS IN COLD WEATHER

The wild animal that minds cold the least is undoubtedly the rabbit. Indeed, it is said that the rabbit is, of all warm-blooded creatures, the most capable of withstanding very low temperatures. A rabbit which had got into a block of ice was imprisoned there twelve hours. When freedom was finally secured it began almost instantly to feed. Hares, too, can stand a lot of cold so long as they can get food. The Alpine hare, which is found in Cumberland and Scotland, never seems inconvenienced by the worst frosts. The Arctic fox is another creature which no degree of cold seems to bother. It is one of the very few animals of the Arctic regions which does not hibernate. Of domestic animals, sheep come first as cold resisters. In a great blizzard which swept England in 1891, sheep were dug out of the drifts where they had been buried twenty-four days. They were still alive. Next to sheep in cold weather hardiness come goats and then pigs. Among the birds, thrushes and blackbirds seem able to endure less cold than the finch tribe, of which the house sparrow is the commonest type. The hedge sparrow appears, of all birds, to be the most affected by cold. Perch enjoy cold weather and freezes, comfortably making their winter homes in lakes that are frozen practically solid.

IRISH WIT

'In Ireland the whole world jokes,' writes Mrs. Hinkson, 'and the responsiveness is delicious. In England you have learned a sober demeanor. As soon as the first velvet breath of Irish air blows on your face you begin to rollick.'

'Lunching at a Dublin restaurant, a friend of ours of an impassively dry demeanor tried a joke on the waiter. When the bill was brought he placed on it a bright new farthing and went on talking to us, apparently unconscious of his mistake. The waiter stood by patiently till there was a pause in the conversation.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' he said, 'but have you no smaller change?'

'As we came across from Holyhead the Irish ticket collector on the boat scrutinized our return tickets closely.'

'They're a fortnight old,' said one of us.

'Bedad, then they're wearin' their age well,' he replied delightedly.

'A friend of mine who was very enthusiastic about things Irish, herself being an English woman, was driving on an outside car in Dublin. She was praising everything to the carman, and among the rest the famous Dublin stout, with which she had just become acquainted.'

'What an excellent drink it is,' she said. 'Why, it is meat and drink, too.'

'Thrice for you, ma'am,' replied the car driver, 'an' a night's lodgin', too, if you only drink enough of it.'

THE BARGAIN BET

The genuine Yankee pedlar passed out of existence with the creation of the 'notion store,' but he was a most interesting character, astonishingly sharp and frequently amusing. One such appeared in a general store in a Southern town on one occasion, deposited his pack on the floor, and remarked to the merchant:

'I guess I couldn't drive a trade with you, Colonel?'

'I reckon you calculate just about right,' was the decided reply of the merchant, who had 'had dealings' with Yankee pedlars on previous occasions. 'Get out!'

'Oh, well, don't get riled up; no harm done. Now just look at this dozen genuine razor strops; easy worth 3 dollars—let you have 'em for 2 dollars, Colonel.'

'I wouldn't touch any of your trash. You get out!' the merchant declared.

'Well, now, Colonel, I always like to do some business in a place. Tell you what, I'll bet you 5 dollars that if you make an offer for them strops we'll make a trade.'

'I'll go you,' said the merchant, 'and,' he added when the stakes had been put up, 'I'll give you a quarter for the strops.'

'They're yourn, Colonel,' said the Yankee, pocketing the wager.

THE BEAR AND THE BOAT

A bear story with an element of novelty is related by Dr. J. Winslow Ayre in his *Life in the Wilds of America*. The incident occurred on the Little Missouri River, in Dakota:

'A young Indian told us one morning that he had seen an old bear and cub on the bluff of a small creek on the opposite side of the river. Several of the party at once took a small boat and started in search of the game, resolved to take the cub alive and keep it for a pet.'

'They proceeded up the creek for a hundred yards or more. Then, hastily clambering up the bluff, they soon found the cub in a recess of the rocks, but the dam was not to be seen.'

'This suited the hunters very well, as they were not in a bloodthirsty mood. By means of a rope they secured