

The Family Circle

MOTHER'S LAP

When I'm a little tired of play,
And have put all my toys away,
And do not want to take a nap,
I go and climb on mother's lap,
And ask her if she will not tell
The stories that I love so well—
Of all she used to do
When she was little, too.
And she tells me all the stories I like best
Of times so long ago, so long ago—
About my aunts and uncles and the rest
And the funny things they used to do, you know
How the soldiers came and asked for food one day,
When my grandma and my grandpa were away,
And how she and Uncle Ned
Hid the silver in the bed.
And how Uncle Jack
Went to India and back,
How my Aunt Jane put the gander down the well,
And my Aunt Maria knew, but wouldn't tell.
How the gipsies stole my Uncle Ned, and how
He meant to kill a crow, and shot the cow.
How one day my Aunt Maria
Took my little Aunt Sophia
A-wading in the brook,
And the awful cold she took.
And how my Uncle Ned
Painted grandma's carriage red,
And the things that grandma said.
Oh, I love to hear her talk that way, you know
Of times so long ago, so long ago—
When she was little, too.
And of all she used to do.
And it's better than a story, for it's true.

FILLING IN THE CHINKS

'I? Oh, I just fill in the chinks.'
The girl laughed as she said it, but her mother added quickly:
'The chinks are everything. You haven't the slightest idea what a help she is, and what a load it lifts from my shoulders, this "filling in the chinks," as she calls it.'
The busy woman spoke warmly as she smiled happily at her daughter.
'You see, when she was through school, there didn't seem to be anything definite for her to do. Her father and I wanted her at home, for awhile at least, before she undertook to go out into the world.
'Our one servant does all the heavy work, of course, and I am kept pretty busy with the children, and so she looked around and noticed the little things that should be done to keep a home neat and orderly, and which a servant never does, and I have very little time for. The "left-overs" I always called them—Oh, but it is a comfort to have them all done.'
'And what are they?' I asked of the girl as she sat pulling out the edges of a lace mat and making it look fresh and fluffy.
'Oh, I don't know,' she answered, 'there are so many of them and such little things, you know.'
She spoke almost apologetically.
'Let me see. Well, I began in the parlor, of course. All girls do at first. There were some little silver vases that were seldom shined. I kept these bright, and the silver on the afternoon tea-table. You have no idea how much it tarnishes. And the little cups always dusted, and the dollies fresh and clean, and the tidies also. Really that is a work by itself and mother used never to have time. Then the picture moulding. The brass hook that holds the picture cord was never dusted. I kept those clean.
'Then in the bedrooms, I look out that fresh towels are on the bureau and stand, and that the hair receivers are not jammed full.

'It is really too funny the way I found them packed when I first began. And the soap dishes clean; and fresh soap when it is needed, and dusters in their bags, and waste baskets emptied—oh, yes, and buttons sewed on the shoes. I believe I sewed on half a dozen every day.

'I go over the house daily, in the morning, right after the children are sent to school.

'I begin by picking up the things they have dropped, and putting them in their proper places.

'Then I go into the library, sharpen the pencils that need it, fill the ink well, see that the pens in the penholders are good, the blotting pad not too old, the waste basket empty; then I go through the other rooms, and if you'll believe me, I always find something to be done, something aside from the regular work of cleaning up, sweeping, or bed-making—these belong to the girl to do.

'You see I only do the little things that get left for the general cleaning or neglected altogether.

'It is pleasant and helps—at least mother says it does.'

'Yes,' said the mother, 'and no one else knows what a difference it makes to have those "chinks filled."'
—Good Housekeeping.

WHAT THE PATRON WANTED

'How will you want your hair cut, sir?' said the talkative hairdresser to the man in the chair. 'Minus conversational prolixity,' replied the patient. 'How's that, sir?' 'With abbreviated or totally eliminated narrations.' 'I—er—don't quite catch your meaning, sir.' 'With quiescent mandibulars.' 'Which?' 'Without effervescent verbosity.' 'Sir?' 'Let diminutive colloquy be conspicuous by its absence.' The hairdresser scratched his head thoughtfully for a second, and then went over to the proprietor of the shop with the whispered remark: 'I don't know whether the gentleman in my chair is mad or is a foreigner, but I can't find out what he wants.' The proprietor went to the waiting customer and said politely: 'My man doesn't seem to understand you, sir. How would you like your hair cut?' 'In silence.' The proprietor gave a withering look at his journeyman, while the latter began work, and felt so utterly crushed that he never again asked his patient if he'd buy a bottle of hair restorer.

REALISTIC

A well-known physician who visited a certain picture-gallery the other day was drawn at once to a painting that has attracted considerable attention, and is entitled 'Where the Poppies Grow.' The picture is, however, not labelled, and the physician didn't take the trouble to look the name up in the catalogue. He just stood before the expanse of scarlet-spotted canvas and gazed as though his life depended upon it.

'Wonderful!' he cried at last. 'I never saw anything like it in the realm of art before.'

'Anything like what?' asked one of his friends. 'Surely you never saw anything like it out of the realm of art?'

'Oh, yes, I have,' was the answer. 'It's the most perfect representation of a bad case of scarlatina that I've ever seen.'

LEGEND OF THE PHOENIX

According to ancient writers, the phoenix was a bird of great beauty, about the size of an eagle. Only one of these birds could live at a time; but its existence covered a period of 500 or 600 years. When its life drew to a close, the bird built for itself a funeral pyre of wood and aromatic spices, with its wings fanned the pyre into a flame, and therein consumed itself. From its ashes a worm was produced, out of which another phoenix was formed, having all the vigor of youth. The first care of the new phoenix was to solemnise its parent's obsequies. For that purpose it made a ball of myrrh, frankincense, and other fragrant