

The Family Circle

PUSSY'S PLEA

Now is the season of my discontent;
When summer comes and all the world is gay
With Nature's smile, my mistress hies away
To shore and woodland green, while I am pent
In back yards lone and empty. Weak and spent
From lack of food, I prowls by night and day
O'er fence and gate, and howl my doleful lay.
But there are none to heed a cat's lament!

Sad is my lot! Why was I born a cat!
My lady's ugly poodle takes his nap
On some hotel verandah, in her lap.
Without a care, he feasts and waxes fat
The summer long. Please, friends, now have the
grace
To plead the cause of my ill-treated race!

THE PINK STRING

'Peter,' said his mother, 'I want you to do a little errand for me.'

'Yes, mother, tell me quick, for it's most school time.'

'O mother, Jack Ray's been telling me that whenever he has an errand to do his mother ties a string round his finger. That keeps him in mind every time he looks at it that he has something to do. Did you ever hear of anyone doing that?'

'Yes, many a time. So you would like a string?'

'Yes, here's the string bag, and here's a nice piece of pink string.'

'Now, then'—As she tied it on his finger mother told him what she wanted him to do.

'And, Peter,' she added, 'be sure to speak very politely when you ask it.'

'Yes, I'll remember.'

'I know you always mean to be polite, dear, but you sometimes forget, as all little boys do. Good-bye.'

'What's that on your finger?' asked one of them.

'Oh, that's because I have an errand to do, so as to make me think of it.'

But, as he gazed at it, what was the errand, anyhow? In his interest in watching the string tied on he had only half listened to what his mother had been saying, and now the most he could remember of it was that he was to be very, very polite.

'I can do that, anyway—to everybody. And perhaps, if I do it all the time, I shall get to thinking of the errand—Oh, please excuse me, I didn't mean to.'

In his hard thinking he had run against a big girl as he was turning into the school yard.

'Peter,' said she, 'you're such a polite little fellow that it's easy to excuse you.'

'A good thing to say of a boy,' said one of the teachers who was passing in. 'Keep it up, Peter. Good manners are always a very great help to a boy in going through life.'

'If they'll only help me to remember that errand,' said Peter to himself.

He did remember the politeness. He stood up to give a girl his seat on a crowded recitation bench. He said his best 'please' and 'thank you' when he went to the teacher's desk to ask about an example, all the while thinking—

'If I'm polite, p'haps I shall think of the errand.'

At the close of school the teacher said:

'Who will carry a book with its marked lesson around to Johnny Park's house? He is sick and could not come to school to-day.'

'I will,' said Peter, rising in his seat as he spoke.

'Thank you, Peter. I might have known you are just that kind of a boy.'

He had to go several blocks out of his way to do it. No remembrance of his errand came into his head

as he left the book at the door with a polite inquiry about Johnny; and he walked on slowly, doing his best thinking.

He passed a yard in which were many beautiful flowers. A lady was inside whom Peter had sometimes seen talking with his mother, so he raised his hat to her with a very polite little bow. She smiled at him, and then said:

'I wonder if I couldn't get you to do something for me?'

'Of course, ma'am,' said Peter, again taking off his hat. 'I shall be very glad to do it.'

'I am cutting some flowers to send to a sick woman,' went on the lady. 'Mrs. Hale told me about her—'

'Oh, that was it!' Peter flung up his hat and capered about for joy.

'That was what?' asked the lady, with a smile.

'My errand. Mrs. Hale's my mother, and you're Mrs. Garde; and mother told me to come here and ask you, very politely, if you would let her have some of your flowers to take to the sick woman. She tied this pink string around my finger so I wouldn't forget. But I did forget, all but the politeness.'

Mrs. Garde laughed as she put a wonderful bunch of flowers on Peter's arm, saying as she did so:

'If you hadn't taken off your hat so politely, I shouldn't have thought of asking you to oblige me.'

'Will you please to excuse me for not taking it off to say good-bye? You see, my hands are full.'

'Oh my dear boy, you did remember, didn't you?' said mother, as he laid the flowers before her. 'We will try the string again.'

'Mother,' said Peter, gravely, 'it wasn't the string at all; it was the politeness.'

ANIMAL CURIOSITIES

There are many strange facts about animals which no one has ever seemed able to understand or explain. Here are a few of them:—

A fly will crawl to the top of a window-pane, fly back to the bottom, and crawl up again. Hardly ever does it fly up and crawl down. It has been known, however, to repeat the former process thirty-two times without stopping.

Hens scratch for food always with the sun behind them, so that its rays will reflect on the tiny particles. Yet a blind hen, for whom this reason does not hold, always manages to get the sun behind her when she scratches—and she will not miss a single kernel either.

Cats hardly ever lie with their feet to the fire. In most cases they lie instead with their left side turned toward it. But dogs invariably lie with their forepaws to the fire.

A mouse overlooks a perfectly safe food supply, sufficient for a meal or two, to enjoy the perilous pleasures of an unlimited store. It will hide near the food and come out to nibble when it is hungry, for it is not true that a mouse runs to its hole at the first alarm.

A CARNEGIE STORY

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the American millionaire, was once in the reading-room of a certain hotel, when an English family party entered, one member of which was a little boy of about ten. Mr. Carnegie always took notice of prepossessing boys. After making friends with the child he asked him, 'What would you like best to have—a picture-book or an orange?' 'Neither,' said the boy. 'I thought little boys always liked oranges, even if they did not care for picture-books,' was the amused comment. 'What I'd really like,' said the child confidentially, 'is a cream-colored pony, not half as big as a Newfoundland dog.' 'Oh, but I couldn't get you that. I could give you an orange or a shilling to buy a picture-book.' For several minutes the urchin scrutinised the stranger's face. At last he remarked, 'Then I don't think it's much use being a millionaire; but I'd like the shilling, please, as you can't get me the pony.'