

The Family Circle

LOVED HIS MOTHER

She sat in the porch in the sunshine,
As I went down the street—
A woman whose hair was silver
But whose face was blossom sweet,
Making me think of a garden,
When in spite of the frost and snow
Of bleak November weather,
Late fragrant lilies blow.

I heard a footstep behind me,
And the sound of a merry laugh
And I knew the heart it came from
Would be like a comforting staff
In the time and hour of trouble,
Hopeful and brave and strong,
One of the hearts to lean on,
When we think all things go wrong.

I turned at the click of the gate-latch,
And met his manly look;
A face like his gives me pleasure,
Like the page of a pleasant book.
It told of a steadfast purpose,
Of a brave and daring will,
A face, with a promise in it,
That, God grant, the years fulfil.

He went up the pathway singing,
I saw the woman's eyes
Grow bright with a wordless welcome,
As sunshine warms the skies.
'Back again, sweetheart mother,'
He cried, and bent to kiss
The loving face uplifted
For what some mothers miss.

That boy will do to depend on,
I know that this is true—
From lads in love with their mothers
Our harvest heroes grew.
Earth's grandest hearts have been loving once
Since time and earth began;
And the boy who kisses his mother
Is every inch a man.

A BOY AND A WOODCHUCK

Teddy was sick in bed. The doctor had just come; Teddy could hear him talking with mamma in the next room.

'I can't persuade him to touch the milk,' his mother was saying. 'He never drinks it when he is well. What shall I do?'

Teddy listened eagerly for an answer—Doctor Huntington was such a kind, jolly man.

'Starve him to it!'

Teddy could hardly believe he heard aright. He trusted his ears still less when the doctor walked in smiling, up to the bedside.

'How do you feel this morning?' he asked, taking Teddy's wrist in his cool hand.

'I haven't had anything to eat,' whined the little boy. 'I can't drink milk.'

'You'd better try,' said the doctor.

'I can't! Mayn't I have a cooky?'

'No.'

'Or some bread and butter?'

'No.'

'Why not?'

'Because milk is better for you.'

'But I can't drink it.'

The doctor was preparing a powder, and did not reply. Teddy wondered if he heard.

'Did you ever hear the story of the little woodchuck?' Doctor Huntington looked up with merry eyes.

'No, sir,' said Teddy. 'What is it?'

'Well, it was this way,' and the doctor seated himself comfortably in his chair. 'There was once a little woodchuck that lived in a nice, deep hole with his mother. There was nothing he liked to do quite so well as to run around in the sunshine. At the other end of the lot there was a tall tree, and one morning the little woodchuck's mother said: "To-day you must learn to climb that tree. I cannot always be here to protect you, and if a dog should catch you away from home, you'd be in a fine plight."'

'But the little woodchuck looked up the steep trunk, and said: "Oh, I can't." The next morning his mother said to him again: "To-day you must certainly learn to climb that tree!" But once more the little woodchuck answered, "I can't," and ran off to play in the sunshine.

'It was not long before the mother went to visit a neighbor. The little woodchuck was having a glorious time, when all of a sudden he heard a yelp, and there was a dog rushing toward him! He looked longingly at his home across the lot; but the dog was between—and he was coming nearer every second! The little woodchuck ran as hard as he could make his feet fly, but the dog ran faster. Just as he thought he couldn't run much further, he came to the big tree. "Dear me!" he gasped, "I can't climb it!" And then, because the dog was almost upon him, and because there wasn't anything else to do, the little woodchuck just scrambled up that tree—up, up, till he was out of the dog's reach! You see, he had to, and so he did. I hope to-morrow I shall find you a great deal better.' And the doctor smiled a kind good-bye.

Teddy lay thinking after his mother and Doctor Huntington had gone out. 'I wonder if I could,' he thought. 'I'm awfully hungry!' and he reached for the glass of milk on the table by his bed.

When his mother came back the glass was empty, and Teddy was smiling contentedly among the pillows.

TIME CANDLES

Long, long ago, before clocks had been invented, King Alfred the Great devised a way of telling time with candles which was both quaint and interesting. He took six candles, each twelve inches long and containing twelve pennys' worth of wax; these he divided into twelve parts, burning three of these in an hour, so that it would take four hours to consume all; and the six tapers lighted one after the other burned twenty-four hours. He quickly discovered, however, that the wind, blowing through the chinks of his house (for houses were not built so carefully then as now), wasted the candles and made them burn irregularly; so he designed a lantern made of ox horn, cut into thin plates, to enclose the tapers, thus insuring their burning with some degree of accuracy.

MADELINE'S MOOD

She was not an attractive girl in any way, and she knew it. She was restless and cross and unhappy, and growing more unattractive in looks and manner as she became older. Then an aunt, visiting at her home after a long residence in a distant city, sized up the situation, and out of pity for both the girl and everybody with whom she came in contact, undertook to prescribe the sure cure.

'Madeline, do you want to be a torment to yourself and everybody about you all your life?' was the blunt and astonishing question she put to her niece one day.

'No, of course not,' was the prompt and half-frightened reply from the astonished girl.

'You'd rather be sweet and lovely and happy?' came the next question; and it brought a sincere affirmative this time. The aunt handed her a folded paper, and smiled as she said, very kindly now: 'Follow this magic prescription, and you will be what you want to be,' and she was gone.

Madeline read: 'Every time you want to frown, smile. Every time a cross thought comes, think a