

The Family Circle

BETTER THAN GOLD

Better than grandeur, better than gold,
Than rank and titles a thousand fold,
Is a healthy body and a mind at ease,
And simple pleasures that always please.
A heart that can feel for another's woe,
With sympathies large enough to enfold
All men as brothers, is better than gold.

Better than gold is a conscience clear,
Though toiling for bread in an humble sphere,
Double blessed with content and health,
Untried by the lusts and cares of wealth,
Lowly living and lofty thought
Adorn and ennoble a poor man's cot;
For mind and morals in nature's plan
Are the genuine tests of a gentleman.

THE EMPEROR'S BARBER

An excellent story is told of one of the predecessors of his Imperial Majesty Franz Joseph on the Austrian throne. A wealthy farmer, residing in the neighborhood of Vienna, had an extremely fine young horse,—so remarkable an animal that the owner conceived the desire of presenting him to the Emperor as a gift. With this view he approached a friend of his, a man of high position in the capital, who promised to procure him an audience with his Majesty.

One day, as the farmer was exercising the horse, leading him by the bridle along a forest road, a gentleman in hunting costume came out of the neighboring woods and entered into conversation with him. The farmer extolled the points of his horse, showed his paces, and presently mentioned his own keen desire to make a present of him to the Emperor.

The gentleman was full of admiration for the animal, praised him unstintingly, and asked to be allowed to try him. 'No,' said the farmer: 'the Emperor shall be the first man to ride him.' The hunter explained that he was the Emperor's barber, and knew his Majesty's tastes exactly, so that he could tell at once whether the horse would suit him. But he got leave only to lead the horse about for a little while, the farmer jealously keeping a watch on him.

The gentleman gradually took longer turns up and down, then a longer turn still, and suddenly mounted the horse and was off at a gallop, whistling as he rode away. The poor farmer, covered with chagrin and disgust, went to his influential friend in Vienna, who advised him to go straight to the Emperor himself, and gave him a letter to one of the high officials of the court. The farmer went to Schonbrunn without loss of time, was readily admitted at the palace, and introduced into an anteroom, where some other gentlemen were waiting. After a while the door of an inner room opened, and the Emperor appeared—it was the man who had run away with the horse! For some moments the good farmer was utterly bewildered, but the kindly greeting and words of his sovereign soon reassured him. The Emperor thanked him with royal cordiality, and assured him that he valued his gift very highly.

'But, sire,' said the farmer, 'you told me you were the Emperor's barber. I would sooner have lost the horse than that you should have told—an untruth.'

His Majesty laughed heartily.

'I told you no untruth, my friend,' he said. 'Who is my barber? The man who shaves me, it is not? Well, I always shave myself; so surely I am the Emperor's barber.'

The farmer's delight was as great as his previous bewilderment had been. His beloved Emperor had not only accepted his gift, but had treated him with a kindness far beyond what he had looked for. And the Kaiser himself, we may be sure, rejoiced that he had made the acquaintance of a faithful subject, who not only wished to give his Emperor the best of his possessions, but whose honesty and outspoken truthfulness were equal to his devoted loyalty.—*Ave Maria.*

AMERICAN TOURISTS AT ABBOTSFORD

Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, was a kind of ever-open door to an unparalleled variety of guests, and besides those who were welcome, there was a great army of uninvited. Such visitors, writes W. S. Crockett in 'Abbotsford,' were a constant source of annoyance to Scott. It was impossible at times, it was said, to pass between Melrose and Abbotsford without encountering people armed with sketch books, evidently bent on a peep at the famous writer.

Some came furnished with letters of introduction from friends, for whose sake Scott received them cordially. Others had no introduction at all, but, pencil and notebook in hand, took the most impertinent liberties with the place and its occupants.

Lockhart recalls how, on returning to Abbotsford upon one occasion, Scott and he found Mrs. Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of two tourists, who had been with her for some hours. They were tall, lanky young men, both of them rigged out in new jackets and trousers of the Macgregor tartan, the one a lawyer, the other a Unitarian preacher from New England.

These gentlemen, when told on their arrival that Scott was not at home, had shown such signs of impatience that the servants took it for granted they must have serious business, and asked if they would wish to speak a word with his lady. They grasped at this, and so conducted themselves in the interview that Mrs. Scott never doubted they had brought letters of introduction to her husband, and invited them accordingly to partake of her luncheon. They had been walking about the house and grounds with her and her daughters ever since that time, and appeared at the porch when Scott and his party returned to dinner as if they had already been enrolled on his visiting list.

For a moment he, too, was taken in. He fancied that his wife must have received and opened their credentials, and shook hands with them with courteous hospitality. But Mrs. Scott, with all her overflowing good nature, was a sharp observer, and she soon interrupted the ecstatic compliments of the strangers by reminding them that her husband would be glad to have the letters of the friends who had been so good as to send their greetings by them. It then turned out that there were no letters to be produced, and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added that he could not trespass further upon their time.

The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape. But there was about Scott, in perfection, when he choose to exert it, the power of civil repulsion, and he bowed the overwhelmed tourists to the door.

'T WAS WELL WITH WILLIE

One afternoon Willie was invited to a party where, of course, refreshments were bountifully served.

'Won't you have something more, Willie?' asked the pretty hostess toward the close of the feast.

'No, thank you,' replied Willie, with an expression of great satisfaction. 'I'm full.'

'Well, then,' smiled the hostess, 'put some fruit and cakes in your pocket to eat on the way home.'

'No, thank you,' came the rather startling response of Willie; 'they're full, too.'

ONLY THE MEN

Children (says a writer in the *Spectator*) have a strange sense of justice. They have been taught to sympathise with the sufferings of animals, and to show them an unvarying kindness. Human beings, on the contrary, are divided, in their minds, into the two classes of good and bad. The good are to be rewarded, after the manner of fairy tales; the bad are to be punished.

Ronald's father one day gave an animated description of a bull fight, meaning thereafter to point a moral. But the lad was delighted.

'Wouldn't you like to see a fight, daddy?' he asked, breathlessly.