

## The Family Circle

### JUSTICE WITH CHILDREN.

SO much has been said about the management of children that mothers begin to weary of it all, and yet of children I wish to speak. Would that my voice could reach every woman's heart, whether mother, sister, or teacher.

First, I wish to lead you back to your own childhood. Did you ever begin to do some odd job that you had not been told to do, but that you supposed yourself fully capable of performing, expecting to be thanked for kindly helping, only to find that you had done the worst piece of mischief that you possibly could, and, more than all, were told that you had done it out of pure mischievousness? If you never had such an experience, it must have been because servants were so plenty that nothing was left to do, or that you were too indolent to exert yourself.

A friend that I was visiting had a bright boy of six years, with a loving disposition, always willing to help everyone, but apparently the most mischievous of children. His mother was in despair. She confided her trouble to me, and I resolved to watch him, and see if I could not find out the reason he had won such a name as "Little Mischief."

The next morning at the table my friend remarked that the weather was so beautiful that she must remove her plants from the sunny window they occupied to the veranda; but she added, "I do dread to do it, it is so tedious, and it tires me so." I noticed how the little eyes sparkled, and knew, as well as if he had told me, that the little fellow had heard what she said, and would try to do the much dreaded job for her.

Not long after she ran over to Mrs. A's, and no sooner did the gate shut than Harry was active. The flower stand was already in the accustomed place, waiting for the plants. One by one, carefully, he lifted the heavy pots, and, without breaking a leaf, transferred them to their summer quarters. Sometimes he paused to rest, then went to work again. His face was a picture of happiness. He was helping his mamma. I watched, and wondered if this would also be laid to his mischievous propensities.

My friend was gone rather longer than she expected, for, as she told me afterwards, Mrs. A. had a love of a bonnet that she must see, as well as several costly additions to her parlour furniture. Ah! there lay the secret of her discontented looks, for she had told me that owing to several losses she would not be able to expend much money on her summer outfit. As she came in the gate, her face passed through all the phases of surprise, dismay, and finally anger.

"Harry, come here this instant! What have you been doing? How dare you touch my plants?" Stinging blows fell on the hands that had toiled so thanklessly. "You are always into some mischief!" she exclaimed. I watched the child; he was heartbroken. His bosom heaved and his sobs were pitiful. "Go to your room, and stay the rest of the morning." He obeyed.

"There!" she cried, "what did I tell you? How can I manage such a boy?" "By simply understanding him," I replied. "What do you mean?" "This; your little boy wanted to help you; I read it in his face. His motives were the best. You said it tired you so, and he generously did the disagreeable task for you." "But if he had dropped one?" "He did not; and if he

had, a broken plant is better than a broken heart. I tell you candidly, if you do not act differently with that boy, he is ruined."

They were harsh words, but I knew the mother's heart would in time forgive them. "What can I do?" "Put yourself in his place. Find out his motive, if you can, and, believe me, ten times out of twelve, what passes for mischief is only a wish to lighten your burdens—a desire of the loving heart to help you."

She went with me to the veranda. We rearranged the plants, and I called her attention to the heavy pots, and then to the little aching arms and back, and, after she had acknowledged she was glad they were moved, I begged her to tell her little boy the same.

"What! acknowledge that I did wrong to punish him? I would lose all control over him if I did that." "Try this time and see," I urged. And she did. When she entered Harry's room he sat in a chair by the window, quietly watching the floating clouds. Still smarting from a sense of injustice, he did not look round or smile.

"Harry, come here." He obeyed. "Why did you move the plants? Tell me the exact truth." He looked up to her face, and, reading encouragement there, he simply said: "Because you said it tired you so. I am most a man now. I can help you lots. I did not break one—not one, mamma; and they were heavy. Are you glad now I did it, mamma?" "Yes, yes, Harry; and I was cross and hurt your hand. I am sorry." "Oh, it does not hurt any more now. Next time, I'll wait till you tell me."

They came back together; and I saw by the looks of my friend that she had learned a lesson not soon to be forgotten. That was six years ago. They called while passing through our town this winter, and a more gentlemanly, helpful boy, would be hard to find. She said: "I have you to thank. From the day of the much needed lesson, I watched, and looked into the motives of my child, and always found that the so-called mischief arose from a desire to be useful. I soon got acquainted with my boy, and had no more trouble with him. He is now my greatest comfort."

Mothers, fathers, all that have charge of precious souls, beware how you misconstrue their motives! Though they may perhaps seem to do things out of pure mischief, be sure it is so before you can punish them, lest they cease to care, and as they have the name, only wish to make it fact. Oh, the men and women that have gone to destruction from having their motives mistaken, their action misconstrued! Be sure none of these sins are laid to your charge.—*The Housekeeper.*

The power of Christian song was singularly illustrated in India, not long since, on an occasion when a wealthy Hindu gentleman gave a great feast in honor of their God Krishna. As usual on such occasions dancing girls were employed to give *clat* to the entertainment. The presence and songs of these dancers are such as would not be tolerated in a Christian assembly. Yet to the astonishment of the gentlemen present when these girls were asked to sing they sang "What a Friend we have in Jesus!" and "Come to Jesus." These hymns had been taught them by a missionary lady, and as a result of this strange occurrence the giver of the feast subsequently sent his two daughters to be taught hymns like these. In this way entrance was gained into the house of a wealthy family.