



The Family Circle.

FATHER, TAKE MY HAND.

The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered! Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead up to light
Thy child!

The day goes fast, my Father! and the night
Is drawing darkly down. My faithless sight
Sees ghostly visions; fears a spectral band,
Encompass me, Oh, Father! take my hand,
And from the night
Lead up to light
Thy child!

The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal,
While yet I journey through this weary land,
Keep me from wandering. Father, take my
hand;

Quickly and straight
Lead to heaven's gate
Thy child!

The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn
Has pierced me; and my weary feet, all torn
And bleeding, mark the way. Yet the command
Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand;
Then safe and best
Lead up to rest
Thy child!

The throng is great, my Father! Many a doubt
And fear and danger compass me about,
And foes oppress me sore. I cannot stand
Or go alone. Oh, Father, take my hand;
And through the throng
Lead safe along
Thy child!

The cross is heavy, Father! I have borne
It long, and still do bear it. Let my worn
And fainting spirit rise to that blest land
Of joy and rest. Oh, Father, take my hand;
And, reaching down,
Lead to the crown
Thy child!

—Anon.

MASTER SOMETHING.

Henry Norton lived with his widowed mother in a small town in the western part of New York State. His father, when living, had lost most of his property through unprofitable investments, and died leaving his family only a few thousand dollars.

Mrs. Norton was a delicate woman, and knew that her health would never permit her to engage in any kind of business for the support of her large family. So she decided to live as economically as she could, and make the little money she had last as long as possible. As soon as her boys became old enough she would send them out into the world to earn money for themselves. Had their father lived they would have all gone to college. It grieved Mrs. Norton very much that her oldest son, Henry, could not take a college course. She was a lady of much culture herself, and had paid particular attention to the French language. Having associated a great deal with French people in her younger days, she had learned to speak their language with remarkable fluency. She now reasoned with herself:

"If I cannot send Henry to college I will do the next best thing. I will try and have him master the French language, and I know that if he has thoroughly learned some one important branch of study he will not be so far behind others in the life-
-race."

At this time Henry was fourteen years old. He had been studying French a year with his mother already. He attended the high-school, and his mother hoped to keep him there two years longer. She never let a day pass without giving him a French lesson.

Often he rebelled, and sometimes he thought it was too bad that he must give up a ball game or some other favorite amusement just for "that French."
"What good is it, any way?" he would say in his boyish, impatient way. But his mother persisted, and every day the French lesson had to be learned. After a time, when he began to read and write French

well, it became very interesting, and he spent many delightful hours reading French authors with his mother. She also obliged him to write her one short French letter every week.

Time passed rapidly, and almost before he knew it Henry's sixteenth birthday was upon him, and he was obliged to leave home to begin to make his own way in the world. He went to New York. An old friend of his father's had procured him a place in a large house where there were a number of clerks. Now Henry was a country-boy; and although his home was a centre of refinement, he had never been away from the small country town where he was born. His manners were very refined, but he was very diffident, and had not the confident, easy address of city-bred boys.

When he made his appearance among the clerks where he was to be employed he was greatly embarrassed, and, of course, showed himself in the worst possible light. "Country-bumpkin," whispered somebody, and for a long time his nick-name was "Bumpy."

His position at first was naturally a very humble one. He was a kind of messenger at the beck and call of all the other clerks. And a hard time of it he had! His diffidence, and an unfortunate trick he had of blushing, made him a target for all their wit. They were not intentionally unkind, but were thoughtless. And the younger clerks thought it great fun to make "Bumpy" blush and look like a girl.

But Henry bore it all in heroic silence, although many times he was greatly discouraged and thought it was useless for him to continue. His diffidence, and the consciousness that he was the butt of the other clerks, often caused him to make mistakes, and the conviction was growing upon him that he would never make a business man. But never a word of all his hard times did his mother hear. Their letters back and forth were always affectionate and cheerful. Mrs. Norton continually exhorted her son not to slight his French, and he kept it up; several evenings every week he went to the Mercantile Library reading-room and read the French papers and magazines. But no one ever knew it at the counting-house. Indeed, it never occurred to Henry that it was at all remarkable that he should know French so well, he had learned it all so quietly with his mother, and besides, he was a modest boy. Then, too, my young friends, what we know thoroughly we are not apt to parade; it is only the smatterers who delight in talking about what they know.

But there is an old saying that "sooner or later every one will find his niche." And Henry found his very soon.

The firm that employed him had been doing business for years with a French house in Paris. The French firm employed an English clerk for its English and American correspondence, so that hitherto all business letters from that quarter had been written in good English and had caused no trouble.

But when Henry Norton had been in New York about six months a batch of genuine French letters was received by his employers. The English clerk at Paris had become ill, and during his absence the business letters were all written in French.

There was no little excitement in the counting-room over these letters. No one could read them. They were immediately given over to one of the clerks who had quite a reputation among them as a French scholar. He was very fond of airing French phrases; it was *pardonnez moi*, to this one, *excusez moi* to another, *je ne sais pas* five or six times a day. But the letters, O, that was a different matter! While he was making excuses about the writing being undecipherable, etc., Henry entered.

One of his tormentors immediately saw that here was a chance for some capital fun. "Bumpy" should be asked to read those letters. This idea was soon telegraphed around among them, and the interest became intense. It would be a huge joke, and every body expected to see "Bumpy" covered with confusion when the originator of the joke approached him, saying, in a very solemn manner,

"Bumpy, here are some French letters which Mr. Morse (one of the firm) left for you to translate. If you cannot do it the chances are that you will lose your position." But now Henry's turn had come. All

embarrassment fled. For the first time since he entered that counting-room he felt like a man. Here was something he could do without blushing. Taking the letters he turned to the would-be French scholar beside him, and with a quiet dignity that those city bred clerks might have envied, said,

"Mr. Eldridge, may I have your desk for a short time?"

You should have seen those other clerks! They were so perfectly astonished that they did not even feel abashed at the failure of their joke. They watched Henry in perfect silence; no sound was heard in the room but the scratching of his pen.

It was not long before he gave the letters translated into the best of English to the confidential clerk, for both members of the firm were absent.

And then—well, he was not called "Bumpy" again, I assure you. They crowded about him, addressing him as Henry in the most respectful and affectionate manner, and some even called him Mr. Norton, which amused Henry very much.

And from that time forth the two heads of the firm were hardly regarded with more respect than was Henry Norton. When it was learned that he could answer the letters in French their respect and admiration knew no bounds. And Henry's head would have been turned by their attentive behavior had he not inherited such a large stock of common sense from his excellent mother, who had taken care to foster this good quality in her son.

Henry was glad to be sent out again with a message so that he might be alone with his newsense of freedom and feeling of manliness. His feet fairly flew over the pavement, and his controlling thought was, "My dear, dear mother! How thankful I am that she made me learn French so well!"

And what a letter he wrote her that night! He told her all the troubles of the past six months, and how often he had been tempted to give up and come home to her.

But he did not dream of what was yet in store for him. His happiness and gratitude arose from the fact that his knowledge of French had completely changed his position with the other clerks.

But the two principals got their heads together and said,

"Henry must have a better position. A boy who can do such work as that ought not to do messenger work."

So they decided to promote him. The clerks, of course, told every other man they met the remarkable story; for in those days—this happened twenty years ago—a young man in business with such a knowledge of French was a rarity.

About a week after the event a prominent banker in the vicinity sought an interview with Henry and offered him a large salary to translate and write French letters for him. Henry took the position, and when he was eighteen years old he conducted the entire French correspondence of that large banking-house.

Soon after taking this position he determined to learn the banking business as thoroughly as he had learned French. He did it, and to-day he is one of the largest and most prosperous bankers in our country.

He attributes all his success to his thorough knowledge of French; for it was not only the stepping-stone to a better position and larger salary, but, what was of equal importance, the application that had been necessary to master French had so strengthened and disciplined his mind and character that he was prepared to assume greater responsibilities as they came.

In Henry Norton's case it happened to be the mastery of the French language which paved the way to his success in business. But depend upon it, my young friends, it will pay you to master anything. And, once the habit of thoroughness is established, you will master everything you undertake, and success is sure.—*Our Youth.*

"THINKETH NO EVIL."

BY MRS. S. ROSALIE SILL.

"Have you been to see our new neighbor yet?" asked Mrs. Hoover of Mrs. Landon, as she called one evening.

"No, I have not had the time yet. You know our children have had the whooping-cough, and I could not leave them."

"If I were you, I would not call just yet," was said with the mysterious air of "I have something I could reveal, but I think I will not just now."

So a suspicious feeling took possession of the heart of Mrs. Landon, who was really a good woman and intended calling upon this woman who had recently come in to live among perfect strangers.

"I do wonder if there is anything bad about this Mrs. Heddon?" Mrs. Landon said to her husband one day. "Have you seen her at all?"

"Yes, once. She came into the store one day, and did some trading."

"Did she look like a bad woman, or a bold one?"

"No indeed! She was a timid little thing, dressed in deep mourning, which I noticed was growing a little shabby; and she had a sharp, harsh cough. I thought at the time she must be in the first stages of consumption. But what do you mean about her being bold or bad?"

"Why, I know nothing about her, only Mrs. Hoover said if she were in my place she would not call just now; and her looks seemed to mean more than her words."

"Humph," came from Mr. Landon. "It seems to me you are not doing exactly as the Book you profess to take as your guide would have one to do. 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in; sick and ye visited me.' I think this woman is a widow, as I have never seen a man about the place or any one else but her. Come to think of it, I have not seen her for the last two days. I dare say, Mrs. Hoover knows nothing against the woman. You remember she is just a little singular. Your Book teaches you also to think no evil; doesn't it?" Mr. Landon was very apt to quote Scripture where it concerned his wife, much more so than where it concerned himself, for he was not a Christian; although he was noted for benevolence.

"Why, James, the poor woman may be sick, and no one with her," said Mrs. Landon, in a distressed voice. "I will call as soon as we finish dinner. I am so sorry I have allowed myself to be influenced by Mrs. Hoover."

"I will go in with you, as I am on my way to the store, and if anything serious should be the matter, I will see that a physician is sent at once. Do not distress yourself, Charlotte, over what I have said. I know you mean right. But when I see a flaw in a Christian's life, I make too much of it."

The Landons found Mrs. Heddon lying upon the couch, weak, and suffering from the terrible cough. The poor woman said that every one had seemed to shun her, and she had drawn within herself, feeling too sensitive to covet acquaintance.

Mrs. Landon soon had a physician there, and needed comforts from his store.

Mrs. Heddon had come to the little town, as ordered by her physician, for a change; but it had proved too late. She had brought a letter from the Baptist church where she had lived, and intended uniting with the one there, but her cough had been so annoying she could not attend. And as Mrs. Hoover had sown the seeds of distrust the woman was left to herself.

Mrs. Hoover, in self-defence, said she heard a woman by the name of Heddon had been suspected of having tried to poison her husband, but had afterwards been cleared.

"But that was in B—," said Mrs. Landon, when told of it, "and this woman came from another place."

"You are all so very kind to me," the sick woman said one day. "I was so lonely though, for a time. I think I missed my dear pastor most of all. But I should learn to love this new one almost as well, I know; only the days are so few now."

The tears coursed down Mrs. Landon's face as she heard these words, for well she knew had she not listened to Mrs. Hoover, this poor woman would have had so much more enjoyment. "God give me that charity which thinketh no evil," she said softly to herself as she turned away.—*Watchman.*

HABITS are to the soul, what the veins and arteries are to the blood, the courses in which it moves.—*H. Bushnell.*

VIRTUE will catch as well as vice by contact; and the public stock of honest, manly principle will daily accumulate.—*Burke.*