



### The Family Circle.

#### A CLOSE-FISTED ECONOMIST.

The farmer sat in his easy chair  
Between the fire and the lamplight's glare;  
His face was ruddy and full and fair;  
His three small boys in the chimney nook  
Conned the lines of a picture-book;  
His wife, the pride of his home and heart,  
Baked the biscuit and made the tart,  
Laid the table and drained the tea,  
Deftly, swiftly, silently;  
Tired and weary, weak and faint,  
She bore her trials without complaint,  
Like many another household saint—  
Content all selfish bliss above  
In the patient ministry of love.

At last, between the clouds of smoke  
That wreathed his lips, the farmer spoke:  
"There's taxes to raise, and interest to pay,  
And if there should come a rainy day,  
'Twould be mighty handy, I'm bound to say,  
'T have something put by. For folks must die;  
An' there's funeral bills, and gravestones to buy—  
Enough to swamp a man, purty nigh;  
Besides, there's Edward an' Dick an' Joe  
To be provided for when we go;  
So, if I were you, I'd tell you what I'd do,  
I'd be savin' of wood as ever I could;  
Extra fires don't do any good;  
I'd be savin' of soap, an' savin' of ile,  
And run up some candles once in a while;  
I'd be rather sparin' of coffee and tea,  
For sugar is high,  
An' all to buy,  
And cider is good enough drink for me;  
I'd be kind of careful 'bout my clo'es,  
And look out sharp how the money goes—  
Gawgaws is useless, nater knows;  
Extra trimmin' 's the bane of women.  
I'd sell the best of my cheese an' honey,  
And eggs is as good, nigh 'bout as money,  
An' as to the carpet you wanted new—  
I guess we can make the old one do;  
An' as to the washer an' sewin'-machine,  
Them smooth-tongued agents, so pesky mean,  
You'd better get rid of em' slick an' clean.  
What do they know 'bout women's work?  
Do they calkilate women was made to shirk?"

Dick and Edward and little Joe  
Sat in the corner in a row;  
They saw their patient mother go  
On ceaseless errands to and fro;  
They saw that her form was bent and thin,  
Her temples gray, her cheek sunk in;  
They saw the quiver of lip and chin—  
And then with a wrath he could not smother,  
Outspoke the youngest, frailest brother:  
"You talk of savin' wood an' ile  
An' tea an' sugar all the while,  
But you never talk of savin' mother!"  
—Selected.

#### THE SYSTEMATIC GIVERS.

Slowly Alice Vincent and Laura Keats walked down the slope until they came to the rustic bridge that spanned the stream that ran through the seminary grounds; here in one of the pavilions that jutted out over the water they seated themselves for a talk.

"I know," said Alice, taking up the thread of their conversation where it had been broken off a little way back when they met a party of girls bound for the butternut grove. These two had been urged to join the others, but they evidently preferred each other's company, though they were not rude enough to say just that.

"I know it does seem as though we might do something; but how to begin."

"I do not know of any way but just to begin," replied Laura.

"But who will start it?"

"Why, you for one, and I for another. Here you have been saying ever since we heard Mrs. Van Benschoten speak, that it seems as though we might do something; but saying that will never do anything. We must just do it."

"What?" asked Alice.

"Call a meeting of the girls and organize for work."

"The girls won't come."

"You and I will be there, and Minnie Crawford, and there are only three sides to a triangle, and that is all we had to begin geometry with."

"But we shall have more than that," replied Alice, laughing. "Annie Clark will join us and make a quadrilateral."

"Well," said Laura, "that will be a good beginning, and you know how we progress from polygons to circles—we may have a mission circle before we know it."

That evening when, after tea, the students gathered for evening worship, the principal said:

"Immediately after this service, all who are interested in the forming of a mission band are requested to meet in the small room adjoining the library."

Accordingly, instead of three or four, as the originators of the scheme had looked for, twenty-five girls filled the little room to overflowing. Alice Vincent called the meeting to order, saying: "Miss Keats will state to us the object of this call."

And Miss Keats stepped forward with a dignity which may have been assumed at first, but which gave place to something that was real, as she lost herself in her subject.

"We have lately heard," she said, "some very astounding facts. Some of us knew a part of the truth before; at least we might have known it, but I dare say very few of us have been interested in knowing. But I think that in the course of the very able address to which we were privileged to listen last Sabbath, it was brought home to us very forcibly that there are millions upon millions of men and women sitting to-day in the darkness of heathenism. Many of them know that they are in the dark, and they are crying out to us to send them the light of the Gospel. You remember that we were told that people used to think that there were two points only to be looked at in this matter of sending the Gospel to the heathen: Were the people ready to receive it? and, Were the messengers ready to go? These two things Christians have been praying for, and now it would seem that 'all things are ready.' The heathen world has opened its doors to the Gospel; men and women well fitted for the work are ready and waiting to go; yet there is a halt in the work. Instead of two links there are three, and the middle one is missing. It is literally a golden link that is wanting. Now, girls, fellow students, does it not seem a burning shame that when so many are willing to take up the self-denying work—now that the very thing which the Church has been praying for has come to pass—I say, is it not a shame that the money should be wanting? I think we will all agree to that, and if so, we must own that a part of the disgrace is ours. The most of us are Christians; some part of the work belongs to us. Shall we take it up, and begin now? We have been called together to talk over the matter of organizing a mission circle; I would put it, a giving circle; for that is exactly what we propose to do, give! It is not quite time to propose a name for the organization, but when it comes to that, I want to propose—'The Systematic Givers.'"

Now I do not intend to give you in this sketch a lesson upon organization, so I shall not give you a full report of the proceedings, or tell you how closely they followed Parliamentary usage. It is enough to tell you, that "The Band of Systematic Givers" was duly organized, and properly officered. This motto was adopted: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by in store as God hath prospered him."

Each member of the band pledges herself to give one tenth of her spending money, or the money which she calls her own. Considerable discussion has arisen among the girls as to what moneys they have a right to tithe.

"What would you do about taking a tenth out of the money your father sent to you for a new dress?" asked Lily Case.

"Well," replied Laura, "I will tell you what I did. Papa sent me thirty dollars for dress, hat, etc., and I decided to take out a tenth, and get a dress of a little cheaper material, or a plainer hat. But I tell you, Lily, I never made even thirty dollars go so far as the twenty-seven did. Bess says my dress is prettier than hers that cost twenty-five dollars, and I know it will be more durable than hers."

"With those of us who have an allowance which must cover all personal expenses there can be no question about the matter," said Alice Vincent. "If we choose to deny ourselves of some luxuries, we have the right to do so, I suppose, but some of our fathers say, 'get what you need and have the bill sent home.'"

"I know," replied Laure, "there is a difficulty in some cases of knowing just what we may do; but all of us have something that we may call our very own, and that is all we are responsible for, after all. I know the girls pretty well, and with one or two exceptions, a tithe of what we spend

for confectionery, creams and ices in the course of the term would buy a good many Bibles. We girls might almost support a missionary; certainly we can take a scholarship in some of the schools."

And this is what they did: pledged themselves to support a pupil in a mission school. After several months had passed Lily Case remarked one day: "Is it not wonderful how much we can do by following out a regular system? Why, I do not miss the money I give, and I actually give dollars where I used to give cents!"

"I am sorry you lose the blessing of self-denial," said Laura, smiling; "you ought to give enough to miss it."

"Oh! you need not imagine I do not feel it. Every time I take out the tenth it hurts, for I am naturally stingy. And I say to myself, 'You old miser! you have got to deny yourself even if it does pinch.' But after I put the money in the little gilt box, I find that I get along just as well without it to spend. And I love to hand it over to the treasurer. That is what I meant when I said I did not miss it."

It was only a little while ago that Laura said, one evening, "Girls, I want to tell you something. I am going to India."

And it was then and there decided that when Laura Keats goes to India "The Systematic Givers" will have a missionary of their own.—Faye Huntington, in Pansy.

#### PRACTICE VERSUS PRECEPT.

The lesson for the day was, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Miss Edith Leyton sat before her class in the Mercer Street Sabbath school earnestly striving to press home the truth. She had made thorough preparation, had mastered every difficult point and fortified herself with illustrations of filial piety from the Scriptures and every-day life.

She became exceedingly interested herself, and warmed into eloquence as she went on to prove that this was one of the commands of God, and was quite as binding as the commands forbidding theft and murder.

Her words proved effective, for the young faces looked serious, and many of the girls made inward resolutions to be more careful in future about keeping this command.

Nettie Perry, a bright, positive girl with a will of her own that had not always been laid down at the feet of father and mother as sweetly as it should be, was especially led to reflect upon many of her actions wherein—though not guilty of actual disobedience—she had been rebellious, and had not honored the wishes of her parents.

Nettie had a sister Lida who was on intimate terms with Edith Leyton. They were in the habit of running into each other's homes familiarly.

One afternoon Lida came over with her embroidery to sit an hour or two, as she often did. Edith and her mother were together in the pleasant sitting-room, Mrs. Leyton busily sewing, while Edith had just brought out her writing desk. She said to Lida:

"Excuse me, will you, Lida, and visit with mother a few minutes? I have a short letter to write for the evening's mail, which must not be neglected."

She sat on a low chair, with her writing desk on her lap, her pen moving rapidly over the heavy cream-tinted sheet.

As her mother glanced up an expression of annoyance crossed her face. Mrs. Leyton was a person of fastidious tastes. Everything she did was marked by extreme neatness and painstaking. Her daughter, on the contrary, was the exact opposite. While she would have resented the charge of untidiness or lack of refinement, she was, it must be confessed, inclined to dash ahead and consider dispatch a greater virtue than nicety or elegance. This element in her character gave her mother much concern, and sometimes positive unhappiness.

So this afternoon, when her eye fell on Edith's letter, with the first half page written in a large, scrawling hand, the date, address and lines forming inclined planes on the unruled paper, with already two words erased and one interpolated, it made her almost writhe inwardly. Despite the presence of Lida she put in a protest:

"Why, my daughter! your letter looks very untidy; your lines are quite crooked. Won't you take a fresh sheet and write less hurriedly?"

"Oh, it is not of the least consequence, mamma. It will convey my meaning all the same, and what is the use of being so parti-

cular about trifles?" Edith answered, as her pen moved swiftly on.

"You are mistaken," Mrs. Leyton said, looking distressed. "It is of the greatest consequence that a young lady's letter should not bear a slovenly appearance. It is by just such trifles that judgments respecting character are continually formed."

"Well, everybody knows that I am not a sloven, so it would only prove the truth of the old adage, 'Appearances are deceitful,'" the daughter said, as she scribbled on.

"Do throw that aside and write a neat letter, my dear, especially to this person," her mother entreated.

"And waste my expensive note paper just for a mere notion. No, indeed. You know economy is one of my virtues, mamma, and please don't talk to me any more; I am continually making mistakes."

"Really, Edith, it is too bad to send that"—and one would not have thought the girl could have resisted the persuasive force of those mild eyes as she looked up and met them. But the daughter was becoming irritated. She flushed up to her pretty white forehead and flashed an almost angry look at her mother, while she said pettishly: "Surely I may write my own letters as I please, mamma."

And she went on, never heeding the worried eyes bent upon her as her pen dashed rapidly along.

If only she had been ten, instead of twenty! How her mother wished it at that moment, that she might command her. Mrs. Leyton was especially tried in this instance by Edith's careless ways, because the letter was addressed to an old friend of the family, who, being a person of refinement and culture, would consider such an ill-written letter almost an insult. However, by much effort she controlled herself, only sighing, and regretting that she had not trained her daughter differently.

Lida could not but hear and see it all. She loved her friend, but she felt her indignation rising. She could scarcely refrain from reproaching her for her obstinacy. Her mental comment was:

"Well, I'm far from perfect, but I wouldn't worry my mother like that—not for a kingdom."

That evening, when Lida sat at home under the drop light, still busy with her embroidery, her mother remarked:

"Lida, dear, I fear you are wasting too much time on that sort of work. I wish you would imitate your friend Edith a little more. She is so active in church work; then she goes to the industrial school one afternoon, and to the hospital another, besides doing a great deal in the Water Street Mission. She promises to be a very useful woman."

"Oh, well, mother, she isn't perfect, either, if she is my friend," Lida said, holding out her embroidery to see the effect of the last few stitches. "I don't think you would wish me to imitate her in all respects if you got behind the scenes occasionally. I decided this afternoon, when I was up there, that I'm a better girl to my mother than she is to hers." Then there followed a recital of the scene she had witnessed.

Just behind the curtain, unperceived by her sister, sat Nettie in the next room, preparing her lesson for the next day. Nettie was a girl with sharp ears and sharper wits. For the next few minutes her French grammar did not receive much of her attention. Instead, she was putting things together—was going over again in her mind the solemn words Miss Edith said to them last Sabbath, and her conclusion was:

"It's all put on. She don't mean a word of it. She has to get off those things to us. I suppose they all do, but I shan't listen to her any more. She isn't any better than the rest of us, if she does lay down the law so. I heard her speak real cross to her sister Fanny the other day, too. She isn't as good as my sister Lida, for she does exactly as mother wants her to, and is as sweet as a rose to every body. Miss Edith needn't lecture me any more. She needs to take her own medicine."

Edith Leyton became aware on the very next Sabbath that she had lost her influence over Nettie Perry, but the reason of it she could not divine.

Truly, we all need to pray, "Lord, show me myself."—Mrs. C. M. Livingston, in the Interior.

GIVE PROPER RESPECT to the very little people, in your dealings with them. They have rights you are bound to respect.