



The Family Circle.

"ROCK OF AGES."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Thoughtlessly the maiden sang,
Fell the words unconsciously
From her girlish, gleeful tongue;
Sang as little children sing,
Sang as sing the birds in June;
Fell the words like light leaves down
On the current of the tune:
"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Let me hide myself in Thee."
Felt her soul no need to hide;
Sweet the song as song could be,
And she had no thought beside.
All the words unheedingly
Fell from lips untouched by care,
Dreaming not that they might be
On some other lips a prayer:
"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."
'Twas a woman sang them now,
Pleadingly and prayerfully.
Every word her heart did know;
Rose the song as storm-tossed bird
Beats with weary wing the air,
Every note with sorrow stirred,
Every syllable a prayer:
"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."
Lips grown aged sang the hymn
Trustingly and tenderly.
Voice grown weak and eyes grown dim.
"Let me hide myself in Thee."
Trembling though the voice and low,
Rose the sweet strain peacefully
Like a river in its flow;
Sang as only they can sing
Who life's thorny paths have pressed;
Sang as only they can sing
Who behold the promised rest:
"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."
Sung above a coffin-lid;
Underneath all restfully,
All life's joys and sorrows hid,
Nevermore, O storm-tossed soul,
Nevermore from wind or tide,
Nevermore from billows' roll,
Wilt thou need thyself to hide.
Could the sightless, sunken eyes
Closed beneath the soft, gray hair,
Could the mute and stiffened lips,
Move again in pleading prayer,
Still, aye, still, the words would be,
"Let me hide myself in thee."
—Selected.

A FAMILY STRIKE.

BY JOY ALLISON.

"There! I've stood it just as long as I'm going to! There's no use in being so particular!" and Jasper Jones threw his cap into a chair, his bat on the floor, and stretched himself upon the sofa with a defiant look on his young face.

"What will you do when she comes in and says in that quiet, strong way, 'Jasper, your hat is out of place. Hang it up in the entry, please; and put your bat behind the shed door,'" said Elsie, with a droll imitation of her step-mother's voice and manner.

"I'll just say I'm going to when I've rested a little. We've all jumped at her bidding ever since she came. I've gone back to wipe my feet, and hang up my hat, and clean my over-shoes, and all that, till I'm sick of it."

"I'm sick of it, too," said Elsie. "I left my clothes where they fell last night, when I went to bed. I was so tired. Mother didn't happen to look in, or I suppose she'd have routed me from bad to hang them up. It's awfully tiresome to have to put everything just so, every time."

"Ma never made us do it," said Jasper. "And the house was always tidy enough to suit me," said Elsie. "Not so nice as mother keeps it, perhaps, but I like to be free and easy, and I hate to be prim."

"The old order was good enough, I say," said Jasper. "Let's strike! Strikes are all the rage nowadays. When folks want the rules changed they strike. We'll talk it up to Bess, and Clarence and Rose; and, if we're all in it, mother'll see that she may as well give up. That's the way it always works, don't you see?"

"I don't want to do anything bad," said Elsie. "You know ma said if God sent us

anybody who was willing to be a mother to us, we were to be good and obedient."

"Well, we have been, and we mean to be. Only she needn't be so much more particular than ma was."

Bess and Clarence and little Rose were easily led to embrace the views of their brother and sister. The league was formed, Jasper appointed as leader, and it was agreed that the strike should come off "before father comes home."

"The first thing is to perform a procession and march," said Jasper, "and while we're doing that I'll think up my speech. Our marching will show mother that we mean business."

It was fine fun for the little ones. They got strips of red and white cloth and tied them to short poles, and carried them as banners; and they marched up and down through dining-room, and kitchen, and bedrooms, up stairs and down stairs, out into the yard, and back through the long entry, till the mother wondered, and grew a little restless over the tramp, tramp, that was making more threadbare the carpets which wore out so fast.

"Come, come!" said she, at last; "haven't you kept up that play long enough? Seems to me it is rather small business for you, Jasper and Elsie."

"We're strikin'," said Clarence, waving his flag. "Just like the big folks do."

In and out, up and down, they still kept their march. There was a curious expression on their step-mother's face whenever they passed through the kitchen, where she was ironing their clothes.

Finally they halted before her, and, standing with toes all even with a crack in the kitchen floor, they made a low bow, as Jasper had instructed them, and then he began his speech: "Honored and respected madam, our mother; we have tried to do as you wanted us to, and we don't wish now to be bad, or rebellious, or anything. But we think, one and all, that it's too hard, when a fellow comes in all tired out with baseball, or something, to have to run straight and put his bat in one place and his hat in another. This strike is to—see if we can't come to some agreement that we shall live a little more free and easy, as Elsie says, and do a little more as we've a mind to do about such things. We don't wish to be very disorderly, but we would rather not have to be quite so particular."

"I suppose," said she, "you expect me to make a speech in reply. But I must have a little time to think what I ought to say. Besides it is almost lunch time, and I must get these things ironed first. Suppose you march up and down on the sidewalk in front of the house till my speech is ready."

"Can't I iron, and you go right to getting lunch?" asked Elsie, pressed by hunger.

"That isn't the way. We ought all to keep marching," said Jasper; "but we're all hungry, so perhaps you'd better."

"Just as you like," said their mother, "And, if Jasper and Clarence will bring some light, dry wood from the shed, we shall have lunch all the sooner."

Flags were consigned to Bess and Rose, and the procession broke up for the present. Nothing more was heard of the strike till lunch was over. Perhaps it would have been forgotten altogether, but Mrs. Jones herself reminded them of it by saying, "I have my answer ready now, if you wish to hear it."

"Oh, yes, we do! Form into line here! There, we're ready!" said the children.

"Well, when I came here, you all threw your things down just where it happened, and often they were lost, or broken, or soiled; and it always made the house disorderly. I suppose your own mother used to pick them up for you, but I thought you were old enough to begin to put them away yourselves. But it seems you do not like my plans. Now I can't have a disorderly house, so we must compromise the matter. That is the usual way in case of a strike, I believe."

"Yes, we should like to compromise," said Jasper. "That's just what we want."

"Very well. There is a large hoghead in the back room. Whenever you leave any of your things about, I shall not ask you to put them in place any more. I will just drop them into that hoghead. We will call it the 'disorder barrel.' And when you want them you can look there for them."

Jasper and Elsie looked somewhat non-plussed, and glanced dolefully at each other, but Clarence and Bess and Rose hailed the

compromise as every way satisfactory, and the strike was over.

The first things that went into the disorder barrel were the flags which had been thrown together upon a settee. Mrs. Jones dropped in this first contribution with a quiet, amused smile. For several days Jasper and Elsie were rather careful to put away their things, for the hoghead was deep and wide, and it would be "such a bother" to get them out if they once got in. But presently the barrel began to fill up, and the fuller it grew the more difficult it was to find any small articles that had been consigned to its depths. Mrs. Jones seemed fully satisfied with the arrangement. She no longer reminded them to lay their things in the proper places, and books, slates, hats and bonnets, marbles, and jumping ropes were quietly dropped in together.

More and more frequently the cry arose in the house, "Where is my jackknife? Where is my best alley? Where is my tippet?" and little Rose's small piping voice was generally heard in reply, "In the disorder barrel, I spect!" and the discomfited loser ran, often in hot haste, to rummage among the medley of articles. The older ones stood on a chair and reached down to search, but when time pressed and search was unavailing they were often brought to the extremity of turning the barrel upon its side, pulling out the contents, and, when the lost article was found, tumbling them back again. But Clarence and Bess, who were not strong enough to tip the barrel over, had been known more than once to climb into it, much to the detriment of some of its contents.

Jasper and Elsie complained of this, but the mother's laughing reproof in no wise availed to prevent a repetition of the offence. Consequently many things came out of the disorder barrel so crushed and spoiled that they might almost as well have been thrown into the fire.

"I can't go to the picnic to-morrow, nor to school next day, nor anywhere any more, as I see," said Elsie, one day. "My hat is just ruined. The crown is crushed down, and there's a stain of apple or something on the ribbon. I'll never wear it. I don't think much of your old strike, Jasper! It's made us ten times more trouble than we had before. I should like to set that old disorder barrel afire and burn it up, with all there is in it, and never hear of it again!"

"Well, I own that I'm sick of my job," said Jasper. "Suppose we strike once more and get it abolished."

"Oh, yes; strike again! Where's my flag, I wonder?" said Clarence. "Strikes are such fun!"

"The consequences are not fun to me," said Elsie, "and I'm not going through any more of that silly marching. I'm just going to ask mother to change back to the old way; that's all."

"But we ought all to go together and ask her, because we were all in the strike," said Jasper.

"Well, then let's do it right away," said Elsie.

So the procession was again formed, and without much preparation and with no needless parade they sought their mother and made known their request. She cheerfully promised that the odious barrel should be abolished. And that evening she kindly pressed and retrimmed Elsie's school hat, so that the soiled ribbon and crushed place were no longer visible, and henceforth things returned to their old order, the gain from the strike being manifest only in the added zeal and cheerfulness with which even the slightest hints were obeyed.—Sabbath Recorder.

WHAT CAN SHE DO?

BY GRACE H. DODGE.

A young girl who has just left school often finds herself with few or no regular duties. She has time at her disposal. How is it to be spent? Selfishly? Lessons which lead to self-culture, with fancy-work, chit-chat, and gay social life, are well enough for a part of her time; but ought not the remainder to be given to others?

The mother needs the daughter's assistance. The brothers want a sister always ready to sympathize, and to enter into their pursuits. The father is fond of his daughter's presence, and justly claims certain of her hours. Much joy, gladness and relief a young girl fresh from school can bring into the home circle, and surely she ought there to do what she can.

But more than this. The education, the musical talent, the gift of languages, the

trained pen and cultured tongue, the well-stored mind, should be used for others outside the home as well as within it.

"But what can I do? How shall I begin?" are questions often asked. Be filled with a strong desire to do something, and the way will be opened. "Do that which lies nearest you." In the Sunday-school and in the sewing-schools are classes waiting for a teacher. Not very far from your home stands a hospital. Here are many sick and suffering women and children, to whom the hours seem like days. The day seems endless; and yet, when night comes there is a longing for the day. How tedious to do nothing but lie still! How doubly tedious when friendless and alone! Into the wards and among these tired ones a young girl, with bright and smiling face, can bring the grateful sunshine with her. Perhaps she is not fully equal to advice and practical sympathy; but she can give bunches of flowers to one and another, or some colored picture-cards, or books, collected from more fortunate people. She can, after speaking a cheery word to the different patients, sit down among them, being careful that each can see her comfortably. Then, for a half-hour or more, she can read some happy story or bit of information. Neither the women nor the children will enjoy a long-continued reading, but will be enlivened by clever anecdotes, narrative and other poetry, adventures of travellers, and the like. A few moments should be taken for reading a passage from our Saviour's life, and one of his comforting messages should be given, to be thought over until another visit. There may be a girl in the ward who is able to use hand and head. To her can be brought some pretty piece of fancy-work and she can be taught to do it. Several of the children may have hip trouble. Their brains are active, and their heads strong enough to study. A few moments can be spent in giving and hearing a lesson. Possibly the visitor has a sweet voice for simple English hymns and songs; she must not be afraid to sing these in the hospital as well as at home. The nurse should always be consulted before going into the room, and her suggestions carefully followed, without feeling offended if she advises the young visitor not to enter on that day.

Many girls feel that they could not visit a hospital, or that they would not be allowed to do so by home friends. But they could use their brains and hands by writing little hospital letters. Those for children should be filled with story, illustration, and loving words. The grown persons need the same simple letters, but to them should be added helpful texts and practical precepts. In all letters, love and sympathy must be shown, and through this love and sympathy the sufferer must be turned to the great Physician. No name need be signed except that of "Friend," and the matron or nurse will gladly direct them. Those outside can have no idea how such letters are welcomed and treasured. They are read and re-read until they fall in pieces.

Some will say there is no hospital near, or none needing them. If so, ask your clergyman or physician if there are no sick children or young girls lying in some tenement or cottage home. They need you even more than those in the hospital.

If you go to some concert, some place of amusement, next day go and tell your sick friend all about it. Your own pleasure will be doubled for being shared by others who need it even more than you do. Books of photographs or engravings will be interesting for hours. One poor deformed girl lying in a tenement-house was taught by a lady how to crochet a purse; silk was given her, and then hours fly by, her thoughts and hands busy over the purse to be sold to buy a surprise for her mother.—S. S. Times

THE LONDON Telegraph tells the story of a farmer's wife in Germany, who in making some cherry brandy found the fruit unsound, and threw the whole into the yard. Her ten geese ate them all and became dead-drunk. She had forgotten about the cherries, and when she found her geese all in the gutter, she concluded they had been poisoned, and so they would not be good for food, but she picked all their feathers off for the market. What was her surprise and sorrow to find the geese the next morning as well as ever, but cold and shivering. Perhaps she and the geese both learned a lesson, that cherry or any other brandy is very apt to take the feathers off the backs of geese and the clothes off the backs of people.