

The Family Circle.

THE WANDERER.

Upon a mountain height, far from the sea,
I found a shell,
And to my listening ear the lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

How came that shell upon that mountain height?
Ah, who can say
Whether there dropped by some careless hand,
Or whether there cast when ocean swept the
land,
Ere the Eternal had ordained the day?

Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,
One song it sang—
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide—
Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height
Sings of the sea,
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away—
So do I ever, wandering where I may—
Sing, O my home! sing, O my home! of
thee.

—Eugene Field.

NAN'S WAY.

"Nan," said Mrs. Hodges, as a tall, slender girl came hurriedly into the sitting-room, "wait a minute, dear. I have a letter here from your Aunt Fanny; and she says—"

"Oh, well, mamma," interrupted Nan, "I haven't time to hear what she says now. I'm in a dreadful hurry. I've got my room all torn up, and I want to put it in order before school time. You can read it to me to-night just as well."

"I think, dear, you'd better wait and hear it now," her mother insisted gently; "for she is coming to spend some weeks with us, and I'm sorry, Nanny, but that means—"

"Oh, horrors, mamma! I know what that means. It means I've got to give up my pretty room to her, and go in with Katie. I do wish we could have a house with a spare room in it, and not make me move all over the house whenever anybody comes! It's perfectly dreadful!"

"I know it, dear, and I'm sorry it is necessary. But you must remember you took the spare room on condition that you would willingly vacate it whenever it was needed for guests. Surely you can get along very nicely with Katie for a few weeks."

"Oh, but mamma, you don't know how I hate it! She takes half a dozen dolls to bed, and tumbles around nights, and pulls the covers every way! It's just horrid!" And with a shrug and a frown, Nan flounced out of the room.

"Mamma," said little Katie, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, "will Aunt Fanny stay long?"

"I don't know. Why, dear?" asked the mother, smiling at the sober face lifted to hers.

"Because—why, mamma, it isn't nice at all when Nannie rooms with me. She throws my dolls out of bed and scolds me so."

"Yes, dear, I understand; but you mustn't mind it, Katie. Nannie does not mean to scold you; it is only her way."

That noon Nannie came to the table with a clouded brow, ate her dinner in silence, and, after the meal was ended, went up to her room, where they could hear her closet doors angrily opened and closed, and bureau drawers drawn noisily out and pushed in again with a bang. Her mother sighed, but, knowing the fit of ill-humor would be over all the sooner if no one interfered, left her to work it off alone.

The next day Aunt Fannie came; and from the moment of her arrival Nannie was the devoted admirer of this sweet-faced woman with gentle voice and quiet manner. It was certainly lovely to be sweet and gentle; and for several days Nan's abrupt movements were held decidedly in check, while the quick words and fretful tone, usually so ready in response to annoyance, were seldom heard.

But one day all went wrong. It was rainy and cold for one thing, which always made Nan cross. Then she was late to breakfast, and, finding the coffee and the cakes cold, she first scolded the girl, and then spoke angrily to Katie, was impertinent to her mother, and ended by rushing off to school in the worst possible humor. After that nothing seemed to go smoothly, and matters fell back into the old way, until certainly Jennie Clark was right, and nobody in her senses would have thought of calling her "sweet." Yet under all the fretfulness was hidden a loving heart, which expressed itself often in many helpful ways. She was so truly kind and thoughtful that they had come to overlook the crossness, and excuse it as Nan's way.

But Aunt Fannie saw with much surprise and anxiety how this habit of ill-temper had grown upon the young girl, until it bade fair to make herself and every one about her uncomfortable. One noon Mrs. Hodges came into the sitting-room, saying in a troubled voice:

"Nannie, I wish you would go down and speak with Nora; for she is feeling very much hurt. She took such pains to do up your cambric dress just as you wanted it, and when you passed through the kitchen yesterday and saw it on the bars, you said you never could wear it in the world, it was entirely too stiff."

"Oh, nonsense, mamma! She ought not to mind a little thing like that. I know she's dreadfully touchy, but she ought to know me by this time. It is just my quick way of speaking; and the dress was all right after all. The old goose! I didn't mean to hurt her feelings; but I'll go down, and make it all right with her."

Mrs. Hodges sighed as Nannie left the room, saying to her sister: "I do wish, Fannie, that Nannie was not so impulsive. She makes a great deal of trouble both for herself and others. Still, she does not mean anything by it; for she has really a very warm heart, it is only her way."

That evening Nan came in the early twilight to her aunt's room, saying:

"Aunt Fannie, it is too dark to study and just right for a chat."

"I was just wishing for you, dear," was the reply. "Your mother and I were out driving this afternoon, down by the Long Pond; and I brought home some plants for you to analyze."

"O Aunt Fannie! How kind! Where are they?" Nan exclaimed eagerly; for just now she was very much interested in botany.

"Over there on the table, dear; and I think they should be put at once into water, as they must be somewhat wilted."

Nan went quickly to the table, where in the dim light she could discern the heap of leaves and branches. Grasping them impulsively with both hands, to carry them to her room, she suddenly threw them from her, and, rubbing her hands together, exclaimed angrily:

"For mercy's sake! Why, what are they? My hands burn like fire!"

"Oh, I'm sorry, dear," said Aunt Fannie, gently; "but never mind. They are nettles, and that is just a 'way they have.' They are a very useful plant in many ways, and you must not mind it if they do sting you a little. They don't mean to hurt you, Nannie; it is only their 'way!'"

Nan's cheeks flushed hotly; but she bit her lip, and, silently slipping the nettles on a paper, carried them to her room. After putting them in water, she stood a few minutes by the window half vexed with the pain in her hands, but feeling a still sharper pain in her heart. Suddenly she felt herself folded in two loving arms, while a tender voice said:

"Was the lesson too severe, dear?"

With quickly filling eyes, Nannie turned to her saying:

"O Aunt Fannie! Do you think I am like the nettle? Do you mean that?"

In the gathering twilight they sat down together for a long and earnest talk in the course of which "Nan's way" looked more hateful to herself than it could have ever seemed to any one else. Just before they separated, Nan said earnestly:

"Somebody once said of somebody that 'her ways were ways of pleasantness, and all her paths were peace;' I think that was lovely."

"Yes, dear," replied her aunt, stroking her fair head as it lay on her shoulder, "Solomon said it of wisdom and many have found it true."

"I know," said Nan, catching the caressing hand, and playfully kissing it; "but since then somebody said it of you, Aunt Fannie, and 'many have found it true.' If I thought that by trying ever so hard, years from now people would say that of me! Aunt Fannie, you must help me, for it will be dreadfully hard; but I will try, for I mean to begin a new way from this very night."—*The Advance.*

IN A JAPANESE FARMHOUSE.

It is seemingly a very happy family which sleeps nightly beneath the roof of this little valley farmhouse. There are the old grandfather and his energetic old helpmate; their two sons, Genzo and Toehi; the wife and 15-year-old daughter Kimi of Genzo, the present head of the house; two maidservants and a man, besides the cow and the chickens, and "our dog" as Kimi says, "who is such a big fellow, and yet hasn't any name but just 'puppy,' which belongs to all little dogs. Isn't it funny?"

Kimi, or, more politely, "O Kimi San," is the centre of that group. At fifteen she has all the graces of a child of five, and the strength of a woman grown in her tiny body. Her mind is simple and lovable. Having been to a city boarding-school nearly three months, during which she wept daily for dear Tano, and wrote stiff little letters to "Ohichi uie sama" (her sir father), she has at times a deep sense of estrangement from her native town. "The very best place in all the world, because, you know, I was born here." And she speaks pathetically of the strange hands that set the rice on that little patch of ground, about the size of a baby grand piano, which she had always planted herself until this year.

"But then, I was away at school—a very different thing from wading in the mud to set rice sprouts. And then when I got home, there were all the swallows'

nests stolen by the sparrows, which would never, never do. I had to get a ladder and steal all the sparrows' eggs in the house and under the eaves. Even now we haven't nearly as many swallows on the place."

And the pathos of the thought almost drove the dimple at the corner of her mouth out of sight. She had never seen but one foreign lady till she came to school, and that was away back when she "wore dragon fly hair,"—one way of dressing the hair of little children.

Grandfather a few years ago turned over the family government to his eldest son and heir. He is now, theoretically, not the power behind the throne, but above the throne. Genzo is the head of the family. The old man is above the head—so to speak, canonized. That is the theory, but, as a matter of fact, even he has rather settled into second place behind O Kimi San, his only grandchild in the main line.

The grandfather has a daughter, of whose four children he is very fond. Nevertheless, when she married she ceased to be his daughter, and became the daughter of her husband's parents, and so he has no claim on her two bright-eyed little boys—fat little baby and demure little maid—and they have no claim on him, though they seldom let half a day pass without appearing in the regiments or squads at the old homestead to munch green fruit or clamor for sugar.

Grandmother is blunt and good-natured. She has not ceased to be a hard worker yet, though the responsibility of the housework no longer rests on her shoulders. She is on very good terms with her handsome, intelligent daughter-in-law, by whose side she works a good deal of the day. Her special forte seems to be preparing the pickles, relishes and condiments for the distant future, though her hand has not lost its cunning, and can be turned to anything.

Her position is more like that of the men in the house than like that of the women. She has outlived the time when she must keep silence while they are conversing.

Grandmother's great aversion is bashfulness on the part of guests. The house can entertain them well, and she wants a fair chance to do it without being handicapped by the recipients' diffidence.

Young madam's office in the world is work—hard work, swift work, skilled work—from early dawn till late at night, when she is so tired that she has no will to join the chat around the hearth. And yet she is no drudge. Her face is bright, her spirit is in no wise broken or discouraged, nor is her place in the family in contempt. She is only passing through her time of work. By-and-by she will be a grandmother, and some one else will work, work, work—at treadmill, loom, spinning-wheel, caldron, silk reel, or what not.

Kimi thinks mother the dearest creature in the world, only to be compared with grandma. Papa and grandpapa do not think of resenting such frankness. A little illness on grandmamma's part draws evident affectionate interest from papa. So that while no one from the west can help wishing she had now in her prime, the recognition due to her humanity, undiscounted by her sex, and while he cannot help a sense of discomfort at the kind of labour her male relatives can quietly sit by and see her do, he cannot, on the other hand, afford to rail at the