



### The Family Circle.

#### BOYS' RIGHTS.

I wonder now if any one  
In this broad land has heard  
In favor of down-trodden boys  
One solitary word?  
We hear enough of "woman's right,"  
And "rights of working-men."  
Of "equal rights" and "nation's rights;"  
But pray just tell me when  
Boys' Rights were ever spoken of?  
Why, we've become so used  
To being snubbed by every one,  
And slighted and abused,  
That when one is polite to us  
We open wide our eyes,  
And stretch them in astonishment  
To nearly twice their size!  
Boys seldom dare to ask their friends  
To venture in the house;  
It don't come natural at all  
To creep round like a mouse!  
And if we should forget ourselves,  
And make a little noise,  
Then ma or auntie sure would say:  
"Oh, my! those dreadful boys."  
The girls bang on the piano  
In peace; but if the boys  
Attempt a tune with fife and drum  
It's—"Stop that horrid noise!"  
"That horrid noise!" just think of it:  
When sister never fails  
To make a noise three times as bad  
With everlasting "scals."  
Insulted thus, we lose no time  
In beating a retreat!  
So off we go to romp and tear,  
And scamper in the street.  
No wonder that so many boys  
Such wicked men become;  
'Twere better far to let them have  
Their noise and fun at home.  
Perhaps that text the preacher quotes  
Sometimes—"train up a child"—  
Means only train the little girls  
And let the boys run wild.  
But patience, and the time will come  
When we boys will be men,  
And when it does, I rather think  
Wrongs will be righted then.  
—Selected.

#### THE FLOWER OF AN HOUR.

"Can't you choose, Floy?" said Mrs. Temple. "I'm sure I never saw a more beautiful collection of plants. I can hardly blame you for hesitating, with such roses, fuchsias and geraniums to tempt you; but as you can buy only one, you should make a judicious choice."  
Floy moved slowly down the long ranks of potted plants, pausing first at one and then at another with such a doleful look of indecision in her face that her mother laughed outright.  
"Don't be wretched because you can't take all of them, Floy. Fix your mind upon the fact that you can have but one."  
"Yes, I know, mamma. Isn't this the loveliest carnation?—but then it's such a tiny plant."  
"Tiny plants have a habit of growing," her mother answered. "Come now, make haste, for I've been a whole hour waiting for you. A little girl twelve years old ought to know what she wants without taking so long time to decide."  
Floy uttered an exclamation of delight. "I've made my choice, mamma. Isn't it the most splendid plant you ever saw in your life?"  
It was a hibiscus, covered with double blooms of a rich dark crimson. Mrs. Temple did not look charmed.  
"It's a hibiscus, Floy," she said; "the 'flower of an hour.' It has no odor, and the flowers will wither and fade before night. Besides, it is a coarse flower, and not satisfactory to any sense, unless it may be that of the sight, for those who like glaring colors."  
"But it's so beautiful!" Floy cried enthusiastically. "Mamma, I'd rather look at it for one hour, if it lasts that long, than any other flower for a week. It doesn't need perfume, it's so enchantingly lovely!"  
Of course there was nothing more to do

but to pay for the flower and have it sent home. It was intended as a reward to Floy for the good lessons of a school term, and if she had taken a fancy to a weed, no one had a right to object.

Mr. and Mrs. Temple were not wealthy people, and their little presents to their children were simple; but they understood one thing that richer parents would do well to learn. A gift, to please children or to profit them, should not be hampered by restrictions, and if they are to choose for themselves, they should, beyond necessary limitations, have full liberty of choice.

The hibiscus came home, and was promoted to the place of honor in what Floy called her "bow window"—a kind of recess or shelf which extend beyond the window-sill.

She spent the day admiring her flowers, and when they dropped off the stalks that evening, she was comforted by the number of buds which would bloom the next day.

But somehow the second crop of flowers, though as brilliant as the first, did not give her the same pleasure. She could not help thinking how soon they would fade, and she wished they had perfume; and now that she had time to examine them, she saw the flower was far from perfect in its form; that it had, in fact, nothing but bright coloring. Other girls gave bouquets to their friends, but of what use was a hibiscus for that purpose?

In two weeks the poor hibiscus was neglected and forgotten.

"So your hibiscus is dead, Floy," Mrs. Temple said one day.

"Oh yes! I didn't like it a bit, it was such a poor useless flower. I see you smile, mamma. Yes, I remember how crazy I was about it, but I've learned a lesson since then. I'll never be so attracted by mere looks again."

"A very good lesson, my dear. But see here, I have a surprise for you; an invitation from the Wilson girls to join them in a picnic to Montclair to-morrow. And here's a note from your Uncle James, asking you to come the same day and help him unpack and arrange his books and pictures, which have just arrived from Europe."

"Oh, what shall I do?" she cried. "A picnic at Montclair is the most delightful thing in the world. All the girls will be there, and O, mamma! the Montclair gardener lets anybody have fruit out of the orchard, for it's just decaying on the ground. But then Uncle James's books and pictures, that I've been longing to see ever since he came home! Why can't I go to the picnic and to Uncle James's the day after? One day will not make any difference."

"It certainly will," her mother answered drily. "If you prefer going to the picnic, Helen can go in your place to your uncle's. She will like it better, I am sure."

"Of course she will," Floy answered quickly; and if she is younger than I am you say yourself she is more active and useful. She doesn't care a straw for amusements of any kind. Besides Uncle James isn't going to run away with his collection. I can see it at any time; but the picnic is to-morrow or never for me."

Left to herself, Floy began to think that perhaps she had not made the wisest choice. Uncle James was a bachelor and something of an artist, with means enough to travel and taste enough to pick up hundreds of pretty and artistic things.

What a dear helter-skelter house his was, where his nieces could roam unchecked and listen to the stories attached to his curiosities and hear of the foreign lands where so much of his life was passed. But then that pleasure would not be lost entirely by going to the picnic—only postponed. Besides, the Montclair fruit.

Floy went to the picnic. Nothing was quite as charming as she had anticipated, though everything went off well. The fruit was certainly fine, but she ate too much of it, and after dinner felt uncomfortable and very impatient for the time to come when she could return home. It was dark when she reached the house and she was more than half sick, vexed and cross. Helen was talking to her mother in an excited manner.

"Oh, such a charming time as I've had, Floy! I've been telling mamma all about it. And look at this book of drawing lessons Uncle James has given me. He's going to have me taught by Prof. Knox, and I'm to begin my drawing-lessons to-morrow. Uncle James says I have quite a talent for draw-

ing and I told him you had more than I; but he said he guessed not. If you had really cared for works of art, he said, you would have preferred helping him to-day to going to a picnic."

Floy sank into a seat feeling her heart very heavy. She had a decided talent for drawing, and it had been a cherished hope for the last year that Uncle James would give her the advantages that had now fallen to the lot of her fortunate sister. She knew that he would not do it for both and she had twice the taste and capacity of Helen.

It was very hard and the thought of the picnic which had caused this disappointment became disgusting to her.

"Did you have a pleasant day, dear?" her mother asked, with sad pity in her kind eyes. She had known her daughter's hopes, and she sympathized in her disappointment.

"I suppose so; I don't know. Oh, I'm so awfully tired, so worn out, that I believe I'll go to bed."

Six years rolled over Floy's head, bringing with them no pleasant changes. Her father and uncle were dead, and Mrs. Temple's means were so straitened that it was only with the most rigid economy that she could provide for the daily wants of her family.

Helen, slow and plodding as she was, had attained some reputation as an artist, and the sale of her best sketches eked out their scanty living. Floy, brilliant and accomplished, seemed unable to turn her abilities into any profitable channel. In fact, she frittered them away on a thousand useless trifles.

She attempted to give music-lessons; but the stupidity of her scholars disgusted her. She wasted her time at the houses of wealthy people, who invited her to make use of her talents, and thought themselves really charitable for inviting "poor Temple's daughter" to their homes or social gatherings.

"Shockingly reduced," they would whisper amongst themselves. "But poor Temple was of a good family, and she sings and plays remarkably well too. Useful to have some one to play dance-music of an evening; and then you can put her anywhere, you know."

One morning Floy entered her mother's room flushed and excited.

"O mamma, Mrs. Gray wishes me to go with her to-morrow to Sedgebrook Hall! The Sedgebrooks are going to have a concert, and tableaux, and a play, and other nice amusements. They have some relatives staying with them and they wish to give them a good time. Mrs. Gray says we will be there at least a week, if not longer. Now, mamma, pull out your old finery, and let us see what we can find presentable in the wreck."

Mrs. Temple turned a troubled face to her daughter. "Have you forgotten, Floy, that to-day is the 10th, and that on the 20th the concert comes off?"

"Forgotten nothing. Of course I remember, when the nice little sum of six hundred a year depends upon my playing to please the fastidious ears of Signor Stefani. Why on earth couldn't the rector have chosen an organist for his own church without calling upon the great man to choose for him? A perfect stranger, too."

"For that very reason, Mr. Helmley told me, so that he would not be likely to have his judgment warped by any personal consideration. He is a severe critic, I am told, and a fanatic about church music. He says the worship of God should have the highest talent employed in its service."

"That's all right," remarked Floy complacently. "I believe I represent the best musical talent in this place. This city professor will have to take me, whether I please him or not."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Temple dubiously. "The Ellis girls and Mary Beale are practising their parts all the time. If you go to Sedgebrook for a week, you will only get here a day or two before the concert."

"Plenty of time for me. I only need to run over my part once or twice. Let them wear their fingers and their eyes out. I will still triumph. I declare, mamma, I'm surprised you feel afraid of girls with such moderate musical capacity."

"And such strength of will, and such determined application, Floy! I entreat you to stay at home, so very much depends upon your success. I cannot have you risk a chance."

"I won't," Floy answered, laughing. "I promise you, mamma, I'll not risk the chance in the slightest degree. I'll take my music to Sedgebrook and practise it there, though there's not the least use in it. I never fail in music, do I?"

With that promise Mrs. Temple tried to content herself, and Floy set off in the highest spirits.

There was much to be done when she reached Sedgebrook, and she threw herself with such enthusiasm into the enjoyment of each day that the concert almost passed from her mind. Her acting and her singing and playing gained her a great deal of attention and flattery. I am afraid that I must say her foolish little head was quite turned.

She remembered her promise to her mother once, and took out the music she had brought, but the solemn fugue somehow jarred upon her light mood, and she threw it aside.

"I have to be in the humor for these slow old things," she said to herself. "It is more difficult than I thought, but I'll master it as soon as I get home."

But she got home so weary from the dissipation of the week, so fretful and discontented at the contrast of her humble home with the luxurious, easeful life she had left behind her, that she could not settle herself to uncongenial work.

"I don't play it well, mamma," she said the evening before the concert, "but I think I know it, and the good playing will come as soon as I am inspired by the crowd. I always am at my best then, you know."

Poor Mrs. Temple shook her head sorrowfully. She was prepared for frequent mistakes, but Floy had a way of covering these mistakes by some brilliant musical interpolation of her own which drew attention from them.

But she was not prepared for a total and ignominious failure at the concert, which nevertheless took place.

Floy's first mistake so bewildered her that to retrieve it she made a greater one. Conscious of her ignorance of the music, with burning cheeks, unseeing eyes, and hands trembling so much that she could hardly strike a note, she rose precipitately and left the room.

Mrs. Temple hurried home to find her in the depths of despair and humiliation.

"My poor child!" she said tenderly.

"Don't say a kind word to me, mamma!" she cried, with tears streaming down her pale face. "I deserve it all, all and worse, only you have to suffer. I've always been just what I am from a child. I chose the 'flower of an hour' then against your advice; I've been doing it ever since. O mamma, mamma, it would be better for me to die at once, and get out of all my weakness and humiliation! I cannot resist temptation when it comes."

A good woman and a loving mother can bring comfort to the most erring child. Mrs. Temple was both, and she only dealt upon the great fault of her character that she might point out the best way to remedy it.

Under no other circumstances would Floy have been impressed by good advice. Now it seemed to burn into her soul. The next morning she put on her bonnet, saying, with a faint smile:

"I'm going to try to get back the Beckfords as pupils, mamma. I remember what you told me last night about taking up each duty earnestly. I daresay they're not half as stupid as my disinclination to teach them made them appear. I'm going to force myself to like what I ought to do. But there's some one at the door. Who can it be at this hour?"

It was Mr. Helmley and Signor Stefani.

"I've brought the Signor to hear you play this morning, Floy," he said kindly. "I suppose you were sick or nervous last night, and you surprised me terribly by breaking down. I do not wish him to leave here after all I've said of you fancying you can't play at all. Give us something of Chopin's."

Was Floy inspired that morning? I think so, for she forgot herself, her fears and anxieties, and played as she had never done before in her whole life.

"Mademoiselle was not herself last night," said Signor Stefani, smiling, as she finished. "She is a musician, and her genius should not be so capricious as to desert her entirely. She must study and master it."

He bowed himself out, but said a few