



### The Family Circle.

#### WHY LITTLE BIRDS HOP AND OTHER BIRDS WALK.

A little bird sat on a twig of a tree,  
A-swinging and singing as glad as could be,  
And shaking his tail, and smoothing his dress  
And having such fun as you never could  
guess.

And when he had finished his gay little song  
He flew down in the street, and went hop-  
ping along  
This way and that way with both little feet,  
While his sharp little eyes looked for some-  
thing to eat.

A little boy said to him, "Little bird, stop!  
And tell me the reason you go with a hop.  
Why don't you walk, as boys do and men,  
One foot at a time, like a dove or a hen?"

"How queer it would look if, when you go  
out,  
You should see little boys go jumping about  
Like you, little bird! And you don't know  
what fun  
It is to be able to walk and to run."

Then the little bird went with a hop, hop,  
hop;  
And he laughed and he laughed as he never  
would stop;  
And he said, "Little boy, there are some  
birds that talk,  
And some birds that hop, and some birds  
that walk.

"Use your eyes, little boy; watch closely,  
and see  
What little birds hop, both feet, just like me,  
And what little birds walk, like the duck and  
the hen,  
And when you know that you'll know more  
than some men.

"Every bird that can scratch in the dirt can  
walk;  
Every bird that can wade in the water can  
walk;  
Every bird that has claws to catch prey with  
can walk.  
One foot at a time—that is why they can  
walk.

"But most little birds who can sing you a  
song  
Are so small that their legs are not very  
strong  
To scratch with or wade with or catch things  
—that's why  
They hop with both feet. Little boy, good-  
by!"

—L. J. Bates, in *Wide Awake*.

#### AMY'S PROBATION.

By the Author of "Glaucia," etc.

##### CHAPTER IV.—THE CONVENT SCHOOL.

To Milly's surprise and disappointment she saw nothing of Miss Crane during this recreation time, but it was explained before she went to bed, for she heard, to her most profound astonishment, that Augusta was in another division of the school—that specially set apart for the novices, or those who were preparing to take the veil as nuns.

"But Augusta cannot be a novice—she is not going to be a nun; she is a Protestant, like ourselves," said Milly, as soon as she could find her tongue.

"Hush! here is Sister Cecilia, and it's best not to talk about being Protestants here," said the girl who had given her the information about Augusta.

Sister Cecilia was close at their side, and the girl, turning to her, said, "This young lady has been asking about our needle-work, sister, and I have been telling her there is little time for anything but study here."

The nun looked at Milly, and Milly at the girl who had uttered this bare-faced falsehood, but Sister Cecilia only said, "The mistress-general will appoint your class presently," and passed on.

"How could you tell such a story?" said Milly, as soon as she was out of hearing.

The girl laughed. "You are shocked at it,

are you? Well, I was at first, but you'll soon find out that it's the only way to get on here; only be careful how you do it with the Raven." The last words were spoken in a whisper, for Miss Raven had only left them a minute or two, and was coming toward them again.

"Bother Miss Raven! I shall tell her I don't want her," said Milly, in an undertone.

"No, no; don't do that. We can speak sometimes, perhaps, but we return to discipline to-morrow," and the girl heaved a sigh as she turned away to make room for Miss Raven.

When the hour's recreation was over the girls were summoned to the schoolroom, where the old scholars took their places at their desks to prepare their lessons for the next day, while the mistress-general went through something like an examination of the new scholars' attainments, and appointed them to their different classes.

The two sisters were appointed to different classes, and Milly to a third, apart from either. Amy was dismayed when she heard the mistress-general's decision, for she had already heard that the different classes were kept as much apart as possible, and the individuals—even sisters and relatives—only allowed to speak to each other under certain restrictions and at stated times. They rarely saw each other, except at a distance, and had meals and slept and studied entirely apart.

To be separated from tender-hearted Florie in this way was almost agony to Amy, and she braved the mistress-general's stern look and imperious voice, and begged that she might be put into Florie's class, even though it should be lower than her own.

The nun looked at her with some astonishment for a minute or two, but said at length, "My poor child, you know little of true obedience, I fear."

"Indeed, indeed, ma'am, I will be very obedient if you will let me stay with Florie," said Amy, imploringly. "Our papa died only a little while ago, and my sister has fretted a good deal, and—"

"That is enough child," said the nun, coldly. "I will see that your sister has a suitable companion," and she turned away to prevent anything further being said.

Amy threw herself down upon a seat and burst into a storm of angry sobs and tears. Florie was crying, too, but more quietly, more resignedly than her sister. For a little while the sisters were left to indulge their grief unrestrainedly. The mistress-general had left them now in charge of Sister Cecilia and another nun, but neither of them took any notice of the two girls for some time, but at last a gentle-looking girl was sent to sit beside Florie, and soon afterward another asked if she might speak to Amy.

"It is a great breach of discipline," said the nun very severely, "but, as we do not return to our usual order until to-morrow, I will permit it, as a great indulgence, Miss Carey."

So Miss Carey seated herself beside Amy, and whispered, "Don't cry; you will soon get over it, and in our happy community forget all your troubles."

"But Florie and I have never been separated, and it seems so cruel," sobbed Amy.

"Every body says that at first, but they soon get used to it," said Miss Carey.

"Do they always separate sisters, then?" asked Amy.

"It is not often that sisters can be in the same class, you know, and so there is no help for it; but I am to share your room, Sister Ursula says, and perhaps I can help you to speak to your sister sometimes—I will if I can, but you mustn't tell, for the rules about this are very strict."

"I don't care for the rules, I will speak to my sister," muttered Amy, defiantly.

Miss Carey looked sorry, but she was getting used to such scenes as these, and she had no doubt that Amy's grief would wear itself out in an hour or two, or a day or two at the most, and the sisters would be content with the friends that had been appointed for them. Not that there was any close friendship between any of the girls; that was not allowed. No two girls were allowed to converse together, or walk together, even in recreation time. They might play or talk in groups, but there must be no caressing—no putting their arms round each other's waists, as girl's love to do; no getting into corners and enjoying a quiet laugh or chat, and no romping allowed.

Of course Amy knew nothing of all this

yet, and at last she dried her eyes, comforting herself with the thought that she and Florie would spend their recreation time together. When bed-time came, however, it was a fresh grief to see Florie marched into another dormitory. She had not seen her little chamber until now, and was surprised to find that her box was not there, and she said something of this to her companion.

"Sister Catherine has charge of our boxes, and will help us unpack to-morrow," said Miss Carey.

"I don't want any help," said Amy, rather ungraciously. She had been asked if she had a night-dress in her hand-bag, and hearing that she had not, Sister Catherine had placed one on her bed, but in her present mood she declared she would not wear it, and sat down declaring she would not go to bed.

In five minutes, however, the door was thrown back, and Sister Ursula, looking scarcely less stern than the mistress-general herself, appeared in the door-way. "How is this? I have heard talking, when there should be perfect silence, and you are not in bed, Miss Curtis."

"I want my own night-dress," said Amy, sulkily.

"You can have it to-morrow—as soon as Sister Catherine can help you to unpack."

"I would rather unpack by myself," said Amy.

"My child, you have come here to learn obedience, and—must I say it—we insist upon its practice."

Amy saw it would be useless to resist further, and so began to undress, seeing which the nun passed on to open every other door, and then, slowly pacing up and down the room, she began reading or reciting a form of prayer to the Virgin.

This lasted about half an hour, and by that time most of the girls were asleep, and the gas was turned off; but Amy was too unhappy to fall asleep very soon to-night, and, as she lay awake thinking of Florie, and crying softly to herself, she could hear the slow, muffled sounds of footsteps pacing up and down, and once her door was opened, and the almost blinding light of a dark lantern turned full upon her.

Nothing of this seemed to disturb Miss Carey, but Amy felt very uncomfortable. Not for one moment since she had been in the house had she been free from the espionage of the nuns, and it seemed that at night as well as day, sleeping as well as waking, was this ceaseless watch kept up.

But even Amy forgot her annoyance at last, and slept as soundly as the rest, until a bell rang, when Miss Carey instantly jumped out of bed.

Amy did not feel disposed to move at once, but her companion quickly roused her.

"You must make haste," she whispered, "we have only five minutes to dress, and then we must take our places to go to the wash room."

"O dear, what a bother getting up is when you feel tired," said Amy with a yawn. "I wonder—"

"Hush, no talking is allowed," whispered Miss Carey, warningly. But the sister in charge had already heard the sound of voices, and presented herself at the door.

"I must send your names to the Spiritual Mother if the rule of silence is broken again," she said.

Amy had barely time to get all her clothes on when the bell rang again, and every girl stood outside the room door, and then at a given signal, moved slowly down the corridor in single file. Before the image of the Virgin each paused for a moment, crossed herself, and murmured a few words of prayer. Amy was almost the only one who passed it without this reverence, but no notice was taken of her omission, and she passed on to her wash basin, merely looking round in search of Millie and Florie.

She saw her cousin but under the strict rule of silence had no opportunity of speaking to her, and the time allowed for washing did not admit of it either. When this was over they marched back to their bedrooms, in the same order, to make their beds, and put any little finishing touches to their attire they might wish, and the rule of silence was so far relaxed that they might talk to their companions in a low voice, but there must be no shouting, and no visiting each other's rooms. A confused Babel of sounds and hum of voices prevailed for the next quarter of an hour. Amy availed herself of the privilege by asking her companion when she should see her sister.

Miss Carey smiled at her impatience. "We may see her as we go down," she said; "but you must not try to speak to her then."

"Not to ask how she is? I am afraid she will fret in this strange place."

"It will not be strange long. You will like it by and by, as the rest of us do," said Miss Carey.

But Amy shook her head very decidedly. "I can never like being watched as we are here," she said.

"But why need you mind that if you are always obedient?"

"Because it seems like suspicion—as though we were not to be trusted; as though we should get into mischief and do wrong every minute."

"And are we not evil until we have learned true obedience? Have we not just left a world of wickedness and sin? A few of us, who desire to join the religious of this holy house, having learned the evil that is in the world, might, perhaps, be trusted, but for the rest—we, there is no other way, I suppose, or the good sisters would certainly have found it out."

"Do you know Miss Crane? She is one of the novices, I hear."

"Ah! she has been highly favored," said Miss Carey, almost in a tone of envy. "She is to be a religious, I hear, as soon as she is eighteen."

"I cannot understand it. Her friends do not even know that she is a Roman Catholic. My cousin told me she always went to a Protestant Church when she was at home lately."

"Very likely our Mother Superior bade her do so," answered Miss Carey.

"But that was deceiving her parents, and every body else. Would your Superior teach a girl to be deceitful?" asked Amy, forgetting for the moment the lesson on obedience she had heard the previous evening.

Miss Carey had heard nothing of the argument that followed, and answered quickly, "Our Superior could not tell us to do wrong; it cannot be wrong to obey in all things."

"Well I should think it wrong to deceive my mamma, if I were Miss Crane."

"We have no right to set up our poor sinful judgment against one who cannot err, who has been commissioned and set over us by the one infallible Church. It is the Church we obey, and we have no right to question her commands, whatever they may be."

"What! Is a girl to deceive her mother and think she is doing right?"

"She is doing a good work if the Church command it; if what is desired to be done can be done in no other way; and the more painful it is, the more she has to fight against her own judgment in this matter, the more merit does she obtain by doing it."

There was not time to say any more, for the bell rang again, and, taking their places at the door as before, but facing the other way, the girls moved forward.

"We are going to chapel now," Miss Carey had contrived to whisper, as they took their places and Amy felt delighted, for surely now, as neither she or Florie would be going to chapel, they would have a few minutes to themselves.

A lay sister was in charge of each class, and as they passed down stairs into the corridor, Amy contrived to say, "My sister and cousin are Protestants; we do not go to chapel."

"Pass on," was all the answer Amy received, and she went on to the very door of the little chapel, where she could see the nuns were already kneeling before a statue of the Virgin.

With a glance at the altar, however, she turned away, and a lay sister motioned her to stand back against the wall. In a minute or two all the girls who were going had passed through, and about half a dozen were left standing in the dimly lighted passage, in the charge of three lay sisters.

In defiance of their presence Amy attempted to walk some twenty yards back to where Florie was standing, but was at once ordered to stand still. No one else attempted to move or speak, although Amy could see that Milly was casting angry and defiant looks at the lay sister. But they might as well have been cast at the opposite wall. Each sister had taken out a book, and seemed to be following the service going on inside the chapel, kneeling and crossing themselves, and bowing every few minutes,