



The Family Circle.

OUR PRAYER.

When the Cross is heavy,
Be thou near.
When our eyes are weeping,
Dry each tear.
When the way is darksome,
Be our Light—
Though the gloom be midnight,
Cheer the night.
When the path is thorny,
Let us be
Patient in our suffering
Like to thee.

When the world looks sternly,
Smile benign—
Let us know so surely,
We are Thine.
And should'nt want o'ertake us,
Let us see
Glimpses of the fulness
Stored in Thee.
In the parting hour
May we take
Hold of the hand once pierced
For our sake.

—Christian Intelligencer.

A LITTLE MATTER.

BY H. ALLAN.

She had been singing all day like a skylark. Even the people next door noticed the blithe happiness of her voice, and said wonderingly, "What is the matter with Penelope Thornton, now?"

"How is it, Pen?" said her friend and confidante, Fanny Tassel, who had run in to borrow a book, "Yesterday you were as murky as a rain-cloud; but to-day, I heard you singing before I shut the gate."

"O, I'm always that way—in the depths or on top of the mountain—hardly ever just calmly contented," said Penelope; "but I'll tell you what is the matter to-day. Fred is going to take me to the social, to-night."

"Coming event casting its shadow before?"

"Yes. It's so seldom Fred goes out with me, in the evening, and when he doesn't I have to stay at home; and I'm so pleased with the prospect of one social evening that I have to sing or do something. Silly, isn't it?"

"No; it's not silly," returned Fanny, quickly. "It just shows how you live—shut up here seven nights out of the seven, while Fred is out every evening, isn't he?"

"Yes," replied Penelope, slowly; and then, anticipating what was to come next, she went on. "But then, you know, I can't blame him for going out alone. He is at the office all day, and when night comes, he likes to run about with his friends."

"And you are in your office all day—your housekeeping, marketing, and receiving-calls-office, and when night comes, you'd like to run about with your friends, too; wouldn't you?"

"Housekeeping, receiving-calls-office! What a girl you are!"

"I mean you are at work, as well as he. And I mean to say that it is selfish of him to take you out so rarely. I have a brother, and he and I go out together all the time. The idea of my singing like a bird at the bare prospect of an evening with him! Why, it's the rule with me, and not the exception."

"Fred never thinks," pleaded Penelope. "He's so used to running in and out whenever he wants to that he doesn't seem to understand that every one cannot do the same. I wish we did not live in such a lonesome place, so that I might go to prayer-meetings and the socials alone."

"No need to go alone, when you have a brother," persisted Fanny. "You do dozens of things for him—run errands, embroider his handkerchiefs, sew buttons on his gloves, and so on, and it is no more than right for him to take you to the socials and lectures and concerts."

"I wish he could hear you talking about him. Maybe it would give him some new ideas."

"I wish he could hear me; and he shall, too, one of these days. You are too much in love with that brother of yours to talk to him as you should."

"Well, well; never mind. He intends doing his duty, to-night, at least. What would you wear, Fan, that dark cashmere, or my shot silk?" And Penelope branched into a subject which deserves perhaps just a little less attention than it receives.

When the dinner hour arrived, and no Fred, but little thought was given to the absence. "He will take dinner down town and run up for me at about eight o'clock," mused Penelope. "I'll help Kate wash the china, and put everything in order, and then dress, so that he will not have to wait for me. Fred's always so impatient when any one is late."

The silver mantel-clock was just striking for the half-hour after seven, when Penelope entered the sitting-room. Her black cashmere was afire with knots of scarlet ribbon caught here and there; and the pretty flush in her cheeks—heightened by the whiteness of a neck-ruff—told that an evening at a social was something which promised her a not ordinary pleasure.

"Oh, there he is," she cried suddenly, as the outer door slammed and a quick footstep was heard in the hall. "I'll run up for my hat and be all ready before he can find time to scold."

But when she flew into the room upon her return, with both hands busy among the hat-ribbons beneath her chin, Fred looked a little surprised and half-abashed.

"Why, are you ready, this early?" he said, hastily. "I hurried in, hoping to catch you before you were dressed. I thought you wouldn't care much about going. You see, Bradshaw is giving a little impromptu supper at the Club to-night, and I promised him half an hour ago that I'd come. You don't care much, do you?"

"And we are not going to the social?"

Such a look of grieved, disappointed surprise shot across her features, and the fingers in the bow trembled so, that Fred began to think some defence was necessary.

"It's such a little matter, I didn't think you would mind it, Pen," he said. "When I made the promise, I had forgotten all about the social with you; but,—” he stopped here, for his audience had turned squarely about, and was slowly climbing the stairs leading to its chamber.

"Pshaw! now I guess she's disappointed," mused Fred. "Well, it's only a little matter anyhow, and Pen won't worry about it long." With this bit of self-comfort, he took his hat and proceeded to keep his engagement with Bradshaw.

Perhaps had Fred seen his sister enter her room almost savagely, toss aside hat and cloak and throw herself upon the bed, her face buried in the pillows, he would have been in doubt about this little matter. When an hour passed, and the face was not yet lifted, his doubt would be a little stronger, and perhaps when at last an almost inaudible sobbing ceased, and the face did arise, a glance at its eyes and cheeks would have assured him that that must be quite a grievous "little matter" which should bring about such a startling change.

But Fred saw nothing of this. Bradshaw's supper was a success, and how was he to know from her appearance at the dinner table next day, that all the while he was enjoying it, Penelope was weeping? How was he to know that his life was an essentially and brutally-selfish one in this respect of evening pleasures? How was he to know that his sister's evenings were dull and uneventful as his own were bright, and that with her this little matter of a promised evening's outing was enough to call the roses to her cheeks twelve hours before? How was he to know these things? Can you answer? Are you Fred?—*Church and Home.*

MOLLY CAREW'S COUSIN.

BY M. D. S.

"A blue merino dress, made over from last season, mended gloves, and a felt Derby! How can I go looking so shabby, mother, to the Colonnade—to call on 'rich relations,' too?"

And Molly Carew's pretty face put on a scowl that made it almost ugly.

"I thought my Molly was quite satisfied with her winter's outfit," replied Mrs. Carew, pleasantly, "and pleased to wear it, even if it were not so handsome as she might wish,

so that dear papa could afford to buy the new overcoat he has so long needed."

The face cleared a little.

"I am real glad papa has his overcoat at last, and truly, mamma, I am contented with my things, only—I don't want to go to that hotel and see cousin Laura dressed so. Why couldn't you go?"

"I could, my dear, only that I think it would be better for you to go, as Laura invited you particularly and as you certainly have no reasonable excuse to offer for non-appearance."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Molly. "I wish it was over."

"What is it that you dread?"

"Oh, everything!" was Molly's vague reply, as she went away to get ready for her visit.

Six years before (as she thought rather bitterly), when she and Laura were children ten years old, both had worn shabby dresses and gloves and hats. If anything, Laura's clothes had been the shabbier of the two outfits!

"Why couldn't papa have gone West, too, and made a fortune?" asked Molly of herself for perhaps the hundredth time since she had heard of her uncle's success.

A vision of her father with his pale, intellectual face and refined ways, casting in his lot with the rough men at the mines rose before Molly and appeared so ludicrous that she laughed aloud.

"No, papa isn't suited to such a way of making money, to be sure. Uncle Phil was never over-particular and I suppose roughing it was just what he liked. But then—I wish—"

"They were poorer, or we richer," trembled on the young girl's lips but remained unspoken.

"How mean of me to even think such a thing," she soliloquized, as she adjusted her Derby and drew on the neatly-mended kids.

"Molly Carew, if you don't mind, you'll break the tenth commandment, and then you'll be sorry."

This with an admonitory nod toward her reflection in the looking-glass.

Then, with a face which had resumed its usual amiable expression, Molly presented herself for her mother's inspection ere she set off.

A loving, motherly "smoothing-down" of the neat dress, followed by a hearty farewell kiss from Mrs. Carew, somehow brought to Molly's mind, more impressively than ever before, the fact that cousin Laura was—motherless. For three years she had been without the love that only mothers give, and Molly, remembering that sad fact, felt more like pitying Laura for her forlornness than envying her for her elegance.

"Persuade Laura, if you can, to come home with you. Tell her that we should be more than pleased to have both Uncle Philip and her dear self remain with us during their stay in Philadelphia," were Mrs. Carew's parting words.

The love of grandeur was innate with Molly Carew, and quite grand she felt as she entered the hotel by the ladies' entrance, and, under the guidance of a waiter (who was careful to put on extra airs for the bewilderment of "little miss"), sought her cousin's apartments.

Laura was expecting her, for she opened the door almost before Molly had done rapping, exclaiming:

"O Molly! I thought you were never coming! What kept you?"

Of course it was inadmissible to tell Laura the foolish reason of her delay—the reluctance to appear in anything less than silk before the daughter of a California millionaire; so Molly held her peace, returning Laura's caresses a little awkwardly, it must be confessed, in her first surprise at finding her cousin quite unchanged by prosperity.

"I do believe you are the same old Laura," she burst forth at last. "Only older and taller, the same as myself."

"Why, of course I am, you dear old thing!" exclaimed Laura, giving Molly another squeeze. "Why shouldn't I be?"

"Oh, but you are so rich you know—now," said blunt Molly. "I was thinking you'd be"—"stiff, stuck-up," said Laura, as Molly hesitated.

"Not that exactly; but your dress—I thought," stammered Molly, and stopped again.

"I have never laid aside my mourning," said Laura, her face clouding for a moment. "You see, I never want to forget mamma; the black dress reminds me of her, and somehow I feel that as I am the only one to wear

it for her sake, I ought to wear it longer than common." Besides," continued Laura, presently, "I've seen so much vulgar display among the mushroom aristocracy of which papa and I are one, I suppose that I have grown to hate anything even remotely bordering upon it."

Before Laura's friendliness Molly's constraint vanished and the two young girls were soon relating their mutual experiences in the most sociable manner possible.

Presently Molly delivered her mother's message with a heartiness she had not thought to infuse into it when it was first given into her keeping.

Instantly, and for the first time since their meeting, Laura's manner changed. She hesitated a moment, then said, with a brusqueness that drove Molly back upon the old opinion, that "pride and wealth must go together."

"It is impossible! Thank your mother, but it is impossible."

"But why, Laura?" asked Molly, adding with a shade of reproach, "You used to love to be at our house."

"And I should now. It is the dearest place on earth to me," Laura exclaimed with vehemence, "Only—don't ask me why; but it is impossible for me or papa to come there to stay. We start for the South, day after to-morrow, as you know," she concluded, evidently repressing emotion. "It would scarcely be worth while to change our quarters for so short a time."

"Oh, why cannot you stay longer in Philadelphia?" queried Molly. "You have not been here for so long, and it is your native city. Why not postpone your visit to the South?"

A conclusive clasp of the hands preceded Laura's answer, the same answer she had made before: "It is impossible."

"But you will call?" persisted Molly. "Papa cannot, and I like to be here. He likes me to be here when he comes," faltered Laura.

Then, assuming some of her former animation, Molly's cousin attempted to take up the conversation just where it had dropped when Molly had proffered her mother's invitation. But talk dragged, nor would it be made lively in spite of Laura's efforts.

"See here!" she said, springing up at last and unlocking her Saratoga. "I almost forgot, Molly. I knew you used to like curiosities, and so I brought you some."

Molly's delight shone in her eyes as she saw the bits of curious minerals, the specimens of fossilized leaves and insects, the many unique odds and ends that Laura displayed.

"They are all for you, dear," said Laura, as she lifted the box in which they were packed out of the trunk. "And please tell Aunt May I sent her this with my best love, and this for Uncle Will," as she laid across Molly's right arm a handsome shawl, and in the other hand an elegant carved cane.

As Molly would have expressed her thanks, Laura stopped her, saying:

"It is enough that you are pleased with the things. I hoped that you would be. All I ask is that you may remember the giver."

"Be sure of that," answered Molly, warmly. Even while she spoke a groan, which evidently proceeded from the adjoining apartment, reached their ears. A look of dismay overspread Laura's features at the sound, and, as the groan was repeated she looked absolutely terrified.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" asked Molly in much trepidation.

"Never mind what it is," said Laura, almost fiercely. "You had better go now," she added hastily. "I have an engagement which must be attended to at this hour." So saying, Laura fairly hustled Molly out of the room, and closed the door upon her.

As quickly as possible Molly made her way to the street. How she reached home she never could tell, only that she knew that she ran all the way, quite regardless of appearances, and burst in upon her mother in a perfect panic. While she was in the midst of her recital of the afternoon's experiences her father arrived.

Mr. and Mrs. Carew exchanged glances as their daughter concluded her narration.

"You must go at once," was in Mrs. Carew's eyes.

"It is as I feared," was in her husband's.

"Then, while Mr. Carew went hastily away to the hotel from which Molly had fled an hour before, Mrs. Carew drew her young daughter to her side and told her what the