



## The Family Circle.

### ELLIE'S FROCK.

"Pray, what are you making, mamma,  
That you are so long about?"  
"A frock for the veriest darling  
That ever wore them out.  
Is it not, with its puffs and plaitings  
And knots of baby blue,  
For Mabel's birthday party  
The very thing for you?"  
"But, mamma, little Patty  
Is sick and like to die;  
I passed their door this morning  
And saw her mamma cry.  
If you could leave your sewing  
For just a little while,  
Could you not help poor Patty  
And make her mamma smile?"

But I barred the doors of conscience  
Against the pleading knock  
With, "I cannot, I'm determined  
To finish Ellie's frock."  
With tiny points and scallops  
And dainty satin loop,  
I'll make my little darling  
The fairy of the group."  
In my heart I stifled pity  
And sewed with all my might—  
I plaited, puffed and scalloped  
All day and half the night.  
I sewed and sung together  
And stitched in all the seams  
A mother's loving fancies,  
A mother's happy dreams.

But early on the morrow  
A passing neighbor said  
"There's mourning in the cottage,  
For little Patty's dead."  
And now at my selfish folly  
Small time to be grieved or vexed.  
For of the fever's victims  
My Ellie was the next!  
I barred my doors but vainly  
Against Death's warning knock,  
And—lying in her coffin,  
She wore the finished frock.

—By Ruth Mariner, in *The Congregationalist*.

### LITTLE DON'T CARE.

BY A. M. W.

"Johnnie! Johnnie! Johnnie!" and Mrs. Atkins came to the door of her cottage, and gazed anxiously up and down the street. "Oh, dear," sighed the weary mother, "what-ever shall I do? Here it is past six o'clock, and it is full three miles to Miss Hill's, and them clothes must go home to-night. I would take Louie with me if she could walk, but she can't, and I cannot carry her and the basket too. Johnnie! Johnnie!"

Just then the figure of a boy with hat jammed on one side, shoes and stockings tucked carelessly under one arm, and stained, mud bespattered clothes came swinging lazily round the corner. Seeing his mother in the door Johnnie Atkins quickened his pace and said somewhat apologetically as he came up,

"I intended to be sooner, mother, but the rest of the boys stopped to play in the lane, and somehow I forgot."

A pained, reproachful look was Mrs. Atkins' only reply, as she hurried into the cottage, hastily donned her shawl and hat, and took up a large basketful of ironed clothes.

"It will be almost dark when I get back from Miss Hill's, now," she said, with an uneasy glance at the clock, "and I must trust little Louie to you. Take good care of her; don't leave the back gate unfastened, and don't let her out of your sight for a moment." "Yes, ma'am," came from Johnnie promptly enough now.

He thought it would be a grand thing to take care of 'Baby Lou'. She was such a little mite of a thing, and had such sweet cunning baby ways—it would be just fun.

For some time after his mother left Johnnie played with Lou contentedly enough, drawing her about in her little wagon, playing 'bo peep,' and so on; then he began to grow tired of it, and to wish his mother would come. It was all very well for a little while,

but then Louie couldn't run and jump and play as the boys at school did. She could only clap her chubby hands and scream with delight when Johnnie executed some particularly clever trick or manoeuvre. "I think I'll just run across and see if Joe Parson has got his white mice yet," thought Johnnie. Nothing can happen to Louie. She can't get out of the yard, and I can see the house from there all the time. Mother told me not to leave her, but I don't care; she'll be all right. Here, Louie," and he gave the little one his rubber ball and bat, "play with these till brother comes back."

"You tom back," lisped Louie, taking the ball and looking with half-frightened eyes into his face.

"Yes, yes, you be good; I'll come right back." And without stopping to look at Louie, who was almost ready to cry, he ran out the front gate and across the street to Mr. Parsons'. Not only had Joe got his mice that afternoon, but two pretty rabbits, one white and one gray, had been sent by his aunt along with them.

The two boys were soon so busy looking over the treasures, and preparing a house for the rabbits, that Johnnie had no idea how the time flew—indeed I doubt if he ever once thought of Louie after he got the first peep of Bunnie with his milk white fur, and soft, shy eyes.

"There I don't think we can do any more to-night," said Joe, at last. "The sun is about down, but come over early in the morning and we'll finish it up before school-time."

Johnnie rose to his feet with a great start, for just then he remembered 'Baby Lou.' If anything had happened to her all this time, if—but without stopping to consider further he rushed out of the yard and away home with all the speed terror could lend to his feet.

"Louie! Louie!" he called, as he rushed into the yard, but no little pattering feet came to meet him, no sweet baby voice responded to his call. Out in the garden, the back yard, the shed, through the house, everywhere rushed Johnnie, frantically calling "Louie! Louie!" but to no purpose. Not a trace of her could be found.

Both the back and front gates were fastened as securely as he had left them. Where could she have gone; how did she get out?

Ah, Johnnie! you forgot that picket you knocked loose on the back fence only this morning, and which you never stopped to nail, carelessly muttering, "I don't care. It won't make any difference with the old fence anyway."

What should he do? It was almost dark now.

Glancing up the street he saw his mother coming wearily along toward home. Rushing out to meet her he could only sob, "Oh, mother, Louie!"

"What of Louie?" demanded Mrs. Atkins, a strange fear creeping over her.

"She's lost," shrieked Johnnie, "lost. I cannot find her anywhere."

The mother's heart seemed to stand still. Louie was her pet and darling, her greatest comfort since the death of her husband a short time previous. If anything had happened to her—but she would not stop to think of that now.

She hurriedly drew from Johnnie the whole circumstance, for he was too frightened now to tell anything but the truth, and then set to work to find how Louie had escaped from the yard. Her quick eye soon espied the broken fence with the board shoved aside leaving sufficient room for Louie to crawl through.

A short distance beyond the cottage was an open marshy field dotted here and there with hillocks covered by underbrush, brambles and the like. It was used by the villagers and indeed for miles around, by the country generally, for grazing purposes.

If Louie had strayed there the chances of finding her that night were small, and Mrs. Atkins felt faint and sick as she thought of her delicate darling sobbing herself to sleep alone in the tall, dank grass. Sending Johnnie, who bitterly reproached himself for his carelessness, to summon the neighbors to her assistance, they spent the greater part of the night scouring the fields in every direction for lost 'Baby Lou.'

What a night of agony that was to Johnnie no one can ever know. He loved Lou very dearly, and to think that she had been lost through his own carelessness was more than he could bear.

How many times he told himself, as he tramped resolutely on through the long

night, that if she were only found how different he would be; and when at length the tired searchers were about to give up for the night he threw himself on his knees in the grass and prayed as he had never done before.

I think too his passionate, agonized appeal for help was heard; for just then a loud 'halloo' rang through the night air, and Johnnie bounded away in the direction of the sound came upon what—almost hidden in a clump of bushes where she had crawled was poor little Lou. She must have cried herself to sleep, for her cheeks were red and swollen, and her little bosom still heaved with convulsive sobbing.

There was joy and gratitude in Mrs. Atkins' heart that night when her darling was placed in her arms alive and well. As for Johnnie, it proved a lesson that he never forgot.

The promises of amendment that he made on the open marsh when he thought 'Baby Lou' lost forever were faithfully kept; and aided by the loving counsel of his mother, whose patient forbearance never failed him, from being one of the 'ne'er-do-wells' he became one of the most studious, thoughtful well-conducted boys in the village.

## SCRAP-CARDS FOR HOSPITAL CHILDREN.

BY F. R. LITTLEJOHN.

"Oh, dear!" said Rob, and "Oh, dear!" said May, and "Oh, dear me!" said Willie, as they all three gazed out of the nursery windows into the thick rain. Baby, laughing on nurse's knee, seemed to be the only one of the family with any spirits that afternoon, but he did his best to cheer up his brothers and sister by giving the rain a scolding, and by trying to make it go away by gestures, and he ended by talking to it in the old nursery rhyme:

"Yain, yain, do away,  
'Tilte baybins yants to p'ay.  
Tum aden anudder day."

And he made up such a funny little face of entreaty that the children all laughed in spite of themselves, and ran to see who could kiss the baby first for his funny sayings.

The rain could hardly have heard baby's request or it would never have splashed with more force and noise than before on the window-pane. No rain could have been so hard-hearted as that. It would not have been rain then—it would have been hail, for hail, you and I know, is just hard-hearted rain.

But after the children had kissed the baby they were at as much of a loss as ever to know what to do that long afternoon. While they were still racking their brains the door-bell rang, and, with one accord, they all three ran and looked over the banisters.

"Is May at home?" they heard a little girl's voice asking.

"Why, it's Alice," they whispered, one to the other. "Is not that jolly? We'll make her stay and play with us!" and the three ran downstairs to give their visitor a welcome, and to take possession of her, even to her soaking ulster and dripping umbrella.

"I can't stay," said Alice—"that is, only a minute. I was so busy, and I could not nearly finish it alone; and, besides, it was stupid not being with you, and I thought you would like pasting things just as much as I do, and—"

"Pasting things! I should think you had been pasting. Just look at this umbrella-handle!" And Bob's hand stuck to it so he could hardly get free.

"Oh, that's too bad," laughed Alice; "but you don't mind, do you? You see, my hands got all over mud, and it dried, and then when the rain got on them when I was holding the umbrella it must have made the mud sticky again. It was all dry when I left. It's dreadfully uncomfortable, isn't it?" And she closed and unclosed her hand, for there was a certain fascination to the child in seeing and feeling her fingers stick to the palm of her hand.

"What have you been pasting?" asked May.

"Cards for the hospital," said Alice.

"What kind of cards?" asked Rob. Well, pasteboard cards, with pictures on them—don't you know! I can't explain them; you will have to come over and help me, then you will understand."

"I wonder if mamma will let us? It is just peltin'," said May, looking out of the hall door.

"Oh, I guess she will," said Rob. "I'll run and ask her. She'll be sure to let me go, anyway, Alice, because I am a boy—and

pooh! nothing hurts boys!" And upstairs, two steps at a time, sped this young lord of creation.

"I want you all to come," said Alice, quietly. "Willie, you will, won't you, if your mother will let you?"

Willie was deeply grateful for the invitation. He was just enough younger than his sister's and brothers' friends to be considered "in the way," and so he continually received snubs hard to be borne. To be included as an equal in such a delightful invitation made his little heart palpitate for joy, and made him say, in a most thankful tone:

"Yes, of course!"

"Come on, May; put on your things; mamma says we can go!" called down a delighted voice from the regions above.

"And I'm going too, Rob! I'm going too!" cried Willie, scrambling upstairs, all fours, thinking that in that way he could make better time.

It was not many minutes before four muffled objects under two umbrellas were making their way across the street and tinkling a door-bell; and it did not take many more minutes for the four objects to doff their sprinkled clothing, and to settle themselves before Alice's mamma to take a lesson in their new work—the work of making hospital cards.

Now, my little reader, I am going to tell you exactly what the children did, thinking that you may get a little hint from them. And oh, how glad I shall be if, on some rainy day, you and your brothers and sisters, or, if you are a lone chick as Alice was, you and a few of your friends, meet together and make some hospital cards. You will be surprised to find what pleasant work it is and how quickly the rainy moments fly. Now, don't say you "can't" do it. Just try; it is not hard; and if you only knew the pleasure these cards give to poor, sick little children in the hospitals! But, there! I have not told you yet what these cards are, and I know you are very anxious to find out; so, listen.

Alice had gathered together all her old picture-books. Some had pages torn from them, some were soiled and crumpled and dog-eared, and some had said good-by to their covers long ago. She had taken none of her books that were in a good condition, but only the ruptured and crippled, so that the pile before the children looked almost like a hospital for wounded books. Her mother had gotten pasteboard in a stationer's store, and had cut it in large pieces, about the size of this page that you are reading; sometimes she had even used up old box-covers in this way. This was the ground-work, and upon it the children pasted the pictures that they cut out, very neatly, from their torn books. When each side was covered over with pictures the cards were finished. These scrap cards are better than scrap-books in a hospital on many accounts. Being so easily made, there can, of course be many more of them, so that instead of one or two patients being provided with a scrap-book, the whole ward can be supplied with cards at the same time. And my nurse will tell you that sick people are like very little children—they are sure to want whatever they see in the hand of anybody else, and are by no means willing to wait until their turn comes. Then, too these cards are more easily handled, and being of stiff card-board instead of thin muslin, can be held up in one hand, a great advantage for any one lying in bed. And then they are readily passed from one to the other, which creates quite a little excitement. I have written very particularly, you see, for I dare say, little reader, you have made scrap-books for hospitals more than once, and, if so, you will like particularly to turn this matter over in your mind.

"Now, you take this book and cut out all the pictures very neatly," said Alice, handing Rob a book and a pair of scissors.

"Alice wouldn't it be better to let him choose his own book?" said mamma; "he might prefer this one—see, full of the animals of South Africa."

"But, mamma, I want that," said Alice. "I have set my heart upon cutting out that giraffe's lovely long neck. You don't want to cut it, Rob, do you?"

"Yes, I do," said Rob, truth getting the better of gallantry.

"Well," said May quickly, before mamma had time to speak again, "why don't you both cut out of that book? There are lots of pages, and Willie and I will take this one; it's all full of little children playing games—see,