



The Family Circle.

NOTHING TO SHOW.

"My day has all gone"—'twas a woman who spoke,
As she turned her face to the sunset glow—
"And I have been busy the whole day long;
Yet for my work there is nothing to show."

No painting nor sculpture her hand had wrought;
No laurel of fame her labor had won,
What was she doing in all the long day,
With nothing to show at the set of the sun?

What was she doing? Listen; I'll tell you
What she was doing in all the long day;
Beautiful deeds too many to number;
Beautiful deeds in a beautiful way;

Womanly deeds that a woman may do,
Trifles that only a woman can see,
Wielding a power unmeasured and unknown,
Wherever the light of her presence might be.

For she had rejoiced with those who rejoiced;
Had wept with the sad, and strengthened the weak;
And a poor wanderer, straying in sin,
She in compassion had gone forth to seek.

Unto the poor her aid had been given,
Unto the weary the rest of her home;
Freely her blessings to others were given,
Freely and kindly to all who had come.

Humbly and quietly all the long day
Had her sweet service for others been done;
Yet for the labor of heart and of hand
What could she show at the set of the sun?

Ah, she forgot that our Father in heaven
Ever is watching the work that we do,
And records He keeps of all we forget,
Then judges our work with the judgment that's true;

For an angel writes down in a volume of gold
The beautiful deeds that all do below,
Though nothing she had at set of the sun,
The angel above had something to show.
—Mary H. Rowland, in *Family Friend*.

WHY NICK CONFESSED.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY MRS. HARRIET A. CHEEVER.

Poor little fellow! He didn't look much as the other children did, that Saturday afternoon, when they were all playing together. The family to which he—Nick Jackson—belonged, had recently moved into the neighborhood, and but little was known of them except that they appeared like very respectable people, and as the mother took music lessons and spent a great deal of time on Kensington and other fancy work, it was not probably for want of money that Nick's overcoat showed sundry little bursts, and the binding was ripped off here and there; his cap also wanted a stitch or two, and mittens he had none.

It was altogether a neglected-looking little boy, rather than a poor one, on whom the kind, motherly eyes of Mrs. Harper rested, as she stood watching from her window the group of merry children at play, and also with quick, womanly instinct, she divined the fact that the boy felt the difference in his appearance from the rest.

Her own little daughter, Bessie, in neat ulster and felt hat, with bright mittens and leggings, was the picture of comfort and neatness. Mrs. Harper had heard Bessie say that Nick Jackson was one of the nicest little boys that ever was; "only," she added, "he never seems to think the others want him to play, but we do, we all like Nick, and he will do anything in the world for us; why, he's a splendid little boy!"

But something in the look and manner of the little fellow all at once engrossed the mother's attention.

Peeping out of each pocket of the ulster was a bit of something white, which showed that thoughtless Bessie had clutched a fresh handkerchief from her little box, forgetful of the fact that she was already provided with one. Doubtless, all the other children had one of the useful little articles at hand, but now as they dodged about, first one way, then another, Mrs. Harper from behind the blind where she sat watching, noticed that Nick kept pushing playfully between Bessie and little Jennie Hill, and suddenly with a sidelong movement, he jerked one of the handkerchiefs from the

ulster pocket, availed himself of its use, then deliberately placed it in his own coat pocket.

It was all so quickly done, that not one of the other children was aware of the trick, but it filled the mother's heart with regret.

"Poor child!" she sighed, "now what must I do? To let Bessie play with a little thief is impracticable surely, and ought I not to tell Mrs. Hill?"

She sat lost in thought for several moments, then arose with a gratified look, as though she had planned it all out to her satisfaction. Presently Bessie ran in for an apple.

"Bessie," she said, "where is your other handkerchief? You had one in each pocket, I noticed, when you were playing."

"Oh dear! I've lost it."

"Well, ask the other children if they have seen it; will you remember?"

"Yes, mamma."

When Bessie came in to supper her mother questioned her again about her loss.

"None of the children had seen it, mamma."

"What did Jennie Hill say?"

"Said she hadn't seen either my ole nose-gays," returned Bessie.

"And what did Nick Jackson say?"

"Asked me if I was sure I had two, and I said yes, and he said he was awful sorry I lost it."

A bit of advice as to the importance of being more careful in the future was all that followed then. When in her room alone, Mrs. Harper said to herself, with a sad smile,—"Unless I am very much mistaken, I'll make that dear child tell me the whole truth himself yet, without any questions either. He has a good little face; pity he is quite so neglected."

It was the day before New Year's and Bessie was out playing with Jennie Hill, when Mrs. Harper went to the door in quest of the little girl, as she wanted an errand done; but no little girls were in sight. Just then Nick Jackson appeared.

"Have you seen Bessie, Nick?" inquired Mrs. Harper. "I want her to run on an errand for me."

"No, ma'am, I haven't," he replied, "but please let me go for you," added the obliging child. "I'll run to the store and back in a jiffy."

Mrs. Harper gratefully accepted his offer, and as he returned with the errand nicely done, she said cheerily,—

"Come and wish me 'A Happy New Year' to-morrow morning, Nick, that's a good boy."

"Yes'm," responded Nick.

When he came creeping half shyly around the back-yard next morning, Mrs. Harper went to the door, and holding out a neat little package, said heartily,—

"Good-morning, Nick. Here's a little New Year's gift for you; this, you know, is the first day of a new year, a time to be happy and a time to try and be good."

Nick went home, ran to his own room, and hastily removing the wrapper, found three pretty, nice handkerchiefs, with his name neatly marked in one corner of each.

The box which had been stocked for Bessie's delectation had been despoiled of all its attractive belongings, the ample New Year's dinner was over, and Bessie and papa were enjoying a nap. Mrs. Harper was just contemplating lying down herself, when she paused upon hearing some child in conversation with the cook.

"Yes, she's here," said cook, putting her head into the dining-room, and the same moment Nick Jackson entered, his eyes swollen with weeping, and his whole manner so woe-begone, that kind-hearted Mrs. Harper was all sympathy at once.

"Why, Nick, little boy, what is the matter?" she asked pityingly; and, as if he was about to face the one great conflict of his life, he began in a quavering little voice:

"You see, Miss Harper, I never meant to be wicked in my life, no I didn't, but here 'tis,"—and he held up Bessie's little soiled handkerchief,— "here 'tis, Miss Harper. I s'pose I stole it, but I was so 'shamed! all the other fellows had one but me, and all the little girls too, but I hadn't. I'd asked ma for one, but she was 'broider-in' and says I mustn't bother her. I meant to give it back anyway, but when you so kindly give me those three beau-ti-ful ones,—oh, if I only hadn't!"

Poor Nick had been steadily losing voice

all along, but here he broke into such a great sob that Mrs. Harper cried too, and drawing the little penitent up to her, she talked to him in a manner he never forgot, and when she advised him to tell his mother all about it, he said he would, and he did; and it was evident it awoke in her dormant conscience a more lively sense of her little boy's needs, for he was less neglected-looking from that time forth; and a more, honest, truthful child than Nick Jackson could not be found. But to this day neither papa nor Bessie knows that the little lost handkerchief was ever found.—*Watchman*.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING!

Mr. John Spraggs was a man of principle. He believed in doing what was right, in thinking what was right, and in saying what was right. A good clear conscience was one of his most cherished possessions. "I want," he used to say, "to look every man in the face without flinching;" and consequently he never knew what it was to go down a side street to avoid anybody, whether rich or poor.

But Mr. John Spraggs, for all his good principles, had a good deal to learn, and although he was pretty comfortable he was not exactly happy. But he became happy, thank God, and I should like my readers to know how he became so, if they will listen for a few minutes.

It happened on a New Year's day. It was a cold, wintry morning; the snow had been falling heavily all night, and John had been up bright and early to clear a path from the church door. All day long folks had been wishing him "A happy New Year," and he had been wishing them the same, and "many of them." To tell the truth, however, he had become tired of receiving and returning the New Year's greetings long before the day was over, and actually dreaded having to receive or give any more. But in they came faster and faster, for all the world as if everybody knew that he did not want them. At length, his day's business over, he took refuge by his own fire-side, and for the first time for some hours began to breathe freely and comfortably again.

"I am glad," said he, confidentially to his wife, "that New Year's day only comes once a year. It's been nothing but 'Happy New Years' all the day long. I'm thoroughly sick of them."

Now Mrs. Spraggs had had a good many of them too when she went out to do her bit of shopping. But she had quite enjoyed them, and to tell the truth had stayed out a little longer to have a few more of them. And so it was not to be expected that she should show a particle of sympathy with her other half.

"But you want a happy New Year, don't you, John?" she asked.

"Of course I do, my dear," he replied; "but wishing won't bring it, will it? What am I the better for all these scores of wishes I've had to-day? All they've done for me is to give me a headache, that's all!"

"Now look here, husband," said Mrs. Spraggs, "I've got a notion; it's been simmering in my head all the day, and I shan't be comfortable till it's out."

"What's that, my dear?"

Mrs. Spraggs' reply was at first in dumb show. It consisted in getting a clean sheet of paper, a pad of blotting paper, a new pen, and an inkstand; and it was not until after spreading them out and arranging everything that she made any remark.

"I vote," she said, "for being practical. I vote for wishing ourselves a happy New Year, and putting down on paper in black and white what will make it a happy New Year."

"Ay, that's sensible," said John, who had braced himself up to sticking-point. "What shall we put down first?"

"This New Year," wrote Mrs. Spraggs, "shall be a year of new resolutions. There's a good deal in making up our minds, John; more than folks commonly think. Good resolving is half-way house to good performing. Where there's a will there's a way, you know. We have proved that over and over again, haven't we? We'll resolve to brace up our limp wills, to put on new armor, and to begin afresh."

"The very thing," said Mr. Spraggs; "I'll sign to that."

"Now it's your turn, John," said Mrs. Spraggs.

"This New Year shall be a year of new pursuits," proudly suggested Mr. Spraggs,

who seemed determined to let no grass grow under his feet. "I don't know how you feel, my dear, but I know I haven't read my Bible as much as I ought to have done. And I know, too, that I haven't done as much good as I ought to have done. And I'm afraid I haven't gone to church as regularly as I ought to have done. Yes, we'll make it a year of new pursuits."

"That's splendid!" said his wife, her face full of smiles. "Now it's my turn again."

"This new year shall be a year of new faith. We shan't do very much better, John, if we don't get some new faith as well. Weak faith is all very well, but it's nothing near so good as strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't see why we shouldn't have this strong faith either, do you? And so, John, we'll trust the Lord for forgiveness, we'll trust Him in our troubles, and we'll trust Him for all our future. There are plenty of promises to trust in, thank God. I'm sure it will be a happy New Year if we only get new faith for it."

By this time the paper had begun to appear quite business-like, and both husband and wife looked at it with evident pride and pleasure. But there wasn't enough yet to please Mrs. Spraggs, who insisted on her good husband suggesting one more new thought for the new year.

After thinking a bit, he said, "Well, there is just one thing I think we can't leave out anyhow. It is this—

"This New Year shall be a year of new love. We'll try to love the Lord more, and not get out of temper and say unkind things. Yes, and we'll try to love everybody, whether they love us or not."

When he had finished, said Mrs. Spraggs, with a bright face and a somewhat roguish look, "A happy New Year, John."

To which John replied, with every whit as bright a smile, "The same to you, Mary, and many of them"—*Rev. Charles Courtenay, in Friendly Greetings*.

POSTAGE STAMP HONESTY.

Be rigidly straightforward and conscientious even to the value of a postage-stamp. Let nothing on earth tempt you to spend a penny that is not your own. Vow you will rather want for a meal, or wear a threadbare coat, than incur a farthing of debt. Set your face determinedly against all under-hand dealing. Have nothing to do with shuffling or shams of any kind. Do your own part to purify the market-place, and to make the commerce of our land such as heaven can smile on. Detest the gospel of shoddy. Hate all trickery, imposition, and evasion. In the smallest trifles act as under the eye of God. Plant your foot firmly on the line of stern principle, and dare the devil himself to persuade you to cross that line. Even as regards this world, dishonesty is the worst policy. It means in the end death to your peace, death to your comfort, death to your interests, death to your soul! Only two days ago, I heard of a young man who had business transactions with a foreign merchant, and was asked, some time since, to send out certain packages of goods marked of a less weight than they actually were, the object being to evade the payment of a heavy import duty. Many a young fellow would have smiled, and done it. "The friend I am speaking of telegraphed, 'I cannot, and won't do it.' 'Very well,' replied the foreigner, 'there are plenty of others who will, and our business connection is at an end.' This meant a heavy loss to the conscientious youth. Since then, the foreign merchant has written him as follows:—"Enclosed is a draft for —, which please put to my credit. I am sending my son to England to learn your way of business. There is nobody in whom I have so much confidence as I have in you. Will you take him into your office, and make him the same sort of man that you are yourself?"—*Dr. Thain Davidson*.

LAST KNOCKS.

Some people are able to tell when they first heard the knocks of Jesus. These are first knocks. But Mr. McCheyne once said to a little girl in Kelso, "Remember, also, there are last knocks." When the heart becomes hard and careless, then be afraid. Be afraid lest Christ should knock for the last time. Oh, you at whose hearts He is still knocking, you whose hearts are still fresh and young, oh, children, in the days of youth open the doors of your heart, and let the King of glory in.—*MacLeod*.