



The Family Circle.

JOHNNY'S PRIVATE ARGUMENT.

A poor little tramp of a Joggie, one day,
Low-spirited, weary and sad,
From a crowd of rude urchins ran limping
away,
And followed a dear little lad,
Whose round, chubby face, with the merry
eyes blue,
Made doggie think, "Here is a good boy and
true!"

So, wagging his tail and expressing his views,
With a sort of affectionate whine,
Johnny knew he was saying, "Dear boy, if
you choose
To be any dog's master, be mine."
And Johnny's blue eyes opened wide with
delight,
As he folded the doggie and hugged him so
tight.

But alas! on a day that to Johnny was sad,
A newspaper notice he read,
"Lost a dog: limped a little, and also he had
A spot on the top of his head.
Whoever returns him to me may believe
A fair compensation he'll surely receive."

Johnny didn't want money, not he; 'twasn't
that
That made him just sit down to think,
And made a grave look on his rosy face fat,
And made those blue eyes of his wink
To keep back the tears which were ready to
flow,
As he thought to himself, "Must the dear
doggie go?"

'Twas an argument Johnny was holding just
there
With his own little conscience so true.
"It is plain," whispered conscience, "that if
you'd be fair,
There is only one thing you can do;
Restore to his owner the dog; don't delay,
But attend to your duty at once, and to-
day."

No wonder he sat all so silent and still,
Forgetting to fondle his pet—
The poor little boy thinking hard with a
will;
While thought doggie, "What makes him
forget,
I wonder, to frolic and play with menow,
And why does he wear such a sorrowful
brow?"

Well, how did it end? Johnny's battle was
fought,
And the victory given to him:
The dearly-loved pet to his owner was
brought,
Tho' it made little Johnny's eyes dim.
But a wag of his tail doggie gives to this day
Whenever our Johnny is passing that way.
—Mary D. Brine, in *The Churchman*.

A STRANGE STORY.

BY MARY E. C. WYETH.

She could not become a burden to others.
She had outlived her usefulness, perhaps,
but she had by no means outlived her self-
respect, or her desire to be a factor, however
unimportant, in the world's wide field of
product.

So when her boys—there had been two,
and they had become men and had taken to
themselves wives—emigrated to the far
Southwest, and the girls—they were women
now—wondered how they were to crowd any
more than they were crowding, in order to
spare a room for mother, who had just been
burned out of house and home, and had
come, first to Julia and then to Jessie, to see
if she could find a home with either—when
these things came to pass, the old lady, who
had never before realized how old she was,
began to feel aged, and weary, and very
lonely, yet she never before determined to
make for herself a place in the world, where
by her own efforts she could live and maintain
herself.

It had grieved her to see her home, with
all its homely treasures, flame up and flare,

and fade into ashes before her eyes, as she
stood alone and helpless on that fateful night.
But she had consoled her bereaved heart,
saying, "After all, the care of these things,
my house and garden, and cow, and chickens,
prevented me from doing much for the girls;
now there is an end. I will sell the cow and
fowls, and replace my lost clothing, and go to
Jessie and Julia. I can live by turns with
them, and help them on in many ways."

Poor heart. She had been a good mother,
and had done a good part by her children.
The thought that she could be anything else
than a help to those whom she had always
helped, ah, with what loving, unselfish help-
fulness, never occurred to her. Yet as she
stood, homeless and destitute, in her daugh-
ter's house that bright, October morning, and
heard Julia's husband remark that there
wasn't enough room in the house for those
rightfully belonging in it, "grandma had
better go up to Jessie's," the poor mother
felt a strange, unnatural tremor shake her
frame. The road between Julia's and Jessie's
seemed twice as long as ever before.

"Did you save nothing, mother?" Jessie
asked. "And how much insurance had you?
To think, we never knew a word of it till
ten minutes ago. Jule sent up to say she
saw you coming over the hill, and as they
had no room for you I'd have to manage
somehow. I couldn't make out what it
meant, till the young one said you'd been
burned out. How soon do you suppose the
insurance will rebuild for you? We can
crowd up for a few weeks by letting Andrew
give you his cot. He can sleep in the dining-
room. Of course you'll have to be in the
room with little Jim and Isabella. Did you
save all your things?"

How weak she grew as she sat and listened
to her daughter's half-peevish questions.
She scarcely knew her own voice as she an-
swered:

"The insurance expired last week. I
neglected to renew it. The fire broke out
at four this morning, and everything was
gone before my neighbors heard my cries.
I saved nothing but my clothes and my tin-
box with my papers, and watch, and a few
trinkets in it. There were five gold dollars
in the box. It is all the money I have now.
The lot, the cow and the chickens are all that
is left to me.

"Why, mother," interrupted the daughter
vexedly, "how could you have been so neg-
lectful? You must be in your second child-
hood. All your nice bedding, and furniture,
and the china! Dear me! There must have
been at least a thousand dollars' worth of
property destroyed."

"And I am homeless and destitute in-
deed," said the mother quietly, in very sad
voice.

"And all through your own culpable
carelessness, I declare," said Jessie. "And
what in the world you are going to do, I
don't know, I'm sure. We're crowded
enough, mercy knows. And I was just
thinking of sending little Jim up to you for
a month. The air is so much purer over
where you lived, the other side of the hill,
and he is so cross and troublesome. Dear
me! And to think of there being no insur-
ance. You might as well have thrown your
home away, and your things, and done with
it."

Not a word of sympathy or of encourage-
ment from Julia. Reproaches from Jessie.

Were these the babies whom she had borne,
and nursed and fondled, and served, so will-
ingly, so patiently, so gladly? Were these
the daughters for whom she had toiled, and
striven and planned? Was it not all a
hideous dream?

Her blood seemed turning to ice in her
veins. She rose with rigid limbs and turned
to the door.

"I will walk over to tell your Uncle Dick,"
she said. "I may not return to-day. Andrew
need not give up his cot to grandma, at least
to-night. Good-by, children." And she
closed the door slowly and with trembling
hand, as she went out from her daughter's
house, to return no more.

"There is no welcome for me in my chil-
dren's homes," she said; "their bread would
choke me. And oh, I love them so."

And as she walked along, gray, ashen
shadows settled upon her face, and her look
was as of one whose death-stroke has been
felt.

Another mother might have acted differ-
ently—even felt differently. Mothers have
suffered disappointment in their children, and
have borne the pain in one way or another,
and veiled it from all eyes; even with loving,

forgiving affection endeavoring to hide it even
from their own. Alas!

Perhaps they were less proud-spirited than
this mother. Perhaps they were less sensi-
tive. Perhaps they had less self-respect.

When once these mothers realize that the
children for whom they have lived, and
would gladly die, value them more for what
they have than for what they are, battle
against the unwelcome conviction as they
may, the realization works its sorrowful
change in their lives. Some may succeed in
making the hideous spectre down, and may
persuade themselves indeed that 'twas a
phantom only. The difference between these
and this mother was, that she accepted the
truth, and neither tried to deceive herself or
others.

As she neared the home of her brother-in-
law her resolve was taken. When she entered
his house she was outwardly calm, and could
talk of her loss and her intentions, with even
tones and quiet air.

After arranging with him to dispose of
her cow and chickens, she took the cars to
the next town, and began to search for em-
ployment.

Mamma was visiting friends in that town
at the time. Mamma is one who usually
follows the leadings of her own instincts, and
always regrets when she fails to do so. She
was in Mrs. Ludlow's sitting-room when
Mrs. Alpen applied for a position as general
assistant, asking only for kind treatment and
small wages.

Mrs. Ludlow had no place for her, but
mamma felt assured that here was a treasure
for some one, and forthwith proposed that if
Mrs. Alpen would go with her to her home,
two days' journey by rail, she would give her
suitable employment at fair wages.

Mamma shortened her visit in order to
bring Aunty Alpen home. She has re-
mained, mamma's most valuable helper ever
since.

For years we knew nothing of her personal
history beyond the fact that she had married
children settled in distant places, from whom,
at long and irregular intervals she received
letters.

One day it chanced that, as mamma read a
paragraph from a newspaper, she smiled, and
called Aunty Alpen's attention to it.

"It is your name," said mamma. "Rowena
Alpen. I wish it were your land also. It
would make you independent indeed."

"It is my land," said Mrs. Alpen quietly.
"But I am independent without it."

And she burst into tears and sank into a
chair at mamma's side. We left them
alone—mamma and our poor friend in her
grief.

It was then that she confided to mamma
her story that she said was too pitifully sor-
rowful to be told.

She had been with us seven years. In all
these years never once had her daughters
invited her to their homes. They had been
glad she had employment and was satisfied
with her position. They had even asked
her if it was convenient to have a visit from
one or more of the children in their sum-
mer vacations. But they had never ex-
pressed any regret for the separation, or any
desire to have her become a member of their
families.

Until now.

The lot on which her home had stood had
suddenly become valuable. A coal-vein ran
beneath it. The mine was working. The
owners of the shaft wished to purchase, and
offered a price that astonished those who
knew nothing of the real values. Both
daughters at once remembered their filial
obligations, and at once each offered a home
with her own family.

"God pity me if I am unlike what a mother
should be," she said. "I loved my children
only for love's sake. I hoped that thus my
children would love me. Love, love was all
I asked or craved. Land cannot buy love nor
happiness. All that I have is theirs. They
shall have no temptation to become impatient
for their mother's death. I will give them
all now. For myself, when I can no longer
work, there remains the poor-house. I will
go thither."

Is her story too strangely sad to have been
told? I know of other mothers no less
keenly stung by that

"Sharper than a serpent's tooth,"

filial ingratitude and neglect.

I have but lately been the confidant of a
tale as strangely sad from a gray-haired mother
of children in far higher social scale than
Aunty Alpen's, yet not one whit above them
in filial duty. I know of another mother
this hour, snubbed, grudging hen attic room

and her poor bite and sup, and forced to do
her own laundry work in her daughter's
house where rooms and food and servants are
in plenty.

Why do I tell of such shames?

Why, indeed, unless in the hope that some
who have eyes to see may see, and who have
ears to hear may hear and understand? For
these stung hearts of sorrowing mothers are
remembered by One who in the day of his
power is mighty to avenge.—*Illustrated
Christian Weekly*.

"THERE'S SUMMAT IN IT";

OR, BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.

Colonel Waldegrave sat in his library one
autumn afternoon with his well-worn Bible
before him, but as the light failed he closed
the book, and leaning back in his chair in-
dulged in a reverie that brought a gleam of
reverent gladness over his face. He thought
of the time when he had vainly sought
satisfaction in a life "without God." of the
remarkable chain of circumstances that had
taught him his mistake, and of the peace
that came to him when the Saviour whom
he sought said unto his soul, "I am thy
salvation." Then, as in a rapidly-moving
panorama, there passed before him scenes of
conflict in his early Christian life, when he
had to suffer reproach and ridicule, and
when it needed all a soldier's courage and
endurance to be steadfast and immovable in
his new service. But the Captain of his
salvation had given the needed grace. He
came to be honored for his earnestness, and
he was a good friend and adviser to not a
few young men in the army, some of them
serving divers lusts and pleasures, and being
hurried on to misery for both worlds, but
stopped in their downward course by his in-
fluence, and made noble and pure through
becoming good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Since he left the army he had inherited
the old family estate, and went to end his
earthly life amongst his own people. He
showed the same earnestness for the best
interests of his tenantry and neighbors. Men
and women who had never cared to travel a
mile or two to the nearest village church,
came gladly to the service, which, once in
the week, and again on Sabbath evening,
when there was no service in the church, he
held in the hall of his beautiful home.

The Colonel was enjoying, as we said, a
quiet meditation, from which he was startled
by the entrance of a servant with lights. He
roused himself to speak to the old man,
who had been with him in all his wanderings,
and still kept the post of personal attend-
ant.

"Well, Thomas, is all ready for the meet-
ing to-night?"

"No, sir; I was just going to name to you
that there's no oil for the lamps. What you
ordered from town, sir, has never come. I
thought maybe it might be lying at the
station, but I sent Bob over in the light cart
to enquire, and it wasn't there."

"Then drive down to the village, and get
what you want at Tomlinson's."

Thomas stood irresolute, the old habit of
military obedience preventing a negative
reply to any order.

"What is it, Thomas?"

"Sir, you remember what the old man
said the last time we went to his shop for
oil?"

The Colonel smiled. "Did not approve
of these meetings, rather inclined to denounce
them, was not that it?"

"Yes, sir," said Thomas; "he flew out at
me quite spiteful, and said he would refuse
to send oil to help such doings."

"Well," continued the Colonel, "though I
pity the old man's ignorance, I cannot but
admire his honesty and independence, for he
must have known that he was risking our
custom in speaking so."

"He doesn't believe in either God or
devil, so I'm told," said Thomas with sup-
pressed wrath.

"Poor fellow! He will learn better by-
and-by. We must pray for him. His must
be a dismal life with a creed like that. How-
ever, Thomas, we must face the enemy
again; you and I don't believe in discourag-
ement, do we? You just drive over and give
my compliments to the old man, and say I
particularly want a supply of oil for the
meeting to-night, and if he declines we must
have wax lights, that is all."

Thomas was, like his master, an old veteran,
but like many of his class he could face the roar
of cannon far more bravely than the strife
of tongues, and his heart sank in a manner