



The Family Circle.

[For the MESSENGER.]

THE BUTTERFLY CHASE.

BY M. CAMERON.

With hat in hand, a schoolboy rushed
O'er rocky heath and bramble;
His eye intent, his face all flushed,
He heeds not many a tumble;
But up again with eager haste
His headlong race renewing,
This one idea filled his breast,
A butterfly pursuing:
"If I can catch him, he is mine,
His velvet coat so sooty,
His dainty form, his eyes so fine;
Oh, isn't he a beauty!"

Years flew apace; I saw the man
(Men are but boys grown older)
Pursuing life's maturer plan,
With firmer step and bolder;
But ever just beyond his reach
His brightest hopes were flying,
As if this lesson they would teach,
"Life is made up of trying;
And those who grasp earth's fairest prize
With bosom all enraptured,
Too late, alas! find butterflies
Are worthless when they're captured."
Springford, Ont.

OVER IN A MINUTE.

Kitty had constructed a new swing for her doll's entertainment; but it proved unsatisfactory, for that wooden lady slipped from her perch and landed with considerable violence upon the table, overturning an inkstand upon a picture Walter was copying. In an instant Walter sprang to his feet, snatched up the doll, and threw it into the fire, and marched out of the room, leaving Kitty in tears and the table in confusion.

In half an hour he returned, gay and sunny as ever, bringing a handsome doll to replace Kitty's loss. She was easily comforted, and was more sure than ever that Walter was the best brother in the world.

"If a fellow is quick-tempered, why, he is; I suppose that's all there is of it," said Walter, more carelessly than penitently. "I do get angry in a jiff, but it's all over in a minute or two."

"Are you sure of that?" asked his grandfather gravely.

"Oh, yes. I'm not one of the sort to go sulking about over anything. I flash up quick enough, but I never bear malice."

"But the consequences—can you be sure that they are 'all over in a minute or two?' I never hear any one speak carelessly of that fault without recalling one scene in my own boyhood. I was quick-tempered too, Walter, and as you say, quick over it—flying into a rage one minute, and ready to laugh at my own tempest of passion the next. I held a high place in my classes, and one day had spoken rather boastfully of my position and how long I had kept it; but that very afternoon, through some carelessness, I failed, and gave an answer so absurd that it was received with a burst of laughter. Mortified by my blunder, vexed at having lost my place, I passed an uncomfortable afternoon; and when school closed, I walked out moodily, inclined to speak to no one and pretending to be busily whittling.

"Here comes the infallible! Here's the fellow that never misses!" called the teasing voice of a schoolmate in front of me; and then he mockingly repeated my absurd answer.

"With all the force of a sudden fury I threw my open knife at him. It just missed his head, and in an instant it was quivering in a tree beside him. The sight of it—and of his white, startled face recalled me to my senses, and I sank down upon the ground, covering my face with my hands. The boys gathered about me kindly, even Charlie, the one at whom I had aimed the blow, saying that the fault was more his own than mine. But I knew that only God's mercy had saved me from seeing my schoolmate dead at my feet and my whole life darkened with the stain of murder.

"For weeks afterward I lived it over in horrible dreams; and to this day, Walter, un-governed temper can never seem a light thing to me. Anger that is 'over in a minute' may

be like a spark of fire on powder, and give you cause for shame and sorrow all your days."—*Kate W. Hamilton, in S. S. Visitor.*

TWO WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS.

Deacon H., of R., was in his wood-lot busily engaged in preparing a load for market. On the other side of a low fence his neighbor S. was also loading for the same market. S. paused in his work and watched the deacon for a while, and then exclaimed, "Deacon, you are a fool in being so precise with your load. You are altogether too particular. What is the use of packing so closely, rejecting so carefully every small and crooked stick, and every one which fails a single inch of the required length? Look at my load; it does not contain nearly as much as yours, though it will measure well, and will sell as readily as yours, with a considerably larger profit." The deacon simply answered: "You may do business in your way, and I will do it in mine."

They both drove to a neighboring city and waited in the market-place for customers. S. was fortunate enough to find a purchaser without much delay, while many hours passed before the deacon could dispose of his load. Upon his return late at night, his neighbor, who had been at home a long while, said to him: "I said you were a fool, and was I not right? I sold my wood for the same price you did, and besides a larger profit I have saved much time." The reply was: "You may do business in your way, I will do it in mine."

Several weeks passed. Deacon H. and his neighbor were again with their loaded teams in the city, where they had now been many times for a market for their wood. The deacon was met by a wealthy merchant of the city, who said to him: "Take your load at once to my yard; you need not stop to have it measured; and do the same with every load you bring; and I will gladly pay your price."

That night Deacon H. was early at home. Late in the evening S. arrived with his wood unsold. "How was it," he said, "that you found such a ready sale to-day, while I could not dispose of my load at any price?"

"You do business in your way, and I do it in mine; who is the fool?" said the deacon.—*Congregationalist.*

HOW CAME HE THERE?

One day a visitor to a prison saw a gang of convicts going from their day's work. They were walking "lock-step," each prisoner crowded close against another, their feet moving together, their arms pressed back, with each one's hands on the forward one's shoulders. Between a great rough man and a negro with a low, cruel face, was a slender, refined young fellow.

"How came he here?" asked the visitor, and the prisoner overheard the question, if not the answer: "Oh, a breach of trust—cheated his employers out of twenty thousand dollars."

A few minutes later, the young man sat alone in his miserable cell, out of which daylight had faded; covering on his hard bed he pictured to himself the world outside, full of warmth and light and comfort. That question came to him again sharply: How came you here? Was it really for the stealing of that last great sum? Yes and no. Looking back twenty years he saw himself a merry-hearted schoolboy, ten years old. He remembered so well one lovely June day—why he could fairly see the roses in bloom over the porch, and the dress his mother wore at her work, could hear the laborers in the wheat fields. Freshest of all before him, stood his good old Uncle John—such a queer, kind, forgetful old man! That very morning he had sent him to pay a bill at the country store, and there was seventy-two cents left, and Uncle John did not ask for it. When they met that noon, this boy, now in prison, stood there then under the beautiful blue sky, and a great temptation came. "Shall I give it back because I ought? or shall I wait until he asks? If he never does—that is his own lookout. If he does, why I can get it again together."

The birds sang as sweetly as if a soul was not in danger—as if a boy was not making his whole future. The boy listened not to the birds, but to the evil spirit, whispering, whispering, and he never gave back the money. Yes, twenty thousand dollars brought the man to the prison-door, but the boy turned that way years before when he sold his honesty for seventy-two cents and never redeemed it. That night as he sat in the chilly cell, Uncle John was long ago dead, the old home desolate, his mother broken-hearted, and the prisoner knew what brought him there was not the man's deed alone, but the child's. Had the ten-year-old boy been true to his honor, life now would have been all different. One little cheating was the first of many, until his character was eaten out, could bear no test, and he wrecked his hope and manliness.—*Child's Paper.*

FANNY'S TEMPTATION.

"Now, Fanny," said Mrs. Ledyard, "I find that I must go to market directly, and I want you to put the sitting-room in perfect order while I am gone. See how nice you can make it look, and be spry, dear, for I shall not be gone long."

Fanny sighed. The sitting-room did look horridly! There were ends of thread, and scraps of muslin and calico from yesterday's sewing strewn over the carpet; the table was a mass of books, and papers, and letters, and the children's playthings were everywhere.

"Dear me!" she said, looking listlessly around, after watching her mother down the walk; "I don't know where to commence."

Then she heard the voices of the children in the yard. Willie called to her, and she ran down to see what was wanted. The velocipede was out there, and Willie begged to be taken a ride. Then Ada wanted a "teeter" with sister; and by the time that was accomplished, Anna Carter, who lived next door, came out, and the two girls hung over the fence and chattered awhile.

"Oh, dear!" said Fanny at last, "I ought to be in the house this minute clearing up the sitting-room. I do hate to work such nice days."

Then she went in very slowly; went up to the sitting-room very slowly. There she had a surprise! How nice it looked! The room was swept and dusted, and everything everywhere was in perfect order. Kate, from the kitchen, had been there and put everything right. While Fanny stood thinking about it, half pleased and half disappointed, and wondering what mother would say, the door opened, and mother came in. What she said was:—

"Why, how nicely you have done the work. It looks as pleasant here as possible—everything done neatly. I am very much pleased."

What did Fanny say? Did she exclaim, "O mother, don't you think—I didn't do it at all?" Kate came while I was downstairs and surprised me."

She said no such a thing. In fact, she said not a single word. Just think of telling a falsehood about so little a matter as clearing up a room! But Fanny didn't speak. Oh, no, she didn't—and that was just the trouble! She kept still, and let her mother think what she knew was not the truth; and so my poor naughty Fanny told a story that bright sunny morning, simply by keeping still when she should have spoken.—*Christian at Work.*

THE ART OF BEING DISAGREEABLE.

Not much of an art, you say? Well, perhaps not, but a very unpleasant art, we think sometimes, when we have suffered from its practice. Often the professors who seem most skilful in this art are the most simple and unpretending people one meets, whose very want of importance or self-assertion makes us loth to notice their thrusts, or even to believe them intentional. Then again, there are the haughty, over-bearing folk who are disagreeable as a matter of course, having made the art a part of themselves.

But at present we will only give an example of one of the first class—one of the mild, meek, well-meaning professors, who gives you no direct occasion of offence, but whose gently-spoken words annoy and even wound long after they are heard.

She comes in to see you some morning, does Mrs. Blank, and congratulates herself on finding you at home, "such a treat, to have you all to oneself."

"Yes," you reply innocently, "I have been out every morning for the last week."

Mrs. Blank—"Have you, really? It must be very pleasant to be able to go out so much, but I never could do it myself. I have so many things to do for my children, and then too, I find that my servants don't work as well when they are left entirely to themselves. But you are so fortunate in being able to shake off cares."

Now it is quite useless for you to protest that you do oversee your house, and attend to your children, for Mrs. Blank only smiles, and goes on to a fresh topic in a way which implies that she knows your faults, but would not touch upon them for the world.

Another time she, or one of her sisters, describes for your edification the house and furniture of a mutual friend. "They have a picture gallery, you know," says your companion; "a charming one, where all the pictures are so well shown, for, of course, it is very bad taste to hang pictures and engravings all about your rooms now—very bad taste indeed! Nobody does it any more, at least nobody who pretends to any artistic taste. Those new wall papers are the only decorations needed," and all the while she gazes tranquilly abouts upon your well-covered walls, where pictures and engravings hang side by side. Does she not see them? you wonder, but you make no remark, because by this time Mrs. Blank is asking if you have been quite well this winter.

You confess to a succession of colds, which

have made you rather an invalid, whereupon your friend says with a scrutinizing look, "Yes, that accounts for it—I was thinking how haggard you looked the other day when I saw you at church—of course, a bad cold explains all. Nothing like it, my dear, for making one look wretched—why, I met a friend lately who really seemed ten years older than she did last year, and all because she had just such a cold as you are suffering from."

But we will not further describe the ways of these people who practise the art of being disagreeable, because there are few of our readers who cannot fill up the picture from their own experience. And the most aggravating thing is that such people always pride themselves on what they call their candor, or frankness, or straightforwardness, or simplicity.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

"SOMEBODY ELSE."

A lady was walking quietly along a city street not long ago, when the door of a house flew open, and a boy shot out with a whoop like a wild Indian. Once on the pavement he danced a sort of double-shuffle all around a curb-stone, and then raced down the street in great haste, for it was evident, by the books under his arm, he was going to school. The lady was thinking what thoughtless, noisy creatures healthy boys always are, when just a few yards before her she saw something yellow lying on the stones. Coming nearer she fancied it was a pine-shaving, and looked after the boy again. She saw him suddenly stop short in a crowd of people at a crossing, and come back as fast as he had gone, so that just before she reached the shaving he did—and picked up, not a shaving at all, but a long, slimy banana-skin. Flinging it into a refuse barrel, he only waited long enough to say, "Somebody might have slipped on it," and was off again.

It was a little thing to do; but that one glance of the boy's clear gray eyes, and this simple, earnest sentence, made the lady's heart very warm toward the noisy fellow. He had not slipped himself; he was far past the danger, and when one is in a hurry, it is a great bother to go twice over the same ground, but the "somebody else" might slip, and so for the sake of this unknown somebody the hurrying boy came back, and it may be, saved the life or limbs of a feeble old man or a tender little child. He might have said, "I can't wait to go back—it is none of my doing, and so it is none of my business;" but he made it his business; and in this showed a trait of character which promised well for the future. There is nothing nobler on earth than this taking care that "somebody else" shall not suffer needlessly. The child who grows up with such a spirit always active in him, may make his home like a heaven upon earth; and he will never know what it is to be unloved or friendless.—*Watchman.*

THE HEARTS OF THE LOWLY.

One day three or four weeks ago a gamin, who seemed to have no friends in the world, was run over by a vehicle, on Madison Avenue, and fatally injured. After he had been in the hospital for a week, a boy about his own size, and looking as friendless and forlorn, called to ask about him and leave an orange. He seemed much embarrassed and would answer no questions. After that he came daily, always bringing something if no more than an apple. Last week, when the nurse told him that Billy had no chance to get well, the strange boy waited around longer than usual, and finally asked if he could go in. He had been invited to many times before, but had always refused. Billy, pale and weak and emaciated, opened his eyes in wonder at sight of the boy, and before he realized who it was the stranger bent close to his face and sobbed:

"Billy, can ye forgive a feller? We was allus fighting, and I was allus too much for ye; but I'm sorry! Fore ye die won't ye tell me ye haven't any grudge agin me?"

The young lad, then almost in the shadow of death, reached up his thin, white arms, clasped them around the other's neck, and replied:

"Don't cry, Bob. Don't feel bad. I was ugly and mean, and I was heaving a stone at ye when the wagon hit me. If ye'll forgive me, I'll forgive you, and I'll pray for both of us."

Bob was half an hour late the morning Billy died. When the nurse took him to the shrouded corpse, he kissed the pale face tenderly, and gasped:

"D-did he say anything about—about me?"

"He spoke of you just before he died—asked if you were here," replied the nurse.

"And may I go—go to the funeral?"

"You may."

And he did. He was the only mourner. His heart was the only one that ached. No tears were shed by others, and they left him sitting by the new-made grave, with heart so big that he could not speak.—*N.Y. Independent.*