



The Family Circle.

THE ANSWER TO THE PUZZLE.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

Dear little girl, chiding the morning long,
With pouting lip and eyes all wet and blue,
Counting it as a hardship and a wrong
That other children are more loved than you.

"'Tis so unjust," you say, "and so unkind,"
Bending the while a puzzled, angry brow—
"How can you help it?"—If you will not
mind,
Nor think me cruel, I will tell you how.

Sweet things from sweet, and fair from fair
must be,
Hearts have their wages, reckonings strict
are made;
We scold, rebel, but other people see
That, soon or late, we are exactly paid.

The willing love which counts not any cost,
But daily lavishes its first and best,
Although to careless eyes its pains seem lost,
Reaps in the end a tenfold interest;

While selfish souls who keep a strict ac-
count,
And tally, like a huckster in his stall,
Of all they give and feel, and the amount,
Get back their dues, indeed, but that is all.

Love is not free to take, like sun and air;
Nor given away for naught to any one;
It is no common right for men to share—
Like all things precious, it is sought and
won.

So if another is more loved than you,
Say not, "It is unjust," but say, "If she
Has earned more love than I, it is her due;
When I deserve more, it will come to me."

But if your longing be for love indeed,
I'll teach you how to win it—a sure way:
Love and be lovely; that is all you need,
And what you wish for will be yours some
day.

—S. S. Times.

HOW WE GIRLS HELPED.

(N. Y. Observer.)

PART I.

How could we help? It was like an in-
spiring strain of music to hear Miss Loring
tell about the world's work, and how bravely
women and even little children all over our
land, from the Great Northern Lakes to the
Golden Gates of the Pacific, were helping to
carry it on. She was staying at our house,
for mother is the President of the Foreign
Mission Auxiliary to the great Woman's
Board. So it fell out that Prue and I watched
her pack the little black trunk that evening,
ready for an early start the next morning,
to stir up another Society a hundred miles
off. We both felt sober. Something in
our lives must surely be wrong when there
was so much to be done; and we had not
even begun.

"I wish you'd stay and set us girls to
work!" sighed Prue.

"I'll come back to see what you've done
next year," she answered encouragingly.

"But who'll tell us how to begin?" I
asked.

"Why not yourselves, little women?" she
demanded briskly, shutting the trunk and
turning the key.

"Oh!" cried Prue and I together, "we're
only school-girls. What do we know about
such things?"

She turned down the gas and sat on
the trunk for a little chat in the moonlight.

"Girls," she said earnestly, "you don't
suspect your own power. Ever since I came
into this house yesterday, a perfect stranger,
I've been thinking what a great work you two
could do. You do not begin to realize your
own importance and stewardship in this
family and community. Haven't I seen how
your opinion makes all the difference in the
world? Didn't your mother get up an hour
earlier to finish Prue's new dress? Didn't
your father go a mile out of his way for fruit

to tempt Kitty's appetite? Didn't Harry
agree to give up that long-planned geological
excursion with his college chums because two
little maidens coaxed him so sweetly to escort
them to the chestnut picnic on Saturday?
More than that, didn't Harry confide in me
proudly on the drive over from the station
that his two sisters were the prettiest and
most popular girls in the village? 'There
isn't a fellow in 'our set' they could not twist
around their little fingers,' he said."

We both laughed a little. It was pleasant
to know we were somebodies. But Miss
Loring made it seem a sober thought too.
In her address she had made such a point of
social influence as a talent to be used for the
Master, not to be wrapped selfishly in an
aimless pleasure-napkin of our own.

Here we sat on the floor at her feet, two
black-eyed, gay-hearted twins of fifteen: life
stretching out like a beautiful dream, still
the real heart-work of the world all unsought.
So far, everybody had paid tribute to our
whims and ministered tenderly and lav-
ishly to our happiness. Was it not time for
us to begin to serve the great, waiting world
a little?

"Truly, Miss Loring; what is there for
us to do in particular?" pleaded Prue. "Kitty
and I give a little money once in a while;
and now and then, as a favor to mother, help
along in the singing at the Ladies' Missionary
Prayer Meeting. But life is just one rush
for us school-girls in term time: and then
there are music and drawing lessons and
compositions and class-meetings and picnics
and what-not to fill in all the spare half-
hours. By-and-by, when we are young ladies
in society, and have more leisure, we'll take
our turn."

"Oh, pussies!" she said sadly. "Can you
not make a little place for Jesus in your
young lives? Is there 'no room in the inn'?
Do you ever think how these years, so full
of joy and pleasant occupation for girls in
Christian America, are dragging your young
sisters farther away from the light and hope
of the Gospel tidings? The burden of life is
pressing hard upon their young shoulders;
already some of them are wives and mothers
—aye, widows. They drift to the degraded
ignorance of Christless womanhood, starving
for the knowledge of the truth. We need
your help right off—real help, great help,
this very year. So many love you, serve
you, admire you, follow your lead. Begin
now to 'lend a hand!'"

"How?" we asked.
"Gather up the fragments for Christ's
sake; help us to save your young sisters
across the sea."

"Set up a missionary scrap bag!" cried
Prue, with a half-laugh.

But just then I felt a big tear fall on my
hand; so that meant business. Prue doesn't
start off before she is half ready, as they say
I often do; but when she is once roused
there's no give-up in her.

"Littles move the universe," continued
the young lady-guest, in her earnest pleading
tones. "A word here; a bright thought
there; some moments redeemed each day
for prayer; a few shillings saved from rib-
bons and sweets; a little pretty fancy work
for sale; one of Prue's clever children's tales,
illustrated by Kitty's artist fingers, for
Children's Work—a missionary paper to
stretch the imagination of the literary
society in a new channel occasionally. Put
your whole heart in the search and watch
your chance. The trifles gathered together
by you two during all the days and months
of the coming year, if blessed by the Master,
who can tell what a chain of events may re-
sult? Promise me to try, dear girls."

She had made herself very agreeable to us
girls during that short visit; we liked to be
appreciated and to please; her eloquent words
in the afternoon had stirred our youthful
sympathies: so we promised.

The next morning, just as we were start-
ing for school, Harry drove Miss Loring
off to the train. But her last words to us
were:

"Girls, I depend on you about that prom-
ise. I wish for this one year you would
keep a record against my return. If Provid-
ence permit, I'll be back next October to
read it."

PART II.

That was the way Prue and I came to start
a sort of a diary together. We wrote at the
top of the first page for our motto Miss
Loring's words:

"Gather up the fragments."

"Money a mickle makes a muckle," says
the old Scotch proverb, and it would take

so long to write out all the entries in that
missionary note-book.

Prue saved several dollars on gloves and
neckties and candy. She collected a thousand
newspapers and sold them to father to line
the mill-boxes in which the woollen goods
were shipped. She actually set up a scrap-
bag, too, and stopped to pick up every tiny
bit of silk or cotton. I laughed at that, but
she said it helped her to remember keeping
on the look-out all the time. But, of course,
rags and waste paper don't count for much.
Then she took to reading *Children's Work* to
Tiny and Bob, and explaining the pictures.
They agreed to put in a penny apiece if she'd
buy a pretty red mite-box. And now she
has collected a band of twenty children,
and they are going to try to raise enough to
support a little scholar in one of the mission
schools.

I wasn't so good at saving. Somehow,
my things always did get lost or torn sooner
than Prue's. So I took to making moss-
baskets and filling them from my own plants.
Eliza, our old nurse, is the housekeeper now
at her son-in-law's hotel. She agreed to put
them on the table, with the price ticket, and
if possible sell them for me. I made over
twenty in all. If my flowers had not given
out, I could have sold more. Then I painted
some panels with vines and flowers and sold
them to my friends.

Instead of our birthday party, we got up
a stereopticon entertainment. Uncle Henry
sent our Harry a fine instrument and a lot
of slides from abroad, and he agreed to show
off his present to us. Then the ices and
cakes and goodies which we usually have for
the party answered for the refreshment table.
We just took possession of the carriage-house,
and though black Sam grumbled a little at
turning out all the sleighs and carriages, he
did it. Father sent the carpenter from the
mills to put up benches for us, and a lot of
the girls agreed to come and help us dress
the room with evergreens and to wait on the
tables.

Harry said, "Whew!" when he counted
the money taken in. How proud we felt
when we found there was over forty dollars
for the mission fund! To be sure two five-
dollar gold pieces father put in for our birth-
day presents from him. That pleased mother
most of all, because he never believed much
in Foreign Missions. He quoted, "Charity
begins at home," to Prue and me when we
first talked of this new kind of birthday
party. But Prue said, in her quiet way, she
"was glad St. Paul didn't stop there, or where
would we all have been?" Father laughed
and pinched her cheek, and asked: "Was his
birthday present to go in the contribution
box, too, this year?"

Prue hesitated a little. He always does
give us such lovely presents. Then she said
gravely, "Yes!" so, of course, I said, "Yes,"
too. Prue and I generally do agree, except
about favorite colors.

But the very next week we were so glad:
for when Deacon Oliver came round for the
Church Foreign Missionary collection, instead
of the usual ten dollars, father gave him fifty
dollars. And when the old man opened his
eyes in astonishment, father said: "My little
girls must not get ahead of me in giving to
the Lord;" and he didn't laugh a bit, but said
it as sober as could be.

By-and-by, talking over things and lend-
ing the missionary magazines and papers
around, almost all our set of girls got inter-
ested. So we formed a Circle and held a
monthly meeting in the chapel before even-
ing service. At first we were afraid of the
sound of our own voices; but we sang
hymns and read letters that stirred us up
considerably, and somehow those quiet
little meetings seemed to help along wonder-
fully.

Then Harry said "we girls" were growing
so wise, it was time the fellows studied up
more about the world they were living in,
this nineteenth century. So we began a
series of missionary soirees from house to
house. Somehow, we did not any of us
feel in the mood for "the German" that
winter. Prue said the fact was, we had
cultivated our heels long enough at the ex-
pense of our heads. Mother was so glad.
Father had insisted on letting us have a good
time with the rest, but she never approved
of dances.

One night our pastor was calling, and said,
somehow, his work was easier that winter.
The young people were growing more
thoughtful. Prue's eyes shone then, for he
looked right over as though he meant us.

There is a good deal of musical talent in
the village for a place of its size. So two

or three parlor concerts, with a small admis-
sion fee, proved a success; and, in one way
and another, the Circle raised nearly one
hundred dollars. Some of the young gen-
tlemen were honorary members and contri-
buted handsomely. Harry said that was fair
enough: if girls could save up on ribbons and
candy, it would not hurt their brothers to
spend less on cigars and suppers.

But, best of all, last communion six girls
in the Circle made a public confession of faith
in Christ. That made Prue and me feel
sober. One was our great friend—such a
gay, clever girl. Harry and his chum joined
the church at the same time. Harry talks
about studying for the ministry, and perhaps
some day he may be a missionary. Father
does not like the idea much. He says Harry
ought to make his mark in the world with
his talents and fine education. But Harry
feels that if God honors him with success in
winning souls, that will be the highest mark
of all.

Miss Loring kept her promise, and came
back to visit us again at the end of the year.
Mother told her what had grown out of her
talk with us twins in the moonlight, and she
looked so pleased, and said: "Little workers,
I'm proud of you!" But mother shook her
head and sighed. I know she thinks we are
just like stupid sign-posts, pointing the way
to others, but not going the right road our-
selves.

But that evening Miss Loring had another
chat with Prue and me, all by ourselves up-
stairs, over our record-book, and now we
are both decided to be out-and-out Christians
and not be ashamed to show our colors be-
fore the world.

She made it seem such a strange, beautiful
thing that we—just two young, gay school-girls
—could be of so much help in our own little
world, and that Christ should have honored
our efforts by making them of real use in
the advancing of his glorious kingdom.—N.
Y. Observer.

"MOTHERS OF OUR OWN."

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

In a family where I was visiting recently,
a lively little discussion followed the reading
aloud of a bright editorial from one of the
household newspapers upon "Mother Wor-
ship in India." After some learned talk
about the hundred and forty distinct "moth-
ers," local deities, in Gujerat alone, which
the Brahmins declare to be different forms of
Siva's consort, the conversation naturally
took a more practical turn as to mothers in
general.

A good many different views were ex-
pressed as to how far men's lives were really
shaped by a mother's influence, and
whether, after all, "mother worship" was
not really the most natural form of adoration
for heathen peoples to fall into.

"I have seen a good deal of the world,"
said a fine-looking middle-aged man, from
the Far West, who was spending a few weeks
at his old New England home, "and I have
found that most men have tucked away, in
some cases, it may be, down in the most re-
mote corner of their hearts, a great tender-
ness for mother."

"I remember, when I first went to Indiana
as a clerk in one of the offices of the Wabash
Railway, that John Carpenter, the pay-
master, to whom I had letters of introduction,
sent me to board with a certain widow who
was trying to gain a living for herself, and
to educate her children, by taking railway
boarders."

"Mrs. Griswold's husband was killed on
our road while on duty as an engineer," said
Mr. Carpenter, as he walked with me across
the depot platform. "She has just taken
that large frame house which you see yonder
on the corner, and has gone to keeping
boarders. She is a good hearted, worthy
woman, and we are all anxious to have her
succeed. But it is new business for her, and
I can see that she already looks tired and
discouraged. Perhaps our boys worry her
some," added the paymaster, in his kindly
way. "Tell her you are one of our new
men from the East, and that I sent you, and
she will make you comfortable, I know."

"I was an entire stranger in the place and
to all the railway boys, and was homesick
enough, as, carpet bag in hand, I trudged
down the muddy street of the mushroom
western city, and presented myself before
good Mrs. Griswold. She at once ushered
me into the dining-room, and gave me a
general introduction to the dozen or fifteen
young fellows who were seated about the
supper-table. They were good looking,