



### The Family Circle.

#### THEY ARE SEVEN.

"How many roses are there, dear?"  
I asked a little maid,  
"Seven," she answered, counting them  
With eyes demurely staid.

"Why, no, dear; one has fallen down  
Here on the shelf, you see;  
And standing in the pretty vase  
Together there are three.

"The other three are in the glass,  
Only reflected there."  
She looked and nodded in assent,  
That little maiden fair.

"Three in the vase, one fallen down,  
And in the mirror three;  
Add them together, Auntie dear;  
There will be seven you see."

I took the vase down from the shelf.  
"Now, Annie, come, look here;  
Only four roses with them all  
Together—that is clear."

With eyes serene, and far more calm  
Than Wordsworth's little maid,  
Sweet Annie heard my protest through,  
And listened undismayed.

"If I were you," she gently said,  
With blue eyes raised to heaven,  
"I'd put them back there on the shelf,  
And then there would be seven."

And after all, is she not right?  
It's just the point of view;  
A grateful heart knows how to make  
One blessing seem like two.

—The Independent.

#### ELEANOR'S TRIUMPH.

"A carriage, and white satin slippers, pearl-colored kid gloves above the elbow, a fan and a bouquet—I must have all these, mother, if I am to be graduated with the other girls. The gown won't be such a dreadful expense, for my last summer's white cashmere can be made over, if I can get a few yards of surah, and Aunt Millie's old point will come in splendidly for trimming. But," and pretty Eleanor heaved a deep sigh, "I must have a sash, an elegant one, of broad, white moire; fifty dollars would about cover the whole expense, mother, if spent with economy."

Mother lifted a tired face from her sewing. Eleanor was too self-absorbed to notice it, but mother was looking ill as well as tired. She had been under a great strain lately, and this dear young daughter was now bringing her weight to add to the burden. How blind a girl's eyes can sometimes be!

"Mother," said Eleanor, pleadingly, "you will manage it somehow, won't you, dear?"

All through her eighteen years, Eleanor had been used to seeing mother contrive to bring order out of confusion, straighten tangled skeins, perform what looked almost impossible. That there might be a limit to mother's ability in that direction, the girl did not dream.

"I asked father last evening if he would fill my order for any reasonable amount," Eleanor proceeded, "and he laughed and told me to go to you, mother. He said, 'Of course, I want my little girl to look as nice as the others, after she has worked so hard.' And, mother, you know, in the autumn, I'll be sure to have a position myself, and money will be coming in then every month, so that I can pay you back."

Still mother was silent. An inscrutable expression, hardening and ageing the quiet face, had stolen over it at the allusion to father, the easy-going, amiable, impecunious man, whom everybody loved, and whose children, thanks to his wife's tact, did not suspect his weakness. He always left it to mother to say no. She must always do the denying and reproving.

A conflict was going on in the mother's mind, such a conflict as only mothers similarly situated can understand. To deny, Eleanor, at the culmination of her school career, the pretty dress and the other luxurious indulgences which her class were to

have was inexpressibly painful. But never had it been so difficult to gratify her, for never had needful wants so heaped themselves up. And the load of debt in the background had never pressed so heavily. Mr. Hylton's business was a fluctuating one at best; returns were slow, and often every cent was anticipated before it came. There was the interest on the loan a rich cousin had made, there was the fire insurance to be renewed, the boys were too large to wear home-made clothes, evolved from cast-off suits of their father's, and they had to be fitted out anew. And now, when mother was harassed half to death, to have Eleanor so sweetly and naively present her petition of wants, it was more than the poor wearied woman could endure. She almost gasped for breath as Eleanor went serenely on.

"A carriage, a fan, white satin shoes, long, pearl-colored gloves, a bouquet!" The items ticked themselves off in the mother's mind, as she desperately wondered how they were to be got honestly. They seemed such must-haves to the child that it did not occur to her to say no at once. For a little while there was silence, and, "Please, mother!" began Eleanor, again.

But she went no further, for a very alarming thing took place; mother had quietly fainted away. Nothing more could be said on the subject that day.

"Eleanor Hylton," exclaimed Puss, her younger sister, as that evening, late, the two were preparing for bed, "I don't know whether you have noticed it, but mother is just dying by inches of worry over money. We all go to her, and she wears herself out trying to satisfy our demands, wretches that we are; common sense, to say nothing of love, shows that we must stop spending, if we are to keep our mother. Father doesn't see it, but I do. Are nobody else's eyes to be opened in time?"

"How is it that you know so much more than the rest of us, Puss?" queried Eleanor, ironically.

Puss Hylton was fifteen, and a cripple. She had stayed at home for the last year, studying by herself with a little help from Eleanor, and sharing more of her mother's life than the others. Bit by bit she had penetrated the secret of the pinching economy in some details, offset by the lavishness in others. Little by little it had come home to her that things could not go on at their present pace.

"Eleanor," she said, "there is nobody else to whom we can go for a loan, and the butcher looks cross when he sends in his bill; Dan goes around three squares, sooner than pass the grocer's, he's so ashamed that we owe for the last barrel of flour. And now your graduation is coming to finish the work. If I were you, dear, I would wear my old gown just as it is, and my old shoes, and walk to school; but I'd get my diploma, and take it with independence, not feeling like a sham and a cruel, cruel girl into the bargain. There!"

"Don't say any more, Puss; I'll think about it!"

And Eleanor, with a pale face and a quivering lip took up her Every Day Text Book to read, through a mist of gathering tears, this verse, which seemed to speak to her with an angel's voice: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."

The color came into Eleanor's cheek, for the thought in her heart had been: "Oh, why are we not rich? Why must we always be poor and kept down by having to count every penny?"

Here was God's answer: "A good name is better than riches."

Well, nobody could have a good name who built up her daily life on false pretences as a foundation, and loving favor would not lead a girl to add a feather's weight of care to the load of an anxious mother. But, being no braver than you are, Molly and Frances, and as fond of a dainty, pretty new outfit as you, Caroline and Sophy, you may imagine that Eleanor's battle was not gained in a breath.

She lay awake a long time, the silent tears stealing down her cheek until her pillow was quite wet. But she was so still that Puss slept peacefully, never suspecting Eleanor's tumult of feeling. By-and-by she stepped out of bed and knelt down beside the window, asking God's help to do just what should be right, and not to mind being singular.

You think she ought to have cared so

much for her sick mother that there would have been no contest at all? Whose is the voice that makes this scornful little comment? Is it yours, Marguerite! Let me answer, dear, that you are less tolerant than I because I have lived a little longer. It is very hard for young, inexperienced people to realize the hardships of illness and the danger of death. They feel as though parents especially must live forever, and a peril somewhere in front is not easily realized, while a trouble to be faced now, on the instant, assumes large proportions.

However, Eleanor went to school on the next morning with her mind made up, and she was not one to change it when once she had arrived at a decision. At recess, when the girls talked over the momentous affairs of commencement day and commencement dress, several of them appealed to her. What was their surprise when she said, in low tones, which yet were audible to everybody; "You will have to put me in the back row, girls. I find that it is not convenient for my father and mother to spend anything extraordinary at present; so I am going to wear my last summer's white dress, just as it is, and I shall have nothing at all new."

Contrary to Eleanor's anticipations, this statement produced no effect whatever. Two or three of the more fashionable girls looked annoyed, and one or two of Eleanor's intimate friends glanced at her with sympathy. Daisy Dean stole a little hand into hers with a cordial clasp, whispering, "You brave thing! I love you."

The bell sounded, and recess was over. Tasks were taken up as usual. Eleanor did not know it, but her quiet courage had been a real relief to several timid girls, who had been dreading the expense of commencement, without daring to stem what they supposed to be a public opinion and take an independent course. If somebody will only lead in this world there are always plenty to follow.

And Eleanor was repaid for her sacrifice of personal vanity when she saw the mother face light up and felt the dear arms around her that evening.

"Has it been hard for you, dearie?" said the mother anxiously.

"It would have been, mother, darling, if I hadn't been a selfish creature, who is ashamed of herself for being such a baby," was Eleanor's reply. "But now, that I have settled the thing, I shall just go on studying and think no more about it."

A few weeks later, at the close of the commencement exercises, a very elegant and distinguished looking woman who had recently returned from abroad, approached the president of Eleanor's college.

"Can you tell me," she inquired, "the name and give me some account of a young girl who was dressed very simply, and sat modestly in the background, although she bore off a half-dozen prizes? There was nothing to indicate poverty in her very appropriate school-girl dress, but her face had a look of purpose, and I am in search of such a girl to act as visiting governess to my little daughters."

So from the root of Eleanor's self-denial blossomed the fragrant flower of her success. Her duties at Mrs. Armstrong's proved to be very congenial, while brief hours and frequent holidays left her much time to devote to the assistance of the dear ones at home. In the eyes of the travelled and cultured woman her simple gown had been a positive recommendation, and it was to it she owed the enthusiastic testimonial to her scholarship and worth which the president, having opportunity, was glad to give.

"A good name is better than riches, and loving favor rather to be desired than silver and gold."—Margaret E. Sangster, in *Congregationalist*.

#### THE BEST BED-TIME STORIES.

An enthusiastic young lady, on her introduction to my mother, exclaimed: "Oh, I am so delighted to know you. I have heard about you for years as the lady who is always telling such wonderful stories to children, and they invariably turn out to be Bible stories. How do you do it?" "Very easily," replied my mother; "the Bible stories are the most wonderful stories in the world."

I never thought the Bible anything but interesting, and to this day think my

mother's better than all other tales. I began telling Harry the Bible stories younger than many mothers think worth while, and I used to put his chubby hands together and say his little prayers months before he could lip the words after me.

My practice has always been to go up with him at night, oversee the undressing, and then, after he is tucked in bed, tell the story. I don't believe in telling the stories at hap-hazard and from ancient and hazy recollections. I carried the boy (quite unconsciously) through a regular plan of Bible history; and I used to spend a little time every morning in getting up the story. The more knowledge the mother has, the more dramatic the story can be made.

I must say (if I speak frankly) that I think the reason why so many children find the Bible dull, is because they have had it taught to them by a lazy intellect. Dulness is a crime sometimes. No indolent and heavy mind can interest an entertained bright, wide-awake child, I think, also that the great time to make this glorious and lasting impression of the charm of the Bible is before the child is seven. The things told then take on wonderful hues. Does morning or mid-day ever give us colors like the early dawn?

I like the Bible Story-book very much; I have read that aloud three times to my boy. There is nothing in all the world after the Bible like Pilgrim's Progress. I feel sorry for the mother who has never rested herself and children with the wonderful melody of Bunyan's dream.

Many mothers don't believe in telling stories to children after they are in bed. I do. Have the children go to bed half an hour earlier, if necessary, for the privilege.

The trouble, so many times, is with ourselves. We make studying the Bible a duty and keeping Sunday a burden. I think Sunday afternoon ought to have more privileges than any other day of the week, and I think the time of hearing the Bible ought to be a little cosier than any other hour.

An ignorant young mother talked to me once in great dismay about her boy, who often refused to say his prayers. The result would be a pitched battle between the two, and a compulsory repeating of the prayers. "Don't ever let that happen again," I entreated. "If you see the battle coming, focus it on another point. A good general chooses his own battlefield if possible. Then have everything specially pleasant about prayer-time. Tell him a story, give him a new toy, and, in his happiest mood, have prayer-time come." She promised me to do this. Two months afterwards that boy was run over by an engine and instantly killed. I was with his mother in a few hours, and almost her first words were, "I never had any trouble about his prayers after that day at your house."—*Christian Intelligencer*.

#### WHY WILL YOU?

Why will you keep caring for what the world says? Try, oh, try, to be no longer a slave to it! You can have little idea of the comfort of freedom from it—it is bliss! All this caring for what people will say is from pride. Hoist your flag and abide by it. In an infinitely short space of time all secrets will be divulged. Therefore if you are misjudged, why trouble to put yourself right? You have no idea what a great deal of trouble it will save you. Roll your burden on him, and he will make straight your mistakes. He will set you right with those with whom you have set yourself wrong. Here am I a lump of clay; thou art the potter. Mold me as thou in thy wisdom wilt. Never mind my cries. But my life off—so be it; prolong it—so be it. Just as thou wilt; but I rely on thy unchanging guidance during the trial. Oh, the comfort that comes from this!—*Gen. Gordon*.

#### HOW TO KEEP YOUNG.

It is not years that makes men old; the spirit may be young. Although for the score years and ten the wheels of life have run; God has Himself recorded, in His blessed Word of Truth, That they who wait upon the Lord, they shall renew their youth.

—*Isaiah*.