



The Family Circle.

A SUMMER IDYL.

BY KATE LAWRENCE.

A bird's nest hid in the clover—
Daintily woven, soft and warm—
The timothy grass, bending tenderly over,
Watches by turns with the little house-
mother,
Keeping it safe from harm.

A home-nest under the willow
Warmed and lighted by mother love;
Two golden heads on a downy pillow;
One father sails o'er the raging billow,
One looketh down from above.

God pity the little hen-sparrow
Who waiteth in vain for her mate:
Why did he not stay the pitiless arrow?
Oh! the heavens were wide and the mark
was narrow;
Careth God for a sparrow's fate?

Careth he for a soul's deep anguish
Though the woman's heart, like the spar-
row's, bleed?

Though the weeds of woe the widow weareth.
And her babes on an aching bosom beareth?
Careth he for the heart's sore need?

God careth; we know that he careth
As though voice should speak from the
heaven above;

"Though he sleep beneath the foaming
billow

'Mid tangled sea moss, on coral pillow,
He liveth still in my heart of love!"
—Christian Union.

KIP'S MINISTER.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

"Kip Crail! what makes you stand there?"
demanded Bud.

"I'm a-watching my minister," answered
Kip slowly.

Bud looked curiously after the slightly
gray-haired man, in clothing somewhat worn,
who was quietly picking his way along the
road. Her blue eyes discerned nothing
remarkable, and she turned away disap-
pointed.

"Ho! why he's everybody's minister; he
a'n't yours."

Kip knew better than that. Did not he
remember who always knew him, and stopped
to shake hands and say, "How do you do,
Christopher?"—a name that made him feel
nearly as big as anybody. And who always
asked after his mother? And did not forget
when he told him little Bob was sick, the peo-
ple in the house hitched up their sleek horses
and nice carriage, and drove two miles to the
city church every Sunday; but Kip, with
freckled face shining from soap, head wet
and combed till not a hair could stir from its
place, and red hands thrust into his pockets,
trudged whistling over the hill to the little
frame church where most of the people from
the straggling villages and the neighboring
farms gathered.

"So he is my minister," said Kip stoutly
as he considered the matter.

He would have liked to share the honor
that day, however, with the inmates of the
large comfortable farm-house; for they were
really the most prosperous family in the
village, while he, only a distant relative,
was "chore boy and gener'ly useful" as he
phrased it. And there was to be a "donation
party" at his minister's home that very
evening.

"If they'd just give something handsome!"
he said to Nancy the "hired girl," who was
busy in the kitchen.

"They won't never think of it no more'n
they will of flyin'," replied Nancy, dextrously
turning a flapjack, and the subject also,
by requesting Kip to "run for an armful of
wood."

Somebody always wanted wood or water,
or something from the cellar, or something
from the attic, whenever Kip was in sight.
But he scarcely thought of the constant calls
that morning, so full was he of other thoughts.
Nancy might dispose of the question care-
lessly, but he could not. He was connected

with the house, and he felt that the honor of
the house was involved. Besides, he wanted
his minister well treated and he knew—few
knew better than Kip—how sorely the
"something handsome" was needed in the
shabby little parsonage. He did not mean
they should "never think of it" as Nancy
had said: he would remind them by bringing
up the subject naturally and innocently in
some way.

So he lingered in the room a few minutes
after breakfast, while Mrs. Mitchel was
gathering up the dishes, and Mr. Mitchel
consulting the almanac. He coughed once or
twice, and then, staring straight out of the
window, observed as follows:

"There goes our big rooster! He's 'most as
big as a turkey, a'n't he, Aunt Ann? Tur-
keys always make me think of Thanksgivings,
Christmases, Donations and such things—ch
yes! there is going to be a donation down at
the minister's to-night!"

Kip considered that very delicately and
neatly done!

"Eh? what?" said Mrs. Mitchel, paying no
attention except to the last sentence.

"Who's going to have a donation?"

"Down at the minister's," repeated Kip.
"Everybody'll take 'em things, you know
—flour and potatoes and wood—something
handsome, I hope—the folks that can 'ford
to."

That was another masterly hint. Kip
chuckled to himself at his success in manag-
ing his self-appointed task, but his spirits sank
with Mr. Mitchel's first words.

"Well, now, I don't know as I approve of
that way. The folks here can do as they
please—it's no affair of mine—but seems to
me it's better to pay a man decent salary, and
let him buy his own things."

"Don't know as I 'prove of that way
either," soliloquized Kip indignantly when
he found himself alone behind the wood-pile.
"Don't know as I 'prove of folks giving me
their old clothes," looking down at his
patched knees, "Seems to me 'twould be
better to pay me decent wages and let me
buy my own clothes. But seem' they don't,
these trousers are better'n none; and I guess
if Uncle Ralph had a sick wife and three or
four children he'd think a donation party was
a good deal better'n nothing."

Ideas that found their way into the brain
under Kip's thatch of light hair were sure to
stay, and the cows, the chickens, and the
wood-pile heard numerous orations that
morning—all upon one subject.

"Now if I owned all these things, do you
s'pose I'd go 'off to the big city church every
Sunday, and wouldn't go down now and
then to see what was a-doin' for the poor
folks round here? And when I went, don't
you s'pose I'd see how his coat was gettin'
shinier and shinier, and her cloak fader, and
all the new clothes they have is their old
ones made over? A boy don't like that kind
of dressin'-up partic'lar well, and how do you
s'pose my minister feels? Don't you b'lieve
I'd know when she got sick, how the bundles
from the grocery-store was smaller and
fewer 'count of the bottles that had to be paid
for and the doctor's bill? And wouldn't I
hear the trembling in his voice when he
prays for them that has 'heavy burdens
to carry? Just wait till I'm a man and
see!"

Old Brindle looked at him meditatively,
and one pert little bantam mounted the fence
and crowed with enthusiasm, but no member
of the barn-yard offered any suggestions;
and going to a little nook behind the manger,
Kip drew forth his own offering for the
important evening—a little bracket-shelf,
clumsily designed and roughly whittled out,
but nevertheless the work of many a precious
half-hour. He looked at it rather doubtfully.
It did not altogether satisfy even his limited
conceptions of beauty.

"But then if you keep it kind of in the
shade, and look at it sort o'sideways—so—it
does pretty well," he said, scrutinizing it with
one eye closed. "I guess Mis' Clay will,
seem' she's had to look sharp for the best
side o'things so long."

But how he did wish the others would send
something—"something that would count,"
as he said. He was down on the ground
gathering up a basketful of chips when one
of the well-kept horses and the light waggon
passed out of the yard and down the lane
bearing Mr. Mitchel away to the town. A
host of brilliant possibilities suddenly trooped
through Kip's thoughts as he watched the
vehicle out of sight. His wish grew into
something deeper and stronger.

"Oh please do make him think and bring

back something nice for them!" he mur-
mured.

Bud, who had a fashion of appearing in the
most unexpected times and places, looked at
him wondering from around a corner of the
wood-pile.

"What makes you do that for?" she asked
solemnly.

"Cause," answered Kip briefly, with a
flush rising to his freckled cheeks. "I don't
care," he whispered to himself. "The min-
ister's folks are good and care for other folks,
and it's 'bout time somebody was takin' care
of them."

Bud did not quite accept the lucid expla-
nation given her. She seated herself on a
log and pondered the subject until she reached
a conclusion that she considered satisfactory;
and after that, though she said nothing about
it, she watched quite as eagerly and much
more expectantly for her father's return than
did Kip.

There certainly was something new and
unusual in the light waggon when at last it
drove up to the door again. Both children
discovered that at once—Bud from the win-
dow, Kip from the piazza—a great, easy,
luxurious arm-chair. Mr. Mitchel lifted it
out and carried it into the house.

"See here! what do you think of that?"
he said to his wife triumphantly. "I hap-
pened into a furniture store where they were
auctioning everything off and I got this at
such a bargain that I took it in a hurry. Isn't
that as comfortable a chair as you ever saw?
Just try it."

Mrs. Mitchel examined and admired;
Nancy who came to the kitchen door ex-
claimed and interjected; and the household
generally bestowed such unqualified com-
mendation that Mr. Mitchel's gratification
increased.

"I think I know a good thing when I see
it," he declared, "and this couldn't be bought
anywhere else for that money. Nothing in
the world the matter with it either, not a
flaw about it except"—showing where the
back could be lowered to make it more of a
reclining chair—"this spring works a little
hard. But a cabinet-maker could fix that
in a few moments, and we'll have it done
right away. Kip!" as the boy passed the
door—"Kip, could you take this down to
the parson's this afternoon? I want it to go
at once."

Kip could scarcely believe his own ears.
"Yes sir!" he said with his eyes fairly dan-
cing. "You mean to send it to him, uncle
Ralph? guess I can take it!"

He never called his minister "the parson"
—it scarcely sounded respectful enough—
but of course he knew who was meant and
he was far too happy for any criticizing
thought. That handsome easy chair!
Wouldn't the very sight of it rest poor tired,
Mrs. Clay? Kip could see just how her
pale face would look leaned back against the
cushion.

"It's pretty heavy for you to carry so far
though," Mr. Mitchel was saying when Kip
recalled his wandering wits far enough to
understand. "Jim could take it in the wag-
gon perhaps."

"I might put it in the hand-cart and wheel
it over," interposed Kip with a sudden
inspiration. He could bear no delay, and he
wanted to take it himself.

Mr. Mitchel commended that suggestion as
"not a bad notion on Kip's part."

"And what shall I tell him, uncle Ralph?"

"Tell him—why he'll understand; he can
see for himself. Tell him I sent it, and he'll
know what to do with it, I suppose."

Kip supposed so too. He waited for no
farther directions, but made a partial toilet
very expeditiously, and was soon safely out
on the road with his treasure. To say
that he was pleased and proud is a very faint
description of his feelings. He trundled
that hand-cart by no out-of-the-way route,
and he was not long alone; the village boys
hailed him:

"Hello, Kip! What you got there?"

"It's our folks' present to the minister,"
answered Kip grandly, and one after another
the admiring boys fell into line until the
chair formed the centre of a triumphal pro-
cession. The village soon knew of the gift,
as the village always did know of everything
that happened within its limits, and Kip had
the satisfaction of being stopped several times,
and of hearing that Mr. Mitchel had done
"the handsome thing," and that the chair was
"out-and-out nice."

So, in a beatific state, he reached the gate
of the little parsonage. There was no lack of
assistance. Every urchin was anxious to
share at least the reflected glory of helping to

carry it, and it was borne to the house very
much as a party of ants bear off a lump of
sugar—by swarming all over it. The min-
ister came to the door, the body-guard fell
back, and Kip presented his prize.

"Here's something that Uncle Ralph sent
you, sir; he bought it in town to-day. He
said to tell you he sent it, and he guessed you'd
know what to do with it," he said with
shining eyes.

The minister's eyes shone too, and then
grew dim. This was so unexpected, and it
meant so much to him! It had sometimes
seemed hard to that kindly, tender heart that
the one of all the village who could have
done most, had never manifested any interest
in his work for those poor people—had not
lifted with even a finger the burden of care
and sacrifice, or shown any disposition to aid
or encourage. But there must have been
sympathy after all. This was a generous gift
in its luxuriousness—a thoughtful one, for it
was for the dear invalid. He opened a door
near him and said softly:

"Rachel, look here!"

How he had wanted just such an easy,
restful cushioned niche for the worn slight
form! The boys could not understand what
it was to him in itself and in what it repre-
sented—"Only his voice had a tremble in it
like when he prays," Kip said to himself on
his homeward way.

However he hated "fixed up company"
in general, he would not for anything miss
the gathering at the parsonage that evening,
and wood and water, cows and kindlings
must be looked after early. So it happened
he did not speak with Mr. Mitchel again
until nightfall. Then that gentleman be-
thought him of his commission.

"Ah Kip, carried the chair safely, did
you?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, what did he say to it?"
"I wish you'd seen him, uncle Ralph!"
said Kip radiantly. "Not as he said much
either, only something 'bout he didn't know
how to thank you—"

"How to thank me?" repeated Mr. Mitchel
in amazement. "Why should he? He isn't
so short of work as all that, is he?"

"Short of work, uncle Ralph!" It was
Kip's turn to open wide eyes of astonish-
ment. "I should think not, with all his
preachin' and Sunday-school and poor folks!
I don't s'pose he thought he'd have time to
sit in it much himself; but Mrs. Clay she's
sick—"

"What have the Clays to do with it?"
demanded Mr. Mitchel with clouded brow
and a dawning suspicion of something wrong.
"I told you to take it to Mr. Parsons—
the cabinet-maker's—to have that spring
fixed."

Kip saw it all then, but he wished the
floor would quietly open and drop him into
the cellar, or that he could fly through the
roof. He thrust his hands deep into his
pockets, and his face flushed and paled.

"I—thought—you said the parson's," he
stammered. "I s'posed 'twas for the min-
ister's donation, and so—"

"You took it there?" Mr. Mitchel com-
pleted the sentence. "Now how in the
world—"

But it was too much to be borne. Kip
waited for nothing more, but rushed from
the house, and if in the shadow of the
friendly wood-pile he leaned his head against
the rough sticks and cried, there was no one
to see.

"They may fix it up any way they
please," he said. "I can't do it! I can't and
I won't!"

A little later he stood by the old gate
watching the great yellow moon come up,
and digging his red fists into his eyes now
and then to wipe away some stray tears of
shame, indignation and grief that still gather-
ed there. This was not a very nice world
anyhow, he decided with a queer aching spot
at his heart. Almost it seemed as if he had
asked for bread and received a stone—a sharp
heavy stone at that.

Indoors Mr. Mitchel had expressed very
distinctly his opinion of the carelessness and
obtuseness that could have caused such a
blunder, and the "awkwardness of the whole
thing," and in no little vexation was trying
to find some means of remedy.

"I might write a note and explain, but
then—I declare it's the most awkward dis-
agreeable thing I ever knew! Such a stupid
blunder."

"Papa," interposed the slow, wondering
voice of Bud, "I didn't know there could be
any mistakes up there."

"Up where, child?"