



The Family Circle.

DON'T LEAVE THE FARM.

Come boys, I have something to tell you,
Come near, I would whisper it low,
You are thinking of leaving the homestead
Don't be in a hurry to go!
The city has many attractions,
But think of the vices and sins,
When once in the vortex of fashion,
How soon the course downward begins.

You talk of the mines of the Black Hills,
They've wealth in gold without doubt,
But ah! there is gold on the farm boys
If only you'll shovel it out.
The mercantile trade is a hazard,
The goods are first high and then low;
Better stick to the farm a while longer,
Don't be in a hurry to go.

The great, busy West has inducements
And so has the busiest mart,
But wealth is not made in a day boys,
Don't be in a hurry to start.
The bankers and brokers are wealthy,
They take in their million or so,
Ah! think of the fraud and deception.
Don't be in a hurry to go.

The farm is the safest and surest,
The orchards are loaded to-day,
You're free as the air of the mountain
And "monarch of all you survey."
Better stay on the farm a while longer
Though profits come in rather slow,
Remember you've nothing to risk boys,
Don't be in a hurry to go.

—Farm Journal.

AMY'S PROBATION.

By the Author of "Glauca," &c.

CHAPTER X.—A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE SCENES.

Amy was left some hours to ponder over what she had heard, and what her own punishment would probably be. She would certainly be deprived of all participation in the forthcoming festivities, for the drama was to be followed by a feast and a general relaxation of the rules touching silence and separation of the classes during recreation time.

It seemed that the authorities were in some doubt as to what the character of her punishment ought to be, for, after sitting several hours in darkness, the Spiritual Mother at last came to release her, saying that for the present she was to hold no conversation with either her sister or her cousin.

She found that this rule was to be strictly enforced on all occasions, and during the whole Christmas holidays, but beyond this she did not hear of any further punishment. The sisters, doubtless, judged this would be as severe a chastisement to Amy as they could well inflict; and, in truth, no more severe one could be found just now. By dint of watching Florie closely she saw for herself that her sister bowed as reverently and paused as long before the statue of the Virgin in the corridor as the most devout Catholic girl in the school, and a whisper also reached her that she was going to confession before partaking of the sacrament of the Romish mass on Christmas-day.

To hear this and not be allowed to speak a word of caution or warning was almost agony to poor Amy, and no keener suffering could be devised than this that the sisters were thus able to inflict, while all the time they were reminding her of the great clemency and tenderness with which she was treated.

Everybody but Amy was as busy as possible just now, preparing for the forthcoming *fete*, and the bustle and excitement grew every day in its intensity, and numerous little rivalries sprang up among the girls as to the parts they were to take—rivalries by no means healthy in their development, for envy and jealousy of each other on one side, and overbearing triumph on the other, seemed to be the outcome of it all, except in the case of a few careless, good-natured girls, like Milly, who laughed and joked about the most sacred things, and seemed to

lose all reverence for religion and truth together.

At last the day came, and when every thing in the nuns' refectory had been prepared, Amy was admitted, with the general visitors from outside, to see the show.

"How beautiful! How lovely! What a sweet face she has!" greeted her ears on every side as the curtain slowly rose and revealed the impromptu stable, with Florie sitting by the side of the manger, nursing the doll there had been so much bickering over. Amy could not but admit that the whole was very pretty, and Florie certainly made a lovely Virgin. Her sweet, pensive face and downcast look at the waxen baby in her lap were all that they should be. Presently music was heard in the distance, and then a train of shepherds appeared, singing as they came a hymn beginning

"Hail, Queen of heaven, the ocean star,
Guide of the wanderer here below,"

Amy heard afterward that this hymn had been chosen as a fitting reminder to Augusta of the debt she owed the Virgin as "Star of the sea," for delivering her parents from the perils of shipwreck. When this and several other hymns had been sung in honor of the Virgin, another train appeared, gorgeous in dress, and bearing costly gifts, which they laid at the feet of the Virgin, and which she received with the condescending air of an empress. Her usually sweet, gentle face wore a look of triumph more than once, as a girl who had loudly declared she would not bow her knees dropped humbly before her, depositing her gifts at her feet, but, rising, cast a glance of angry contempt at her; for many a Catholic girl felt her place had been usurped by this Protestant new-comer. Music and singing and the presentation of gifts, in which last performance all the audience were invited to participate, and which many of them responded to with a liberality that astonished Amy, at last came to an end. The play was over, and the actors retired to put away their dresses; but they did not put away the feelings of envy and jealousy that burned the more fiercely for being repressed and kept out of sight and knowledge of the authorities as much as possible.

As one who had taken no part in the affair, and, therefore, could afford to be quite neutral, Amy heard a good many complaints on both sides. Some complained to her of Florie, that she was playing the hypocrite that she might gain the favor of the nuns; while others said that Milly had been elevated to a position she ought not to occupy, for she cared nothing for the mysteries of their holy religion, and laughed at everything sacred whenever she had the opportunity.

Amy felt almost desperate sometimes, seeing and hearing what she did, and yet knowing she was powerless to prevent it, even to speak a word to check either her sister or cousin in the divergent paths this Romish system had driven each of them into. At last she took comfort in the thought that when the new scholars arrived some friend would be with them, and Amy resolved to brave all the consequences of such a bold step, and appeal to them—privately if she had the opportunity, but publicly if no other chance presented itself. Sometimes she had thought of writing a letter and throwing it over the wall of the convent garden when they went to walk there as they did sometimes. But, after talking to Miss Carey about the inhabitants of the village, that she might discover, if possible, whether any one was likely to befriend her by posting the letter, she heard, to her dismay, that the village and some miles beyond were owned by this Jesuit community, and the people living close at hand were either devoted to their service, or such staunch Roman Catholics that any letter so found would at once be taken to the convent authorities.

Hearing this made Amy almost despair of any help reaching them, for although she had a half-formed plan of escape in her mind, the fact of everybody outside being in league with the convent authorities greatly lessened her chances of success, and so she began to cling to this last hope of seeing these strangers, as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Whether she would have carried out her project or not, or whether her courage would have failed at the last moment, is uncertain, but the nuns certainly judged that such a malcontent as Amy was better kept out of the way while these visitors were about, and so, before it was known among the girls that

the new-comers had arrived, Amy was sent for to the Spiritual Mother's room, and, without a word of explanation, the door was locked, and she was left to wonder what this extraordinary step might mean. She understood it only too well when she was allowed to return to the school-room an hour or two later, for Milly was chatting away with these strange girls, and Amy knew that the chance upon which she had rested so many hopes had gone by forever.

The new-comers were all about Milly's age, and former school-fellows with her and Augusta; and it was the account given by Augusta, and the favorable reports contained in Milly's letters since, that had induced their parents to send them.

Milly laughed a little bitterly when she heard this. "We have to write to order here, you know," she said.

"Write to order?" repeated one of her friends.

"Yes, you'll find out what that is; every thing is done by rule here, and if anybody dares to rebel—" Milly shrugged her shoulders suggestively.

"Are they very cruel to you?" asked one of the girls.

"Well, I should call it cruel; but there isn't a single thing you really can lay hold of as a complaint. They don't beat you, nor starve you, nor—but there, just you fall into their ways and take things easy, and times aint so bad here after all."

"And you really do learn well?" asked one.

"O yes, if you only like to try. Music they teach splendidly—if, as I tell you, you don't offend them."

"O, very well, we'll try not to do that," laughed one. But they found it just as hard to conform to the rules at first as Milly had, and wondered how it could be that high-spirited, careless, easy-going Milly Curtis could be broken into such harness. But they were just as much astonished at the change that had already begun to make itself evident in her character. Before, she had been known as a remarkably outspoken, truthful girl—too outspoken, for some of her friends sometimes—but this facile way of talking had degenerated into deception now, for if a lay sister came near when they were talking about a prohibited subject, she could in a moment say something quite different from that under discussion, and then appeal to the sister for a confirmation of what she was saying, or ask some question about it in a way that quite bewildered those unaccustomed to this double dealing.

Milly heartily enjoyed the mystification of her newly arrived friends over this recent accomplishment, and when one of them ventured to speak seriously about the sacrifice of truth it involved, she justified herself at once, exclaiming, "My dear, you will do the same thing in three months. We are all adepts at it; in fact, we could not live at all without doing it."

"O Milly! I cannot think all these girls are so untruthful—deceitful I call it."

"Well, there's one girl, my cousin Amy, who won't conform to the ways here, as the rest of us do; but pray don't follow her example, for it makes my heart ache to see her. I couldn't endure the burden of two martyrs on my heart."

Of course, hearing that Amy was a cousin, they at once wanted to be introduced; but the nuns had resolved that this should not be. For Amy to receive open sympathy from these in her obstinate ways, would be to confirm her in them, and strengthen the resistance that these were sure to make at first to the rules and regulations of the place. So the lay sister on guard at once told them that Amy was in disgrace, when they were about to speak to her; but Florie was allowed to come and chat with them, and her cousin, too.

"What is the matter with Amy? Sister Ann says she is in disgrace," whispered Florie.

"Well, you don't believe it, do you? Why, Florie, you must be a goose if you believe every excuse the sisters make about different things. Poor, dear Amy! She is the best girl in the school; she keeps their hateful rules most conscientiously, and wouldn't tell a fib for anything, and yet they make her miserable."

"She makes herself miserable," said Florie, "and is envious, I believe, because we are not."

"That is one of Esther Gladding's tales. Florie, if you were not the greatest goose that ever existed without feathers you never

would prefer that mean, cringing, artful girl to your sister Amy."

"Milly, how can you say such things about Miss Gladding!" exclaimed Florie loftily.

"Because I know they are true. The Raven comes the same game with me sometimes, but it won't do. I can see through all their mean little tricks, and don't mean to be taken in by any of them."

"For shame, Milly! it is because you are so very untruthful yourself that you think others are deceitful too," and Florie walked back to her dear friend and room-mate, who had gained such an ascendancy over her mind.

There would have to be another division among the girls now, to provide the three new-comers with suitable room-mates, and Amy half hoped that she might be sent to Florie's room, or Florie to hers. She even ventured to speak to the Spiritual Mother and Sister Ursula about this, but she was told that the exchanges had already been arranged, and she found that Milly's companion, Miss Raven, had been directed to make herself agreeable to one, while two other Catholic girls went with the others.

Of course there was the same dissatisfaction and incipient rebellion at first, the same grumbling complaint made about the unreasonable rule of silence and the being separated from companions and friends; and for a few days and the first Sunday Amy had company in the corridor outside the chapel, and she began to hope that these new-comers would remain firm in their loyalty to their convictions of what was true in religion, for they loudly declared that they did not believe in prayers to the Virgin and saints, or in mass and confession.

But, alas for their consistency! Two hours standing broke down their courage, and Milly's account of the music and singing when they were allowed to meet in the afternoon scattered all their objections, and the following Sunday saw Amy again alone in the corridor.

Poor Amy! heart and courage were well-nigh failing her, for it seemed that God would never answer her prayers. She had formed the habit now, lacking all other opportunity, of engaging in silent prayer, walking or standing in perfect silence, as they often did. This had grown to be the habit of her life now, and no sooner was an occupation dropped, and her thoughts free, but they sprang, as with a bound of relief to meet her Father in heaven, and strength was sought and found, and patience given to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

"My grace is sufficient for thee," Amy proved again and again; but it was not for grace alone that she prayed, but for release from this house of bondage. Every week that passed did but rivet the chains of Romanism more tightly about her sister, while as to her cousin, the growing levity she displayed about anything sacred was scarcely less dangerous. Surely a way of escape would be opened for them before the end of their year—surely God would hear and answer her prayers, and enable her to send a word of warning to the friends of Augusta Crane not to trust their only son to the guidance and teaching of these Jesuit fathers.

Poor Augusta was looking very unhappy herself now. Amy had seen her several times since she had overheard the conversation in the Spiritual Mother's room, and, looking at her closely, she could see that a troubled, anxious look had taken the place of the calm self-satisfaction that usually shone in her face; and possessing, as she did, the secret clue to this, she pitied and prayed for her very often—prayed that God would enlighten her mind with his truth, and save her brother from being exposed to the danger so many found it impossible to resist.

But, of course, all this was a secret Amy kept securely locked in her own breast. What she had overheard in the Spiritual Mother's room was a dangerous secret, she knew, and not even to Milly would she whisper a syllable of it. She often wished she had not heard it herself, for it had filled her with a vague terror of the knowledge and power of the sisterhood, which she feared they would use, if they could, with little regard to right or wrong; for this was the doctrine constantly instilled into them: that right was to obey the commands of the Church given by the voice of her appointed priests and ministers, in all things; and wrong was to disobey these commands—to prefer the voice of conscience, or the word of God,