

HOME LIFE.

A whole month has gone, boys and girls, since we have had a talk together. Our last talk was about working for God. What shall it be upon this time? Suppose we take home life this month, and see what we can find to say about it.

In the first place, can any one of you tell us what a home is? "The place where we live," you all answer. That is true; but do you live there alone? "No, no! our parents live there, and our brothers and sisters." Ah, now you have answered our question. No place could be home to us where we had to live by ourselves. It is living with those that belong to us that makes our home. Now there are different sorts of homes. Some are happy, and some are unhappy. We have seen both kinds, and we have made up our minds that the happiness of a home does not depend so much upon great things as upon little things. Great things only happen once in a while. Little things are happening all the time, and everybody feels them. If they are pleasant things, they are like the little sunbeams that brighten all they touch. If they are unpleasant, they are like mosquitoes that carry poison in their stings, and vex and irritate wherever they go. We will talk only about the sunbeams, for every house that has got them has very few mosquitoes. We know three of them that no home can be happy without. The first we shall call Unselfishness; the second, Cheerfulness; the third, Consideration.

The little sunbeam Unselfishness is one of the most precious we can find anywhere. Every one loves to live with the boy or girl who possesses it. If a message is to be sent in a hurry, the cry always is, "Where is Tom? He will take it." No matter whether Tom is reading, or playing croquet, down goes the book, away goes the mallet, and Tom is ready for the errand, glad to do anything he can to help along. If baby wants to be amused, and mamma is busy, Susie is called to her relief, for she, too, is one who never seems to think of herself, and it is a pleasure to ask her to do anything. She does not say, "Yes, mamma, in a minute, but just wait till I finish this chapter." No; Susie lets her book wait, not her mother. Her happiness is to make others happy, and as there is always plenty of chances to do that, Susie is one of the happiest girls we know.



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The little sunbeam Cheerfulness has a great deal to do in making a home pleasant. Everybody it touches carries sunshine around, even on gloomy days. How we all like to have Harry come home from school! He has always something pleasant to tell us. If things have gone wrong, he is ready to make the best of them. If there is any good news, he is always the one to bring it. If there is any bad news, he is the best person to hear it from, for he always looks on the bright side. And there is Alice, too. She is one of those to whom children go with their troubles, for she always seems to make out that things are not so bad after all, and her bright, cheery voice carries a host of comfort with it.

The last little sunbeam we shall talk about to day is Consideration. Frank is a boy who possesses this sunbeam. How thoughtful he is! He comes home from school on a rainy day, and off go his overshoes on the door step, lest he should bring mud into the carefully swept hall. His younger sister has broken her doll's head, and is crying as if her heart would break. Instead of laughing at her, and calling her a foolish little thing, he says to himself, "This is just as hard for her to bear as it would be for me if my new knife had been lost." So he sets to work to comfort her as best he can. His sister Fannie also carries about with her this sunbeam, and you would be surprised to find how much these children do, in consequence, toward making their home a happy one. Their sunbeam keeps them from annoying those with whom they live by unkind words and thoughtless acts, and old and young are always glad of their company.

Now, girls and boys, treasure up the sunbeams, if you want to be a comfort to all around you. To be sure, some of you, during the greater part of the year, do not live at home, but are away at boarding-school. But you can make that your home while you are there, and we know of no boarding-school that will not be the better and happier for the three little sunbeams, Unselfishness, Cheerfulness, and Consideration.

A BRAVE CONGO BOY.

There was never a more touching story of filial devotion than that told by a Congo chief, Essalaka, to Captain Coquilhot:

"You know the big island near my town," he said. "Well, yesterday, soon after the sun came up, one of my women and her little boy started for the island in a canoe. The boy is about twelve years old. He says that, while his mother was paddling she saw something in the water, and leaped out to look at it. Then he saw a crocodile seize his mother and drag her out of the canoe. Then the crocodile and the woman sank out of sight."

"The paddle was lying in the canoe. The boy picked it up to paddle back to the village. Then he thought, 'O if I could only scare the crocodile and get my mother back!' He could tell by the moving water where the crocodile was. He was

swimming just under the surface toward the island. Then the boy followed the crocodile just as fast as he could paddle. Very soon the crocodile reached the island and went to land. He laid the woman's body on the ground. Then he went back into the river and swam away. You know why he did this? He wanted his mate, and started out to find her.

"Then the little boy paddled fast to where his mother was lying. He jumped out of the boat and ran to her. There was a big wound in her breast. Her eyes were shut. He felt sure she was dead. He is strong but he could not lift her. He dragged her body to the canoe. He knew the crocodile might come back any minute and kill him too. He used all his strength. Little by little he got his mother's body into the canoe. Then he pushed away from the shore and started home.

"We had not seen the boy and his mother at all. Suddenly we heard shouting on the river and we saw the boy paddling as hard as he could. Every two or three strokes he would look behind him. Then we saw a crocodile swimming fast toward the canoe. If he reached it, you know

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