



The Family Circle.

A MOTHER'S DIARY

Morning ' Baby on the floor, Making for the fender. Sunlight seems to make it sneeze. Baby "on a bender?" All the spoons upset and gone, Chairs driven into file, Harness strings all strung across, Ought to make one smile, Apron clean, curls smooth, eyes blue (How these charms will dwindle!) For I rather think, don't you? Baby "is a swindle."

That night the ten dollars were ever before me. The last thing I remember, before falling asleep, was thinking of the ten dollars, I deposited in the bank. In the morning, when I had breakfast, I had the whole affair before my mother, and asked her counsel. "Give up the money, of course." "But you see, mother, I am afraid it would offend Jackson, he seems so much to wish me to hush it up." "Never mind Jackson, do what is right, and I am sure it will be better for you in the end. Tell Mr. Elliot"—the head partner—"how it is, and I am certain he won't be angry."

Ten minutes went by, but Jackson did not return. "Watson," said Mr. Elliot, "will you go and say that I shall be pleased if Mr. Jackson will come here immediately?" I went, but could not find him. "Osborne," I asked of a porter, "have you seen Mr. Jackson?" "Yes, sir; he went out about ten minutes ago." "Went out?" "Yes, sir; he came down stairs looking very white, and, taking his hat, he said he felt rather ill, and would get a little air." I went back and told Mr. Elliot. "Oh!" all he uttered, and then turning on his heel he motioned for us to follow. He first went to Osborne, who repeated his story again, and then he crossed to Jackson's desk, which was locked. A smith was sent for, and the lock forced. "Mr. Watson," said Mr. Elliot, taking out Jackson's books, "he had never called me Mr. Watson before,—" will you come with me to my private room? I shall want you for a few minutes."

"Stop a minute, dear. It would not be stories, or anything very interesting to you. She loves to hear old sermons, and the person who reads to her now finds them very dry. If, however, you undertake the task, you must do your very best, and she will pay you one dollar a week." Maggie agreed. She knew better than Miss Bertie did how far toward the rent that dollar a week would go. The rent was the great anxiety with Maggie's mother. That must be met, though they had scanty food and little fire. Minta, meanwhile, waited till her mother came home. She was the mother-girl. To her surprise, her mother had heard of something she could do. "It is boy's work, dear, but you are very strong, and the money will be a help. Mrs. Brown goes to church every day to practice on the organ, and she will give you or anybody ten cents an hour for acting as a singer. I told her I thought one of my little girls would oblige her."

THAT TEN DOLLARS

It was odd, very odd, reckon it up this way or that way, or in whatever way I might, the result was just the same—I had ten dollars more than I could account for. I went over the whole quarter's receipts again, to see if something had not been omitted, but everything was quite right. "Ha! what's this?" It looks like a scratching out, and yet it can't be, for I never use a penknife. So I held the leaf up to the light, and scanned it closely, and then, turning it over, scrutinized it again. "It certainly does look very much like an erasure, but no, 'tis only a little roughness on the surface of the paper." I was completely puzzled. It was quite possible for me to have too little, but to have ten dollars too much—I could not understand that at all. "Well," I said to myself, "it's better, at my rate, than having ten dollars too little." Still, the idea of there being a mistake somehow here made me feel very uncomfortable. I had been busy preparing my accounts in order to present them to my employers in the morning, for the morrow was a quarter day, and I knew that in nothing could a clerk offend so much as by being wrong in his balance. So I thought a little, and then determined to consult Jackson, our managing clerk. I was young at the time—not more than twenty, and, having been in the establishment only a few months, I knew but little of his character. He was exceedingly attentive to business, but there were some vague floating rumors going the round of the place, which accredited him with anything but a steady life. But he had always been very civil, and even kind, to me, and so, in my dilemma, I sought his advice. He went over my accounts with me, but could detect nothing wrong. "Well, Watson," he said, "you are on the right side now, and if you take my advice, you will get there. Just pocket the money, and say nothing about it."

"Let me see. I think Jackson, he had better begin to-morrow." "Yes, sir; it will be most convenient." "You hear, Watson? I believe there's nothing more. Good morning!" There was joy in our house that night, and on the morrow I went forth with a light heart to take possession of Holloway's stool. And now, dear reader, just take a jump over the next three years. Jackson was still in his place, but I had risen step by step, until I occupied a post inferior only to that held by himself. The mystery attached to my ten dollars had never been unravelled, and they still reposed peacefully in my safe. Jackson and I got on very well together, but there was one thing which I could not understand. For a few nights before quarter-day, Jackson always, under some pretence or other, took the books home with him, but as I did not consider it my place to interfere, I said nothing. It was the quarter day at the end of the three years of which I have spoken, and I was assisting Mr. Elliot in examining the account of one of the junior clerks, whose ledger exhibited a glaring deficiency of one hundred and fifty dollars. The youth was not the brightest in the world, and for a time he seemed stunned. But he was sure it must be some mistake of mine, his cash was all right three days ago; and he took the book to see for himself. The result was the same—deficit, one hundred and fifty dollars. Again he went over it, and I could see the big drops of sweat roll down his face as he again came to the same horrible conclusion—deficit, one hundred and fifty dollars. A third time he essayed to reconcile the difference, but suddenly stopping short, he turned to Mr. Elliot, and cried: "These are not my figures, sir." "Then whose are they?" "I don't know, sir, they are not mine." "Look, sir, something has been scratched out here." "Umph! So there has. Has the ledger ever been out of your care?" "No, sir—that is, yes—twice." "When?" "Last night and the night before." "Who had it?" "Mr. Jackson." "Then call Mr. Jackson up here." He came. "Mr. Jackson," said Mr. Elliot, "there's an error in Brown's account; something appears to have been scratched out, and as I understand you have had his ledger the last two nights, I thought perhaps you could explain it." Jackson turned deathly pale, and, bending down to hide the ghastly hue of his countenance, he pretended to examine the figures. Yes, there had been an erasure, but he could not explain it. He had a private memorandum in his desk, he would fetch it.

HOW LITTLE JOE HELPE' ALONG.

BY MARGARET E. BANGOR. It was the morning of a raw cold day late in the fall. Gusts of wind blew fiercely out of doors, and dashes of rain came spitefully against the windows. It was the sort of day when people draw their wraps close around them, and walk fast to keep warm. Maggie, Minta, and May were holding a council of three. Things were dark inside as well as out. Maggie had washed the dishes, Minta had made the beds, and May had swept the floor, and there was nothing more to do. "We can't scrub, for there's no soap; and we can't cook dinner, for there's nothing to cook," said Maggie sadly. "Is there no more on that ham-bone?" asked Minta. "Not another scrap, nor a single potato left in the bin. I know mother paid her last cent to the baker this morning, and even if she gets her money for those cents, she will have to save it all for the rent. I don't know what is to become of us," said Minta. "I mean to help along," cried cheery little May. "I'm going over the way to ask the lady who lives in the big house if she won't hire me to take care of the baby and run on errands. Her girl has gone away. I saw her march off an hour ago, with her clothes done up in a bundle, and Mrs. Earle hasn't had time to find a new one yet." "May Marble," said Maggie, "do you suppose mother will consent to let you be a servant?" "I see that poor mother has to work as hard as a servant herself," said May, "and I do not think she will be angry at my trying to do honest work. It is not worth while to be proud when we are all like old Mother Hubbard, who went to the cupboard to get the poor dog a bone—and when she got there the cupboard was bare, and so the poor dog had none." May made a little courtesy, and went gaily across the street. Mrs. Earle was in trouble, Bridget had suddenly left. The baby-boy needed constant watching, and the house was in disorder. She gladly welcomed her little neighbor, and promised to give her twenty-five cents a day till she found a servant. May proved so handy and helpful that Mrs. Earle kept her for many weeks, and sent numerous presents of food and clothing to her mother and sisters. Each night when she came home to sleep, she brought with her some little token of regard or goodwill. Maggie and Minta, when May had gone, began to cast about and consider what they could do to help. They were only little girls, and heretofore their mother alone had provided for all. Maggie resolved to go and ask her teacher if she knew of anything which a child could do to earn money. Miss Bertie had often been pleased with Maggie's clear sweet voice, and distinct way of pronouncing her words in Sunday-school. She was pleased to see that the little girl really desired to assist her dear ones in this strait, so she put on her thinking-cap, and presently she said, "Maggie would you mind reading for an hour every day to a blind lady?" "Oh, I should love to!" said Maggie with enthusiasm.

BOB'S CONSCIENCE.

BY ALBEO COLLINGWOOD. In a corner in the meadow-side farm, near the barns and stable yards, stood an old hay-rick. It had long ago fallen into disuse, but owing to its antiquity it had been left standing. The cows and the chickens were the only ones who enjoyed it now, the former often standing under its cover on warm summer days when the sun grew too hot to stay in the open field, and the cocks used it as the fittest place to perch before sunrise and crow their good morning to the "lay-a-bods" at home. There was not much beauty in it and it was of no real use, but it often afforded Bob King some pleasure in playing hide-and-seek with the other boys and sliding down its thatched roof. Bob often thought what a glorious sight it would be to see such a tumble-down thing burn up. "My!" he exclaimed one day, confidentially to Tom Long, "wouldn't she blaze? I tell you what, Tom, she'd make a regular Fourth of July fire-cracker." Tom of course agreed with Bob and wished Bob would carry out his plan and not talk so much about it. Bob felt in his heart it would not be right to burn up what did not belong to him—something told him he would get into trouble if he did, but then he could not help thinking what fun it would be to build a fire under and watch it burn. Tom Long too was always teasing him about his cowardly behavior, and