



The Family Circle.

THE FEET THAT NEVER STRAY.

BY MARY E. C. WYETH.

As I mused in the city of the dead,
One golden summer day,
And paused where the gleaming marble shone
In its lustre fair, o'er some favored one
Of earth's loved, and called away;
By the rustic pale, and the lowly cross,
By the simple tablet stained with moss
That had edged it where it lay,
With a sudden sorrow I traced a name
On a broken shaft. Ah, what memories came
To shadow the sun-bright day!
And I bowed my head, with the silent dead,
And wept—I could not pray.

Ah! life so fleet, that thy gifts so sweet
Should be lightly thrown away,
Thy teachings spurned with a scoffing frown,
And thy pleasant sun into night go down
Ere yet 'tis the close of day.
I turned where the tender grasses wave
In quiet peace o'er a baby's grave,
And low in the grass there lay
A little cross. How my heart was stirred
By the thankful trust of the graven word
I read from its page that day,
"The little feet in the golden street
Can never go astray."

O little feet in the golden street,
Not for you I wept that day,
Though my tears fell fast in the waving grass
That grew above you; alas! alas!
For griefs that we cannot stay,
I wept for the wayward wand'rer's fate,
Whose feet strayed far from the narrow gate,
Aye, strayed into sin's broad way.
God knoweth the torn heart's piteous need;
His ways are just, though some hearts must
bleed;
And I bless His name alway,
That the little feet in the golden street
Can never go astray.

—S. S. Times.

LEARNING HER VALUE.

"Just what I have been expecting for about seven years," said Miss Pauline Worthington, looking from an open letter in her hand with a frowning brow.

"Is not your letter from Herbert, Lina?" questioned Mrs. Worthington, a tiny, silver-haired old lady with a gentle expression.

"Yes, mother. Essie is very ill with low, nervous fever, and they want me to come and stay until she is better. The carriage will be sent at three o'clock, mother," and Miss Pauline's eyes snapped. "I think it is about time Bert's tyranny over that little martyr was ended. He's killing her."

"Lina! He is your brother."

"I can see his faults if he is."

"I never heard Essie complain."

"She never would. But look at her. Nine years ago when she was married she was a lively sunbeam, so bright and pretty. Now, pale, quiet and reserved, her voice is seldom heard, her smile seldom seen. A wintry shadow of her former summer brightness! Now she has broken down. You have seen her at home, but surely when she is here you see the change."

"Yes, dear, she has changed; but family cares—"

"Has Louie changed so? She has been twelve years married."

Mrs. Worthington was silent. Louie was her oldest child, and presided over the home in which her mother had been a crippled prisoner for fifteen years. She took all the household care and had five children, and yet Louie had gained in beauty, and certainly in cheerful happiness, since her marriage, even if the sport of girlhood was gone.

"Henry appreciates Louie!" said Lina; "there lies the difference between her happiness and Essie's dejection. If there is any domestic trouble Henry and Louie share it, while Herbert shifts it all upon Essie. He is an habitual fault-finder."

"Perhaps, dear, Essie is not as good a housekeeper as Ellie. Herbert may have cause to find fault."

"Once in ten times he may. I never saw a faultless house or housekeeper; but Essie and her house are the nearest approach to perfection I ever did see."

"You never spoke so before, Lina."

"Because Louie and I thought it better not to worry you with a trouble beyond your help. But firmly believing, as I do now, that Herbert is actually worrying his wife into the

grave, I intend to give him a lesson, that is if you can spare me to go?"

"You must go, dear. I shall get along nicely."

So when Herbert Worthington sent his carriage, Lina was quite ready for the fourteen miles drive to her brother's house. It was a house wherein no evil spirit of repining and fault-finding should have found an abode. Spacious, handsomely furnished, with well trained servants, and all the comforts wealth could furnish, it seemed a perfect paradise to visitors. But a very demon lurked there to poison all, and this demon Lina had come to exorcise.

For the first fortnight Essie took all her time and care, the gentle spirit hovering very near the portal of the eternal home. There was a babe, too, six months old, and its wants filled all the spare moments. Herbert snarled and fretted over domestic shortcomings, but Lina peremptorily forbade all mention of these in the sick room, having the doctor's authority for saying that the patient's very life depended upon quiet.

But when convalescence commenced, Lina sent Essie and the baby to visit old Mrs. Worthington, and took control of Herbert, the older children and the household, fully determined to show her brother how far he carried his absurd habit of fault-finding.

The first dinner saw the beginning of the lesson Lina meant to teach, by practically illustrating some of Herbert's absurdities. Herbert entered the dining-room, his handsome face disfigured by a frown.

"Soup," said Herbert, lifting the tureen cover; "perfect dish-water!"

"Susan," said Lina, sharply, before Herbert could lift the ladle, "take that tureen to the kitchen and tell Jane the soup is not fit to eat."

Susan promptly obeyed. Herbert looked rather ruefully at the vanishing dish. He was especially fond of soup, and the savory fumes of the delicious dish were tantalizing. Essie would have some gentle excuse—never whipped off his dinner in that way. All dinner time Lina kept up a ding-dong at Susan about that abominable soup, till Herbert heartily wished he had said nothing about it. But his imagination had detected a burnt flavor in the pudding, and before he could remonstrate, that dish had followed the soup.

"I'll get this house in some sort of order before I leave it," said Lina, emphatically.

"Before you leave it," said Herbert, sharply "Do you suppose you are a better housekeeper than Essie? Why, I have not a friend who does not envy me the exquisite order of my house and my dainty table."

"Herbert, you surprise me. Only yesterday I heard you say you did wish there was ever anything fit to eat on the table."

"One don't expect every word to be taken literally," said Herbert, rather sulkily. But an hour later, finding a streak of dust in the sitting-room, he declared emphatically "it was not fit for a pig to live in."

Coming into it the next morning he found the curtains torn down, the carpets taken up, the floor littered with pails, soap, and brushes, and Lina in a dismal dress, her hair tied up in a towel, directing two women, scrubbing vigorously.

"Good gracious, what are you doing?"

"Cleaning this room."

"Why, Essie had the whole house cleaned until it shone, in the fall, and didn't make half the muss," he added, contemptuously.

"Well," said Lina, slowly, "I thought this room a marvel of neatness myself, but when you said it was not fit for the pigs I supposed you wanted it cleaned."

"The room was well enough," was the curt reply. "For mercy's sake don't turn any more of the house upside down."

At breakfast, a tiny tear in Louie's apron caught her father's eye, and by his own angry statement she never had a decent stitch of clothes, and he did wish somebody would see to her."

Two days later a formidable dry goods bill was presented at the store, and Lina explained it to him in this wise:—

"You said, Herbert, that Louie hadn't a decent stitch, and you wished somebody would see to her, so I bought her a complete outfit. I could not see any fault myself, but of course I got more expensive articles, as you did not like those already provided. I am glad you called my attention to the poor, neglected child."

"Poor, neglected child!" echoed astonished Herbert. "Why, Lina, Essie fairly slaves herself out over those children. I am sure I never see any better dressed or neater."

Lina merely shrugged her shoulders. A month passed. Essie gained strength in the genial atmosphere surrounding Louie and her mother, while Lina ruled Herbert's home with a rod of iron. Herbert began to experience a sick longing for Essie's gentle presence. Lina took him so very literally in all he said, and yet he could not rebuke her for doing exactly what he openly wished.

A chair with a tiny spot of dirt being declared absolutely filthy, was upholstered and

varnished at a cost of eight dollars. A dozen new shirts, Essie's last labor of love, being said to "sit like meal bags," were bestowed upon the gardener, and a new set sent from a furnishing store. Harry's blocks were burned at the kitchen fire when Herbert, stepping upon one, said he "would not have such rubbish in the house." Every window was opened after a pettish declaration that the "room was as hot as an oven," and an hour later the stove was fired up to smothering heat because he declared it "cold enough to freeze a polar bear."

In short, with apparently an energetic attempt to correct all shortcomings and put the housekeeping upon a perfect basis, Lina in one month nearly doubled her brother's expenses, and drove him to the verge of distraction, keeping actual account of every complaint.

But Essie, well and strong again, was coming home. On the day of her expected arrival, Lina, with a solemn face, invited her brother into the sitting-room for a few moments of private conversation.

"Herbert," she said, very gravely, "I have a proposition to make to you. You are my only brother, and I need not tell you I love you very dearly. It has really grieved me to the heart to see how much there is to find fault with in your beautiful home."

Herbert twisted himself uneasily in his chair, but Lina continued:

"You know that mother is very dependent on me, Louie having the house and children to care for, but I think she would sacrifice her own comfort for yours. So, if you wish, Herbert, I will come here permanently, to keep things in order for you."

Here Lina was obliged to pause and strangle a laugh at Herbert's expression of utter horror and dismay.

"You are very kind," he faltered, the instincts of a gentleman battling with the strong desire to tell Lina she would certainly drive him to a lunatic asylum by six months more of her model house-keeping.

"Not at all. A man who has made an unfortunate marriage certainly needs all the aid and sympathy his family can give him."

The last straw was laid upon the camel's back. Herbert spoke hotly:

"You are entirely mistaken, Lina! I have not made an unfortunate marriage. If ever a man was blessed in a wife, I am that man."

"You amaze me, Herbert," Lina cried in well-feigned astonishment.

"I do not see why you should be surprised. Essie is gentle, loving, orderly, a model housekeeper, and a perfect home angel—God bless her."

"Herbert, is that true?"

"Certainly it is true."

"I cannot believe it," was the slow response.

"Cannot believe it! Why?"

"Because"—and Lina dwelt impressively upon every word—"during the nine years of your married life, though visiting here frequently, I never heard you speak one word of encouragement or praise to Essie. I never saw one look of approbation or appreciation of any effort she made for your comfort, upon your face. Continual fault-finding, constant blame, have changed her from a happy, winsome girl to a pale, care-worn woman. Even her last illness was but the unbroken despair of a heart crushed under a load of daily censure and constant striving for the approbation never given. And you tell me now she has never failed in her duty to you. There is a grave error somewhere."

The sadly earnest tone, the face of thoughtful gravity sent every word home to Herbert Worthington's heart. He spoke no word of self-defence as Lina slowly left the room. In the profound silence that followed, conscience reviewed the past, and he knew that his sister had only spoken the truth. The habit of fault-finding, meeting no resistance in Essie's gentleness, had gained in force, till all its monstrosity stood revealed in the experience of the past month.

In the days when Essie lay dangerously ill, there had been no self-reproach like this in her husband's sorrow. He had given his wife a fair home, an ample income, frequent social pleasures, many costly gifts, and loved her faithfully, while poisoning her whole life.

"God help me," he whispered, "to conquer this fault. Essie shall hear no more fault-finding, and if I see her drooping, I will send her to mother and have Lina back again."

Never had wife and mother warmer welcome than greeted Essie. The children were unchecked in their loudest demonstration of delight. But Lina had to rush into the hall to hide her merry eyes when Herbert kissing Essie, said:

"We must let mother have Lina now, dear; she has been very kind and worked hard for my comfort; but there is no home-fairy like my Essie."

The quick, glad look in his wife's soft eyes told Herbert that one step had been taken in the right direction. As the days glided by, and Essie found appreciation meeting every effort to add to home comfort, a word of praise for every little triumph of cookery or needle-

work, her pale face grew bright with untold happiness. Gradually the careworn expression was obliterated by one of sweet content, and Herbert found his own heart lightened by the cheerful voice, the sunny smile, the bright eyes of the Essie he had wooed years before.

And Lina, making a visit six months later, told her mother on her return:

"Herbert has learned his lesson by heart, mother. He appreciates Essie now at her value, and he lets her know it."—Home Companion.

NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES.

BY MRS. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Two weeks ago we related an interesting conversation with a young wife anxious to assist her husband in making his small salary support them in comfort and respectability, and mentioned our advice to try keeping house on a very small scale.

The little lady listened attentively, earnestly desiring to be a true "help meet" to her husband, but evidently half doubting that the ideas we were endeavoring to make simple and intelligible could be or ever had been put in practice. When at last we told her how to manage on "washing day," her astonishment was unbounded.

"Do my own washing! Why, I never did a bit of washing in my life!"

"Well, it is never too late to begin. You say you are strong and have excellent health. The prevalent idea that there is degradation in it, or that the washing for two persons must be hard work, is a great mistake. Many things that every good housekeeper must do are infinitely harder than washing."

"I have always put great reliance on your directions and receipts, because you tell us that you speak only of what you know and have tried your own self. But do not think me rude, dear madam, if I cannot help feeling that in advising me to attempt to keep house in one or two small rooms, and do my own work, washing included, you must be speaking theoretically, not practically. If in my circumstances, do please to tell me, could you, would you attempt to do yourself that which you have advised me to undertake?"

"My dear child, in this matter, as in many others, the advice is based on actual experience, and under far less favorable circumstances than you have any prospect of encountering. Our life has not been an easy one, and we sincerely hope it will never be too easy. Those who, in the common acceptance of that phrase, have an 'easy life' never fully develop into all that God gave them capacity to be. They are dwarfed. If not exactly indolent, they are never self-helpful, and bury half, and often more than half, of their talents in a napkin."

"As you seem sceptical, listen to the story how we began housekeeping: With a salary not half equal to your husband's, we were first settled far West. For six weeks we boarded, or rather were entertained by a parishioner. Then changes in their family rendered it necessary for us to decide on some more independent mode of living. Boarding was too expensive and would eat up all our small income. But how could we keep house on it?"

"You have sufficient to furnish one room, you say. We had nothing. We could not rent a whole house. That was far beyond our ability. At last we found two small rooms, but such rooms! They had been occupied by laboring men, without a woman's care, and were exceedingly dirty. But we knew what soap and water guided by a willing spirit could do to purify and freshen. Tobacco juice and smoke well dried in, require many pails of hot suds and renewed applications before they can be obliterated; and our landlord would not consent to paint. This work was very hard; but we did not scrub alone. The husband, with as willing hands and a much stronger arm, lightened the labors wonderfully, and made our first house-cleaning a time never to be forgotten."

"At last our little rooms were clean, and to furnish them was the next effort. A cook stove, a small square of cotton carpeting that just covered the middle of the floor in our 'best room,' an old bureau, a pair of candlesticks, half a dozen cups and saucers, and as many knives and forks, were given us. The husband's college study-table, chair, single bedstead, and a brass lamp were hunted up from the 'good-for-nothings' in the Seminary yard, well cleaned and polished, and sent down from the Seminary to our home. We found, among some rubbish in our back-yard thrown out to be burned, three shelves, the remnants of an old bookcase. These were cleaned, varnished, and screwed to the back of the study-table, and the top of the table covered with a piece of cloth, the remains of an old coat found also among the debris of college days. Now what country parson could ask for a more convenient, not to say elegant, study-table than this?"

"A very cheap table covered with an old shawl, half-a-dozen wood-seated chairs, a cheap bedstead, husk mattress and pillows, two sheets and a pair of pillow-cases—to be washed, ironed, aired and replaced every Monday—completed the furniture of what was to