

LITTLE FOLKS

Grandmother's End of the Ice Cream.

(By Annie Hamilton Donnell.)

Grandma dropped wearily into a chair. Her sweet face was full of the little tired lines that were nearly always there on Tuesdays. She held up one slender hand with the fingers spread.

'Churning's done—thumb,' she said, folding down the thumb, 'Ironing's done—first finger; beds are made—thimble finger; dishes washed—ring finger.'

Only the little finger was left, standing up in the wobbly, little-finger way of standing up.

'The little finger stands for dinner,' smiled tired Grandmother. 'That isn't done! Now when one has company, I wonder what one gets for dinner'—

There was a stir across the room. The 'company' with one accord scrambled to its feet and formed in line.

'Ice cream!' in chorus.

'O,' said tired Grandmother. Then she said, 'O,' again. She had not thought of ice cream! Dear, no, not ice cream! She lowered her spectacles from her pretty white hair to her nose and glanced up at the clock.

'It's after ten,' she said, 'It takes a good while sometimes to freeze the cream. I don't suppose the company would like it unfrozen? There's some nice soft custard out in the pan'—

The company made a wry face—three wry faces.

'That wouldn't be ice cream, Grandma,' pouted Olive.

'Nothing but just custard!' pouted Terence. Terence was Olive's twin and always did the things she did. The third 'company' was little Puss in Boots.

'I'd ruvver have I-scream a good dealer,' Puss said.

Tired Grandmother got up stiffly, a patient smile on her dear old face, then sat down again with a sudden twinge of rheumatism. Olive was afraid it meant no ice cream for dinner; and Olive was ice cream hungry. Weren't all three of the company ice cream hungry? Hadn't they talked about having it sure

when they went to spend the day with Grandma? Grandma always gave folks two saucersful—

'We s'posed we'd have it,' Olive said in an injured tone.

'Yes, we s'posed,' said Terry in exactly the same tone.

'Because we're company, that's why. We s'posed you'd give your company'—

'Ice cream,' smiled tired Grandmother. 'Well, dears, you shall have it, but you will have to wait till supper—it's too late to freeze it for dinner. Will supper do?'

'O, yes'm, thank you,' Olive said politely, and of course Terry said,

packed the ice around it, and turned — turned — turned. Something must be wrong. Why didn't the cream begin to stiffen? The tired old arms throbbed with pain. She counted one, two, three, four—she would not stop to rest till she got to a hundred. But she did stop at fifty. She got more ice and chopped it in the chopping tray—more salt and mixed it in. Then she turned again and counted. This time she counted twenty-five between rests. It was cooler out on the back porch under the vines, and she dragged the freezer and the kitchen rocking chair out there.



OLIVE, TERENCE AND PUSS

'O, yes'm,' politely, too. Supper was farther away than dinner, but it would do. And custard was pretty good for dessert. The company was not greedy—just ice cream hungry. Usually it was quite a thoughtful company and noticed the little tired lines in Grandmother's face, but not to-day. Grandmother got dinner and cleared it away. It seemed to her she grew tired and tired. It was lucky nap time was so near—dear, dear, she had forgotten the children's ice cream!

'If Father was only at home to chop the ice!' she sighed gently. Grandfather's being away made it so much harder—he always knew just how much salt to mix with the ice, and he always turned the crank of the big freezer.

Grandmother turned it alone to-day. She made the cream and

'Creak, creak, creak—one, two, three, four—creak, creak, five, six, seven. Still the handle went round just the same, and tired Grandmother knew the cream had not yet thickened.

The company was playing house-keep out in the grape arbor. It was pleasant and rustly out there, with the leaves everywhere whispering things to each other. Olive said it was beautiful spending the day at Grandmother's, wasn't it? And Terry said, wasn't it!

'And there's I-scream a-comin'!' chanted Puss-in-Boots.

'Goody!'

'I'm glad we asked for it, aren't you? Grandma might not have remembered our—our ice cream "tooth."'

'Teeth,' corrected Olive—'yours and mine and Pussy's. Yes, indeed, I'm glad we remembered!'