



The Family Circle.

[For the Messenger.]

'TIS ONLY FOR A TIME.

"There shall be no night there."

"Tis only for a time;
Our lives will yet be right.
And to our hearts appear
All beautiful and bright.

We need our broken lives;
We need this sacrifice,
To make our souls sublime,
And fit them for the skies.

But in the great beyond
Each one will find his goal,
And fully satisfy
The cravings of his soul.

True love will find its love;
Each talent find a friend
To help it on its way
Towards its highest end.

FRANCIS S. WILLISTON.

PHIL'S VALEDICTORY.

There was a hush of expectation in the assembly-room of the Belgrade high school. Late on the previous afternoon Mabel Bowen, who had gone back to the building after school for her questions in geometry, had peeped into the principal's office and seen the teachers "making out averages for dear life," as she told Fanny Day.

"And I just know they were making senior appointments, and they're going to be announced to-day," said Mabel.

So the word had been passed around in the morning. Scant attention was paid to the psalm and the hymn, though each senior tried his best to look as if he had not a thought of being appointed.

Then an exasperating thing happened. Mr. Castle had just said, "I will now read the list of those who have been appointed to take part in our Commencement exercises," when Mr. Wilson, the superintendent, came in and talked with Mr. Castle ten minutes.

"Didn't I tell you the names would be read out?" whispered Mabel. "Oh, if I'm appointed, I do hope they'll let me recite! I never can, could, might, would or should write an essay!"

"Sh!" said Fanny. "He's going to read. Just look how complacent Guy Fenton is! He knows he's sure to get first place. Don't you—"

"The students appointed," said Mr. Castle, "are as follows, in the order of their standings."

Then he hunted for the paper, and adjusted his glasses as deliberately as if he did not know that every senior heart in the room was beating like a trip-hammer.

"Philip Winters, Guy Fenton, Bertha Finley, Celia Peters, Mabel Bowen, Richard Hardy, Clifford Tracy, Fannie Day, Victor Lee and Archibald Hunter. These students are requested to meet Miss Stone in her room to-day at the close of the session."

Ten seniors tried not to look glad, and the other twenty tried not to look sorry; but everybody looked surprised, too. Guy Fenton not first! And of all the boys in the class to precede him, Phil Winters!

Every one knew that Guy was the best student in the senior class, and Phil was just an ordinary, faithful, humdrum fellow.

No one expected him to get an appointment at all. He to be first! How had it happened?

Guy Fenton's looks were unpleasantly suggestive of a thunder-cloud when he fully realized that his name was not first, and Phil himself looked hardly less troubled. Then the signal was given, and the classes went out. The busy boys and girls had to put off the discussion of this great event till recess.

At recess Guy Fenton had cleared away his thunder-cloud. He walked straight up to Phil Winters.

"Congratulations, old boy!" he said, holding out his hand. "I am thoroughly glad you've got it."

That gave everybody the cue about the valedictorian, for Guy was a leader if he

was conceited. And after every one had congratulated every one else, and all had met Miss Stone and been set at work, the Commencement appointments began to be among the accepted facts of the universe, and gave place to other subjects of discussion.

But there was the least bit of a thorn in Phil Winters's side that prevented him from taking the full degree of pleasure in his success. Phil was not conceited, but he enjoyed being at the head as much as Guy Fenton would have enjoyed the distinction.

"I can't see myself how it happened," Phil said to his mother that night. "Guy always got higher marks than I did."

"Is anything besides scholarship taken into account?" asked Mrs. Winters.

"Yes," answered Phil thoughtfully. "You know at the Friday morning exercises the teachers all mark, and Miss Stone makes an average of those marks, and that is counted, too. But even there Guy is ahead of me, though he broke down once. You see he was always working for the valedictory, and I never thought of anything beyond getting through creditably."

"There might have been an error in the making out of the averages," suggested his mother. Then she purposely said no more. She had been a teacher herself, and a good one, and she knew that her Phil was in brains an ordinary boy, and no more; but she had tried to train in him a vision clear to see the right, and a will strong to do it. If there had been a mistake, it was Phil's battle, and Phil must fight it.

Phil took the thought she had suggested to bed with him. The surmise that there had been a mistake was not entirely new to him, but he had refused to recognize it until his mother gave it shape.

"I do think it will be too awfully mean!" he told himself just before he dropped off to sleep. "I shouldn't have cared if I hadn't had it at all—but to give it up!"

"If it isn't honestly yours, you haven't had it at all," said something inside. But Phil would not listen, and went to sleep.

Next day he chose as the subject of his essay "The Scholar in Politics," and began to read a life of Gladstone. He worked on it for a week, and everything went wrong. He could not get interested in his lessons. Moreover, he felt cross and miserable, and his mother was so sober! What bothers honors were!

"Mother, do you think I ought not to take it?" he broke out one day at dinner.

There was no need to say what "it" was, though Commencement had not been mentioned between them since the day he had selected his subject.

"Certainly you should take it, if you are satisfied that it is yours," answered his mother, quietly. She knew the time had come when she must help her boy by leaving him to help himself.

But was he satisfied? He slept on that remark, and the next day he went to school early with a happier look on his face than had been there for a week.

"Miss Stone," he said, glad to find the English teacher alone in her room, "I can't feel satisfied about my appointment."

"Did you wish a higher grade?" asked Miss Stone, with her quizzical smile.

"No, ma'am," said literal Phil. "But I don't think ninety-eight can belong to me, because I've never stood as high as lots of the others. Couldn't you look it up again?"

"I don't think it is necessary," said Miss Stone, kindly. "The standings were all made out twice, and so many of us could hardly have made a serious mistake. I am glad to see you so conscientious, but I think the place is yours."

"Here is Mr. Castle," she went on, as the principal came into the room; "Phil is afraid there is some mistake about his having the valedictory; but I have been telling him how carefully the appointments were made out, and that he need not fear."

She looked enquiringly at the principal.

"Not at all," said Mr. Castle, heartily, "and we are all glad to see you come to the front, my lad. The grades were all down in black and white, and your ninety-eight is honestly earned. Don't trouble yourself any more about it. Miss Stone, can you give me the number of students in your classes for the quarterly report?"

Phil felt himself dismissed. He went through the day with a heart that was heavy and light by turns. But Phil's moral processes were sure if they were

slow. In the afternoon, having gone over the ground again and come back to his doubts, he was ready to return to the charge.

It was teachers' meeting day again. In the midst of their miscellaneous business he knocked at the office door, and entered the room in obedience to Mr. Castle's "Come in!"

The teachers looked amazed. It was a most unusual thing for a pupil to do Poor Phil, with cheeks red and eyes bright, blurted out his carefully combed statement without knowing exactly what he said.

"I don't think my average ought to be ninety-eight," he said, "and if you please, unless it's dead certain, I'd rather not be on at Commencement."

Mr. Castle looked impatient for an instant, and then smiled.

"Very well," he said, "as it is a matter of conscience we will verify the standing at once, and make it 'dead certain.' You may come into the office to-morrow morning before school to hear the result."

Phil turned a shade redder and left the room. He had not meant to use slang, but he did not feel much cast down at Mr. Castle's gibe.

"It feels so good not to have that bad taste in my mouth," he said to himself.

In the morning Mr. Castle announced that a mistake had been made in calculating the averages; that Guy Fenton, instead of Philip Winters, should have been declared valedictorian, and that Philip Winters did not belong to the first ten at all. Mary Lincoln's standing entitled her to the tenth place.

Phil was too much relieved to regret greatly the loss of his troublesome honor. If he had been sore over it, his mother's words would have healed the hurt. For she led him before his father's picture, and said, not very steadily:

"Father would be proud of you to-day, my boy. I felt sure you would come up to the best was in you. But I was anxious, too, for I know it was very hard. I think you will feel more and more that it was worth while, and that you have won something better than a school honor."

Phil said it was worth while, and that he was glad that he had done it. He didn't think much about it the rest of the year. Yet he was a human boy after all, and when Commencement came, it was a little bitter to see the boys and girls on the stage with their essays and their flowers.

When the valedictorian sat down in a tumult of applause, he had to struggle to make himself contented just to march upon the stage, and receive his diploma with the other boys and girls. But why wasn't the signal given?

Mr. Castle was beginning to speak. Had he forgotten the diplomas? Phil started as he heard his own name, and then listened as if he were in a dream.

"I think it is but just to state," Mr. Castle was saying, "that had it not been for the integrity of one of our boys, the programme presented to-day would have been slightly different."

The silence was breathless. Phil heard his heart beat violently. The principal went on.

"Philip Winters was first declared valedictorian, but believing that there had been a mistake in the figures, and that the honor was not fairly his, he insisted upon a reconsideration of the matter, which proved that his supposition was right. He was therefore dropped from the list of appointees. But I desire to make honorable mention of his name, and to thank him publicly for his conduct."

How the people cheered! Then some small boy that thought he knew how to do things called "Speech! Speech!" and the house took up the cry.

Vainly Mr. Castle tried to stop them; vainly Miss Hague played the march by which the class were to pass upon the stage for the diplomas. They could not even hear that she was playing. At last Mr. Castle, in despair, signalled Phil to rise and bow to the audience.

Phil did so: but the cheering and the cries of "Speech!" were doubled when he sat down again. Some wild fellows in the gallery were keeping it up, and affairs began to look serious. Mr. Castle stepped to Phil's seat.

"Rise in your place, my boy, and tell the people you thank them for their kindness," he said, hurriedly. "We shall have

almost a disturbance if the people do not get what they want."

Phil stood up, and the house grew still. "I thank you for your kindness," he said, bravely. "I didn't want to do it at all for a whole week, but afterward I was awfully glad I did."

Then he sat down and the people cheered again; and some one sent him a big basket of flowers. Then Miss Hague played the march again, and the members of the class all received their diplomas, tied up with the class colors, which were white and gold. Mr. Castle made remarks, and Mr. Wilson made remarks, and the trustees made remarks, and all went home. And so Phil had the valedictory after all.—*Isabella M. Andrews, in Youth's Companion.*

A TWENTY-FIVE CENT CHANCE.

One of the overland trains on the Union Pacific Railway was nearing Omaha. The passengers in one of the cars had gathered into little groups, and were passing the time by social chat. One of these groups was composed of a couple of tourists, a commercial traveller, and two cowboys, and, a little to one side, a member of the group, not taking part in the discussions, sat a minister, one of the hardy frontier type.

The commercial traveller, who was a sceptic, said: "Well, you can say what you please; I don't believe a single word about this future life and all that sort of stuff. Gentlemen, I'll tell you what I'd do; I would take twenty-five cents right now for all the chance of heaven I've got now or ever expect to have."

The minister took a nearer seat.

"My friend," said he, "be careful. You can't afford to make any rash offers."

"I meant just what I said," retorted the man of many words.

"I'll take you up," said the clergyman. "I've only one chance of heaven myself, and I'm sure I need as many as I can get. This will be the best investment I ever made. Here's your quarter, and here's my address," handing the traveller a card. "If you ever want to go back on this bargain, just drop me a line, and I will make it all right with you. I should certainly be glad to have you change your mind. You're making a bad bargain, but just as you say." And the minister got up and going leisurely to the other end of the car, took a drink of water.

Somehow or other, conversation lagged. The traveller looked down at the floor; the cowboys seemed to search in vain for something in their pockets, and the tourists turned their faces towards the window, but the vacant look in their eyes showed their thoughts were elsewhere. After a while the minister returned. The traveller was getting nervous.

"Well, parson," said he, "if you are willing, we will call that trade off. Here's your quarter. I don't want it. I'm thinking I'll need that chance myself. The Lord knows I'm bad enough. It's the only chance I've got, and I've decided to make the best use of it I know how."

The minister put the quarter in his pocket, shook hands heartily with the traveller and the train whistled for Omaha. Nothing more was said; and the porter of the car, as he watched them get off the train, wondered why that group of six, who had been so jovial clear through, had such a serious look on their faces. Certain it was that their faces reflected their thoughts.—*Western Christian Advocate.*

THE MOST DANGEROUS DRINK.

Beer is supposed by some to be an innocent and wholesome beverage; and it was once confidently claimed that if more beer were used there would be less drunkenness. This claim, however, can scarcely be maintained with seriousness hereafter. The consumption of beer in the United States has become enormous; but drunkenness has not been banished or diminished. The *Scientific American* says concerning the beer-drinker: "Compared with inebriates who use different kinds of alcohol, he is more incurable and more generally diseased. It is our observation that beer-drinking in this country produces the very lowest kind of inebriety, closely allied to criminal insanity. The most dangerous class of ruffians in our large cities are beer-drinkers."