

### The Small Family.

"Hush, baby, Hush!" whispered a young girl, looking mother, as, perhaps for the tenth time she left the bread she was making, and crossing the room to touch with her foot the rocker of a wicker cradle, whose tiny occupant lay nestling and twisting wearily, fighting the air with both chubby fists, as though bidding defiance to further sleep or quiet.

A few minutes' hurried rocking, and the nestling ceased, as the little hands fell unconsciously on the snowy blanket—and the diligent little housekeeper hurried back to her bread again.

"Mercy on me—a quarter to twelve already!" she said raising her eyes to the clock; "and how impatient Louis will be when he finds he must wait for dinner—O, dear!" and the pretty woman flushed and hurried by the anticipation of her husband's fretfulness, hurried about with all possible expedition.

The bread was at last in the oven—the various culinary enterprises put in operation, and Mrs. Floyd, was just spreading the cloth on the dinner-table, when the baby cried again, and the little foot hurried to the rocker again as usual. Before the child was quieted, Mr. Floyd came in.

"Why, Annie," he said, hastily, "where's dinner? O, dear, you haven't any regularity now-a-days. You're always rocking that cradle, and never get any thing done in time. I wonder what you'd do if you had ten in a family, as your stepmother has?"

Mrs. Floyd felt the tears trying to come but she choked them down, and said quietly—

"Don't be impatient, Louis; I tried to have dinner in time, but the baby has been troublesome and wakeful all the morning; I've had to carry him in my arms while I was at work half the forenoon. Besides, I'm not very strong, and I've had a distressing headache all day."

"If you are not able to do your work you should have kept Matty longer; she was willing to stay."

"Yes, I knew; but you said yourself that she wasted more than her wages, and that everything about the house was going to wreck and ruin under her administration. Besides she knew very little about doing housework as it should be done."

"O, Annie, you're too particular and old-maidish by a great deal."

"Am I? Who came to me with such a woeful complaint because Matty wasn't old-maidish enough about her cookery? who wouldn't drink a glass of water because he saw the print of her fingers on the glass? who looked so dismal because the sugar bowl wasn't in its old place on the table, and his napkin happened to be on the wrong side of the table?"

"Well," laughed Louis, "she certainly didn't display much taste in arranging the table, but there are other things she could do to help you."

"Nothing more than a child ten years old would do. She couldn't even make tea-biscuits without coming to know how many to make. She never did a baking or ironed your linen once while she was here; to the latter a clothes-basket half full of 'starched things,' can testify, even now, for I have not found time to iron them yet since she went away."

"She was a poor affair, I grant you; but she could at least have taken care of little Lou—but by tending don't require much talent, I believe."

"Indeed but it does, though, and such talents as comparatively few possess. Matty said she didn't like babies, and she was never willing to take Lou in her arms; and if I insisted upon it, she would be quite as like to lift him by one arm as any way; I never felt safe to leave him with her a moment."

"Well, I don't know; but it seems to me she would have been better than nothing. Any how, I don't like being obliged to wait a quarter of an hour for dinner."

The young wife sighed at the implied reproof, and hurried around to complete her arrangements—while the thoughtless husband seated himself by the window, and drawing some newspapers from his pocket, read comfortably until she invited him to the table.

The dinner-hour passed pleasantly, for Mr. Floyd, though sometimes irritable, was at heart very fond of his pretty little wife, and vastly proud of his beautiful boy. His wife had hitherto been, as he said, "the most punctual little creature in the world," but since "little Lou" had claimed so much of her time and attention, she found it impossible to adhere to her former rules.

She had "a small family," true—and many seem to consider this but another term for ease and leisure; but many a young wife, with only a husband and one child to care for, has found to the contrary. The same routine of house-work must be gone through with for a family of three as for double that number—and if a part of it is neglected, the omission is quite as sensibly felt. O, a woman with "only a husband and a baby," is to be pitied! If the door-bell rings she must answer it, no matter whether she is washing dishes, kneading bread, or engaged in any other domestic duty—she must go almost always with the baby in her arms. She has no one to take it for her from morning till night; every little touch must be with her own hand.

Mr. Floyd rose from the table, kissed the boy sleeping so comfortably in the cradle; said that he was a funny little plaything, and didn't appear to make much trouble after all; took his hat and was leaving the room, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he drew a roll of papers from his pocket, saying:

"Annie, here are some important papers which I wish you would copy this afternoon, they must be accurately done, and I don't like to trust them to that new clerk; he is a blundering fellow at best, and I have as much as I can do this afternoon. It is positively necessary that these be done as soon as possible; can't you attend to them at once and send them to the office by a boy?—There are half a dozen playing out before the gate."

"I'm afraid I cannot well afford time, Louis."

"Nonsense! you write so rapidly, you know.—And here—I forgot to mention that I caught my coat on the gate latch and tore the lining shockingly; hand me another from the wardrobe, please, and I wish you'd mend this so I can have it again at tea-time. Here it is—good-bye."

And tossing the disabled garment on a chair, he closed the door behind him, but opened it again the next minute to say—

"O, Annie get up something nice for tea wont you? Remember you've given toast twice within a week already. Seems to me you don't have much variety these days, eh, Annie?" And he laughed as he closed the gate.

Poor Annie! she felt half sick and quite discouraged, and longed to lie down and rest; there was "no release from that war." So she hastily cleared the table and commenced her copying—The task was long and difficult. It was after one o'clock that her husband left the house, and by the most rapid exertions she could make, the papers were not finished till half-past two. She sent them to the office as directed, and then, as the baby was not crying, she thought it would be her best opportunity to mend the unfortunate coat. So she commenced it, and had hardly taken half a dozen stitches, when little Lou, out of all patience, began to scream most musically. She took him up, held him a few minutes, and leaning him against the pillow in such a position that he could see her face, she resumed her mending and sewed diligently for nearly an hour—the baby crying half the time in spite of her nods and smiles.

It was finished at last, and she turned her attention to the neglected baby. It was now half-past three—and she was revolving in her mind as to the best method of washing the dishes with him in her arms, when the door bell rung.

The new comers were some lady acquaintances who had called "to see the darling boy," and after handling it till it was sufficiently cross and fretful, and wasting a full half hour of the poor woman's time, they took their leave.

"Half after four!" she exclaimed on re-entering the kitchen, "O dear—where has the afternoon gone? And now supper ought to be on the table by five, and here's the fire all out and this child in my arms."

She consoled him once more to the cradle where he lay kicking and crying after the most approved fashion, until she had kindled the fire and washed the dishes. This consumed about fifteen minutes—and then set about preparing some little delicacy to tempt her husband's fastidious appetite.

The table was drawn into the center of the floor when he arrived—and all wives know that men never think there is anything done toward getting a meal until the table is set.

"O, Annie!" he exclaimed, as he threw himself into a chair, "you are getting perfectly incorrigible, five o'clock and not a sign of supper. One would think the work of so small a family might be done in better season, and with some regard to punctuality. What would you do if you had seven children, as your step-mother has? Her meals are always ready in time."

This "step-mother" allusion was a favorite hobby with Mr. Floyd, and Annie had heard it until she was tired of it. Her cheek reddened as she replied:

"What would I do? I'll tell you, Louis—I'd do as she does, have two or three girls among the seven, who could do half the work and all the running. She don't answer the door-bell, nor make a bed, from one week's end to another; and her mother takes entire charge of the mending, so she is free from that tax on her time. And these same seven children on which you and she are always harping as such a load on her shoulders, making so much work, and taking so much time, are just what save her steps, and by doing a thousand little trifling offices, small in themselves but still taking time, enables her to have her meals always ready in time. Even the little ones can close a door, bring her spool or thimble, or gather a basket of chips—and that's more than I have done for me from morning till night."

"But then, Annie, just think of the cooking she has to do; you say it is the worst task you have to do, particularly in the summer; and you know she always does the cooking herself."

"Yes, I understand all about that. I've lived in the family years enough to know, and you'll look surprised when I tell you that for the real labor, I'd as soon do the cooking for her family as my own. She has to prepare a quantity of food to be sure; but she has none of this little vexing and fussing to 'get up something nice,' as you tell me for every meal."

Her husband wouldn't say a word if she had toast for tea every night in the week. She never troubles herself to prepare the hundred little delicacies which demand my time and patience.—She prepares a quantity of wholesome food, and it lasts till it is gone—that is, if it isn't disposed of at the first meal, it is placed on the table at the succeeding one. But you know you never want to see anything on the table but once—even if it is something which is just as nice as though newly prepared.

You think yourself undone if you don't have warm bread at every meal; her husband don't see any for days together. All these things may be trifles, Louis, but taken together they may make all the difference in the world."

The young husband looked serious as he raised the baby from the pillow and began playing with him, while Annie was clearing away the tea things. Just as she had nearly finished, the "step mother" whom Mr. Floyd had so often quoted, came in by the garden door. She was a little, sharp-featured, observing woman, who prided herself on what she called "taking advantage of her work," having it always done in time, albeit, she had the largest family in the neighborhood.

"Good evening, Annie," she said, as her lynx-eyes took in the fact that Louis was tending the baby while his wife washed the dishes. "Seems

to me Louis is getting domestic; wonder what my husband would say if I should ask him to stay in the house and take care of the baby?"

"He would probably tell you to call on one of the girls," said Annie, with a quiet smile.

Not having gained any advantage in this, the lady changed the conversation.

"It has been a charming day; why didn't you come in with little Lou?"

"I have been busy all day," answered Annie; "Lou has been very troublesome, and I had to neglect him sadly. He has cried half the time."

"I don't see how you keep busy all day with what little house work you have to do," said the pattern lady, who always delighted in such convicting reproofs of Annie's household management. "I should think you could go out just when you please."

"Nevertheless, I cannot," answered Annie, "and I am not slow, either. It is Friday evening, and I have been busy at work ever since Monday morning. I have risen in good season in the morning, worked until late at night, haven't made a single call, and haven't opened a book or newspaper, and my week's ironing isn't done yet."

"Mine was done in the middle of the week," said the pattern.

"Did you do it?" asked Annie.

"Oh, no, Mary always does the ironing—I have enough else to do."

"And your mother has done the mending, and Nell the house cleaning, and Kate the chamber work, and Fanny has washed the dishes, as usual," continued Annie.

"Yes," replied the lady, "the girls are as capable of doing such things as any one—though of course the care all falls on me."

"Well, mother," says Annie, a little mischievously, as she took the baby, and commenced preparing for bed, "I don't see that you have worked much harder this week than I have."

"Mercy on us! what? where you have three to care for and I ten? How unreasonable, Annie!"

"Well," said Annie, "you and I always had different ideas about this matter, and I suppose we shall never entirely agree upon it. But you have never known what it is to get along with a fretful baby, and no one to lift a finger to help you; for when you commenced housekeeping you had a step-daughter twelve years old; besides having your mother with you, as she has been all the time since. But we'll say no more about it. Just lift this baby and see how much he has grown within a week."

After chatting sociably for a little while, the lady took her leave. As she passed through the little back kitchen, Annie's basket of yet unsmoothed clothes caught her eye; and she passed through the garden, saying comfortably to herself:

"If I had only my husband and one child to take care of, and couldn't get my ironing done before Saturday, I'd drown myself."

The husband sat silent a minute after she had gone, and then kindly said:

"Annie, I have been unreasonable with you—for I begin to see that people with large families don't always work the hardest, and that there really is something to do, even in a small family."

**THE MONSTER WROUGHT IRON GUN.**—The great gun is a great fact. In our last we described the conveyance of this gigantic piece of ordnance from the forge of the Mersey Steel and Iron Company to the shore at Hightown, and intimated the course of experiments which would be made during the week to test its capabilities. On Monday last the ponderous mass was removed by means of rollers from on board the lump, and Tuesday was occupied in placing it in the position which was deemed the most available for experiments in firing.

It was pointed in a northerly direction, towards a ridge of sand which juts into the sea a little beyond the Formby landmark. On Wednesday the first regular trial took place, in the presence of the Messrs. Horsfall, Admiral Grenfell, (Brazilian consul) Captains Middleton and Adams, of the Royal Artillery, and several other military and scientific gentlemen. The practical superintendence of the experiments was under the direction of Mr. Clay, manager of the Mersey Works, and Lieutenants Sothern and Weldon, of the Artillery. There were six experiments on this day with shot and shell, the former weighing 284 lbs., the latter 194 lbs. and 284 lbs.

The largest shell was one of 13 inches. The charge of powder varied from 10 lbs. to 30 lbs.—With the latter charge a shot of 284 lbs. was propelled to the distance (first range) of 2,000 yards, the full range of the fire altogether being 2½ miles. The recoil with the 30lb. charge was 2 feet 8 inches. In the last experiment, on Wednesday, a 13-inch shell travelled 1,500 yards in 10 seconds, and finally stopped a little short of two miles in 28 seconds.

On Thursday a large number of persons were present on the ground, and the chief experiments consisted of the discharge of a 196 lb. shell, with a charge of 20 lbs. of powder; a solid shot of 310 lbs., with a charge of 30 lbs.; a load-d shell of 310 lbs., with a charge of 45 lbs.; and a 318 lb. shot, with a charge of 45 lbs. On Friday the firing was made under the superintendence of Captain Vandaleur, of the Royal Gun Factory, Woolwich. It comprised nine rounds, all with powder charges of 25 lbs.

The first round, with a ball weighing 282 lbs., was fired against a target at a distance of 120 yards, composed of an iron plate 3 feet 9 inches by 3 feet, and 4¼ inches in thickness, of solid forged iron; being exactly similar to the plates which encase the floating batteries, and which are considered impregnable. The plate was fixed against nine balks of timber, each balk strutted by strong planks, and the whole buried in a bank of sand.—The plate where the ball struck was shattered to

pieces, the ball itself broken into fragments, and the timber behind splintered into chips.

One fragment of the plate, weighing about 1½ cwt., was carried 80 yards beyond the target, and another, weighing more than 1 cwt., was carried to a distance of 220 yards. One of the huge balks of timber was launched on end to the distance of 100 yards. Incidentally, as an example of the dispatch which characterizes the work at the Mersey Foundry, we may mention that the plate which formed this target, and which weighed upwards of a ton, was manufactured in less than seven hours.

The remainder of the experiments on Friday comprised the firing at a target formed of a barrel surmounted by a flagstaff, and placed at a distance of 2,000 yards. The first round aimed at this object was with a ball of 282 lbs., and at an elevation of 61½ degrees. The shot was in good line, but carried rather too far: the recoil was 2 feet 8 inches. The second round was at the same elevation, and with the same weight of ball.

This went very close to the target: the recoil was 2 feet 9 inches. In the third round the ball fell rather short, but was very close to the target: recoil 2 feet 3½ inches. In the fourth discharge the ball alighted within a yard of the target: recoil 2 feet 1½ inches. In the fifth the ball fell 10 yards short, and two yards to the left of the target. In the sixth experiment the ball carried 1½ yards over the target, and a little to the left; the recoil being 4 feet 10¾ inches. The seventh round was so near that to the range party the ball appeared to strike the mark.

The eighth was apparently 5 yards short and a little to the left. The last discharge on Friday was at long range, at an elevation of 12½ degrees, and it is estimated that the ball carried to the distance of 5,000 yards. Thus concluded what we heard Major Aitcheson describe as "the most splendid practice which he had ever seen." The experiments, with regard to accuracy of fire, both on this and the other days, were pronounced by the other military gentlemen present as eminently satisfactory.

**WASHING FINE WOOLEN ARTICLES.**—The gall of oxen and cows has been used from time immemorial for removing grease and dirt from fine woolen goods of delicate colors. Its action is the same as soap in removing the grease, while it is almost inert regarding the colors. In the hands of skillful persons, however, soap is just as safe, and is more pleasant to use because the gall has an offensive odor.

To use the gall, it should be mixed with just as much rain water as will allow the woolen articles to be squeezed and handled freely. It requires considerable handling of the article in the liquor before the gall acts thoroughly.

After the dirt and grease are removed, the dress, shawl, or whatever it may be that is washed in it, should be thoroughly rinsed in clean soft water. It will take three or four fresh supplies of water to remove all traces of the gall from the goods, and none must be left in on account of its offensive smell. This is a very safe process of washing fine woolen articles of light green, blue, and various other delicate colors. Children's dresses of fine merino cloth may be safely washed in this manner. One gall will suffice for a small dress.

Another plan, and a better one for washing fine articles of dress is to dissolve some fine soap in hot water and allow it to become quite cold, then wash the article in this, taking care not to rub it violently. The soapsuds should be quite strong, or the soap will be decomposed by the grease in the article to be washed. The suds must be thoroughly rinsed out of the articles in cold soft water. Scented soap is the best to use for such delicate operations, because it imparts an agreeable perfume to the article of dress washed.

Another process for washing fine muslins of delicate colors, is to take some wheat bran—about two quarts for a lady's dress—and boil it for half an hour in some soft water, then allow it to cool, strain the liquor, and use it as a substitute for soap suds. It removes dirt like soap, is inert regarding the colors, and requires to be rinsed out in only one clean water, and starching is unnecessary. This is the best method of washing fine muslins and calicoes.

A great number of beautiful dresses are often spoiled in washing by the discharge of their colors, from the use of warm suds. In all cases, the suds and rinsing water for colored articles of dress should be used as cold as possible.—[Scientific American.]

**AN IMPROVED SOAP.**—W. A. Armand, of London, has secured a patent for the following method of making a soap called "saponitoline," and which is stated to be of a superior quality. He places in a copper 88 gallons of soft water, and mixes with it 112 lbs. of crystal soda, or 79 lbs. of salts of soda, and after two or three hours have elapsed, agitates it, and adds 112 lbs. of common soap. He then heats the whole to 40 degs. or 45 degs. centigrade, and adds 17 lbs. of pearl-ash, and 17 lbs. of quick lime. When ebullition has commenced in the copper he slowly agitates the heated mass, and pours into it about five gallons of mucilage of linseed or marshmallow seed, after which he adds 7½ pounds of borax, or about 2½ pounds of calcined alum. When the whole is well mixed in the copper, and the liquid presents the appearance of being perfectly homogeneous, he leaves it to boil on a slow fire for ½ of an hour. The fire is then extinguished, the copper covered over, and the temperature allowed to fall to 55 or 60 degrees. He then pours the liquid into barrels, where it becomes solidified in about 24 hours, (supposing that hard soap has been used) if otherwise, it remains in a gelatinous state.—[Germantown Telegraph.]

**GOLD AND SILVER IN THE WORLD.**—A Russian counselor of state has recently published a work