

Family Reading.

Only a Little Word.

'Twas only a little word,
And a pleasant smile was given,
Directing many a thought
To our Father up in heaven.

'Twas only a little word,
As from angry lips it fell,
And the influence it had,
Not one of us can tell.

'Twas only a little word,
Very gently it was said,
And another hungry soul
Was thus easily fed.

If only a little word
Can cheer us on our way;
If only a little word
Can drive in grief away;

New Select Serial.

MRS. HURD'S NIECE:

Six Months of a Girl's Life.

CHAPTER IV.

A FAMILY CIRCLE.

The worn-out traveller never wakens
all night long. She might sleep until
high noon to-day, were it not for the
alarm clocks and the noisy bells down
in the lower regions.

'They must be home now—I do wonder
if they found that I have come!
I feel like—most uncomfortably like an
intruder!

Theo is nestling about, and she soon
wakes. She sits up in bed and looks
down upon Lois, winking and blinking.

As Lois dresses she falls a prey to all
sorts of uncomfortable thoughts. "How
strange that they are so near, in these
very next rooms, I presume! I wish I
were sure they knew I am here."

Half an hour passes. No one comes,
not even baby Theo. Lois gets more
nervous every moment.

'Oh dear, I wish I knew what was
proper! I may have to stay here all
day, for I can't go down alone. Evidently
nobody is in any great hurry to see me.'

pathetic picture of herself stealing
down and going out and in after dark
to buy herself some crackers or a loaf.
In fancy she has come to a point where
more than once she has swiftly passed
members of the family on the stairs.

Lois and Elizabeth bow across the
table; Elizabeth with indifference, Lois
shyly, and with a look of admiration—
this Elizabeth being a queenly girl.

Lois tries to find her voice, which
they have not heard as yet; what she
has said to her aunt has been little more
than an unintelligible whisper.

Lois seizes upon the crumb—they
knows she has arrived. She proposes
that they go down to the breakfast room
at once.

Below, Theo throws open the door of
a lofty room frescoed in warm crimson
and gold, and carpeted warmly to match.
It is a bright picture, and Lois stands
in the door and looks. With its glowing
coal fire, its silken curtains, its paintings
of game and fruit and flowers, and the
breakfast table in the centre, glittering
with the silver breakfast service, and
the beautiful painted china—it is as
much a picture as Theo's room up-stairs.

Now come other steps down the stairs,
and Lois falls trembling anew. This
time it is a very stately and handsome
woman. She is not at all like her dear
mother—but Lois knows it must be
Aunt Alice. The little gray figure
waits on the rug, and leaves greetings
to the aunt. Many chilling fancies have
disciplined her to this extent.

'So this is my niece Lois,' she says.
'I regret we were gone last night, but I
trust you made yourself comfortable.
How much you are like your mother,
child, when you look up at one! Poor
sister—I hope she is permitted to see
that I am giving her daughter a good
home. John, we won't wait for the
girls this morning.'

Mr. Hurd comes to the table, still
reading. As he throws the paper down,
Mrs. Hurd, behind the coffee urn, speaks
to him. Little Lois receives another
nod and a more protracted glance.

The grace is said; and, shortly after
a couple of young ladies come in.
'Party dresses,' their ignorant cousin
calls their trailing cashmere morning
robes—there is such an abundance of

plaitings and frillings, together with
exquisite lace at neck and throat.

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What a small Boy could do.

A lad in Boston rather small for his
age, works in an office as errand boy
for four gentlemen who do business
there. One day the gentlemen were
chaffing him a little for being so small,

'You will never amount to much.
you can never do much, you are too
small.'

The little fellow looked at them.
'Well,' said he, 'as small as I am,
I can do something that neither of you
can do.'

'Ah, what is that?' said they.
'I don't know as I ought to tell you,'
he replied.

But they were anxious to know, and
urged him to tell what he could do that
neither of them were able to do.

'I can keep from swearing,' said the
little fellow.

There were some blushes on four
faces, and there seemed to be no anxiety
for further information.

A bright boy heard a vile word and
an impure story. He thought them
over. They became fixed in his
memory, and then left a stain which
could not be washed out by all the
waters of this great round earth.

Do not allow yourself to think of
vile, stories or unclean words. There
are persons who seem to take an evil
delight in repeating such things. And
those who willingly listen to them re-
ceive a stain upon their memory. To
give ear to filthy talkers is to share
their sin. Don't lend your ears to be
filled and defiled with shameful words
and vile stories.

In these days of evil speech and bad
books it is our duty to take care what
we listen to and what we read. A bad
story smirches and defiles the heart,
pollutes the memory and inflames the
fancy.

Shun these things as you would poi-
sonous vipers. Draw back from hearing
them as you would shrink from the
"canorous kisses" of the crocodiles seen in
DeQuincy's opium dream. If by chance
you have heard any obscene words or
vile stories, drive them from your
thoughts as you would the black winged
bats from your face at night. Ask God
to help you. Think of the true things
he has said, and study the pure and
beautiful things he has made.

Of course, Mr. Beecher had no inten-
tion of including Canadian graduates
when he said in his sermon last Sunday:
—"Look at the way some young men
shuffle through the academy and then
double shuffle through college. They
don't know enough Latin when they
come out to read the Latin in the diploma
they bring with them. Half the men that
go through college couldn't turn around
again and enter at the other end."

Bass's great brewery in England in-
cludes six acres of beer barrels; and it
is estimated that the beer from it fills
up, each year, about six acres of grave-
yards.

Dr. Newman Hall just before his
departure for England on the 22nd ult.,
said: "I wish to express my pleasure
at one phase of your social life. Not
once have I sat down to a table in my
entire American trip and seen wine on
the table. It is remarkable, and would
be unheard of in England." Dr. Hall
had been in the United States since
August 18th, and had travelled 4000
miles.

It seems that a poor woman in Hamil-
ton, whose son had been led astray and
sent to gaol by the whiskey supplied to
him in the Ambitious City, knelt down
a few days ago on the pavement before
one of those whiskey stores and called
down the curse of God on the traffic.
She protested that she did not curse the
seller, but only the article sold. For
this, however, she was fined \$2 and
costs, or ten days in gaol. Surely this
was a most absurd and excessive punish-
ment for such an offence. Indeed, we
little wonder at many poor women,
driven half crazy by the ruin caused to
their homes by this liquor traffic, be-
coming quite as demonstrative as the
Hamilton woman seems to have been.

Silk Culture in the United States.

The United States is now the third
silk-manufacturing country in the world
and the quality of American silk is of
acknowledged superiority. Our crop of
1883 is estimated at 60,000 pounds of
cocoon. If the annual production were
raised to 1,250,000 pounds, it would no
more than meet the demands of the silk
business; and this home production in
place of importation would effect a year-
ly saving of many millions of dollars
to the country, besides furnishing profit-
able employment to large numbers of
men, women and children. It is particu-
larly recommended as an auxiliary em-
ployment in agricultural sections, where
in a multitude of homes there are hands
not fully occupied, where facilities for
earning money are few, and an added
income from a few weeks of light work
would be appreciated. So purely art-
istic in its nature is this industry,
that it receives the support of the most
cultured classes. Little capital is re-
quired, except that which consists in
knowing how. Of the varieties of mul-
berry the white has proved the best;
5,000 trees can be had from one ounce
of seed; 10,000 plants have been pro-
duced on a quarter of an acre of ground.

Nearly half the States in the Union
are now practically interested in silk-
growing, in connection with the Women's
Silk-Culture Association of Philadel-
phia, which buys cocoons, sells seed
and eggs, and can be addressed for
information. At the excellent exhibit
of the Women's Silk-Culture Associa-
tion in this season's Institute Fair in
Boston, under management of Mrs.
Mariou McBride, reels were in opera-
tion, turning off four large skeins at
once, each thread, fine as it was, being
seven-stranded from the cocoons. Skeins
of beautiful silk were shown that were
raised in a neighboring town almost
fifty years ago. The interest in this
culture in Massachusetts dates back to
1831, when, in response to a request of
the legislature and by order of Gov.
Lincoln, a manual of general informa-
tion and instruction was published. A
committee appointed to examine the
subject, therein reported with every
encouragement, confident that no diffi-
culties in either soil or climate were to
be encountered in the production of silk
in this commonwealth to an immense
extent. It is hoped that with favoring
circumstances, as at present, the in-
dustry may be revived successfully.

Mr. Porter, of the Nonotuck Silk Com-
pany, Florence, Mass., has presented
the Woman's Department of the Insti-
tute with 5,000 mulberry trees, to be
given to women desiring to start the
culture in New England. Particulars
can be obtained from Mrs. McBride at
any time, as the work of the department
will be carried through the year, the
annual exhibitions demonstrating meth-
ods and showing results. There is
more need and more promise for Amer-
ican silk-culture, because, in France
particularly—as usually happens to any
crop raised successively for a long
period on the same soil—the industry
has for some time been much impaired
through the worms being attacked by a
blighting disease.—Watchman.

What a Dog did.

It all happened because mamma was
trying to cut a Mother Hubbard dress
for Bessie out of too small a piece of
cloth.

You see they were five miles from
town, and she didn't want it to look
too narrow, so she had turned it upside
down, and in every conceivable way,
and yet it would not come out.

There was a worried pucker between
her eyes that would not come out either.

Bess and Edith were having a lovely
time in the corner, playing church.
Edith was the minister, of course, else
why was she two years older? While
Bess, looking very solemn and sleepy,
did the congregation to life, as she sat
in her little chair, surrounded by her
large doll family.

'We will sing now, Bess, so stand
up,' said Edith, after she had gone over
all the verses she could remember, by
way of a sermon. And Bess, glad to
change, rose up at once, and they piped
up in shrill, high voices, and then Edith
wound up with 'Amen' in her loudest
voice, but after looking at Bess a mo-
ment she changed it to 'A women,
'cause they ain't a men here.'

Bess wanted to go on singing, so it
grew louder and louder, and mamma
looked up with the worried look still
between her eyes.

'Oh children, what a racket you
make! Can't you play something nice
and quiet?'

'No, mamma,' answered Edith. 'We
feel all full of noise, and I wish you
would let us go out doors, there's such
lots room there. Please do, mamma.'

And Bessie, Edith's echo, said, 'Pe-
do, mom.'

It was almost train-time, and the
track lay just outside the dooryard.
But mamma had been out and shut the
gates so securely that the little fingers
could not open them, just before she
commenced her sewing, though if it had
not been for her bother over the little
dress, she would have remembered that
Bill the hired man, had been up for a
jug of water a little while before, and
nothing could ever make Bill remember
to close the gates carefully. He was
not used to the children's presence there
yet, as they had come out to the farm
only a short time before, to spend the
summer at grandpa's. But all this
slipped out of mamma's mind, and she
said, 'Yes, go on, and be good girls.'

And away they ran out into the
pretty sunshine they loved so well.

It was very quiet now, in the big
sunny room, with no sound to break the
stillness, but the click of grandma's
needles from the bright corner where
dear grandma sat knitting, and dozing
sometimes, and old Bess, the great
yellow mastiff, snoring on the rug.

Presently, missing the babies, whom
he had adopted at once as his especial
charges, he stretched himself with a
huge yawn, and slowly followed them
out of doors. And mamma, looking up
a moment, said—

'Mother, Bess is getting so old. He
isn't good for anything now, but to lie
around and sleep. I should almost
think father would have put him out of
the way.'

Grandma's needles stopped clicking,
and she looked up in astonishment.
'Why, daughter, you surely don't
think what you are saying. Why, I
believe father would as soon think of
putting me out of the way. Bessie!
Why, what could we do without Bess?'

'Well, mother I know it, only I feel
cross and worried this morning, and
everything goes the wrong way. Don't
mind what I say.'

'Are the gates all closed, daughter?
It's almost train time.'

'Yes, mother, I closed them just be-
fore I sat down to sew. But, oh—'

with a sudden thought flashing through
her mind—Bill has been up since
then!

And just as mamma ran out, the train
whistled. Her brain reeled at the
picture before her. For there on the
track, standing still, with her dear
sunny head bent forward in her be-
wildered, and her little hands full of
flowers—'pitty flowers for mum'—was
baby Bess. And Edith stood crying
as loudly as she could on the bank.

All this was photographed on the
mother's heart forever, as she ran, in
the vain hope of reaching her baby in
time.

But there was one before her, and
Bess flew past her like a yellow flash.
In great bounds he gained the track,
caught the baby in his teeth, and they
were safe on the meadow grass as the
train thundered by.

In the mother's heart was a psalm of
thanksgiving, as she crept down after
them, for her strength had all gone, and
everything grew very dim as she
clasped the baby in her arms, and Bess
stood looking on most anxiously as he
saw the number of his patients thus in-
creasing.

But mamma opened her eyes in a
few moments, and seeing Bess standing
over her, she took his honest old head
in her arms and kissed him on the forehead.

'O Bess, dear Bess, how could I ever
have said such things about you as I
did, you who saved my baby's life?
Oh, Bess, if you will forgive me, you
shall have the best time all your life,
and all the fresh meat you can possibly
eat.'

Whereat Bess nearly wagged his
tail off with delight.—Youth's Compan-
ion.

The true motives of our actions, like
the real pipes of an organ, are often
concealed; while the gilded and hollow
pretex is pompously placed in front of
the show.