

Cecilia The Babbler.

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CECILIA THE BABBLER



Madam Bourgeois, widow of a poor officer, was obliged to economise, and to work very hard to bring up her children.



Her eldest daughter, Cecilia, was already old enough to aid her mother; she was a pretty little girl, and would have been beloved by all, if she had not possessed the fault of babbling.



That faulting was so great with her, that it was impossible for her not to speak; she spoke for the sake of speaking, and often sent her mother's work-women to sleep by her chatter.



When she went for milk to the shop at the corner of the street, she would stay a long time making idle remarks, but although a deaf ear was turned to her, that she did not seem to notice.



When at the grocer's, it was the same thing; Cecilia would talk, but everyone went on with his occupation without replying to her.



It must be said however that the female porter at the door lent her a willing ear, and they would idle away hours together in empty talk.



One day her little brother fell ill, and Cecilia was sent by her mother to fetch the doctor. On her way she met with a companion, and stopped to tell her about the illness of her brother.



When she arrived at the Doctor's, she was told that he had just gone out; and instead of returning home, she remained to chatter with the servant.



The poor boy, deprived of medical help, was likely to die. While awaiting the arrival of the doctor, the apothecary was sent for, who arrived just in time to save the child.



The doctor, and Cecilia, arrived when the greatest danger was past. The doctor, not pleased that mother had taken his place, blamed and threatened the apothecary.



The apothecary, who was not too amiable, replied angrily and the two men were on the point of coming to blows, when Madam Bourgeois came between them.



Cecilia, without bad intention, because of her desire to speak, went and told all the neighbours of the quarrel which had arisen between the apothecary and the doctor.



The news spread that the apothecary was to be prosecuted, and all the old women gossips of the town, assembled in front of his shop, making a great noise.



The crowd became so great that the apothecary was obliged to close the shutters of his shop to prevent the windows being broken.



Cecilia on taking some work to a lady who had employed her mother, related the scene with the doctor, and the results which had followed.



The lady, who was a cousin of the doctor, put Cecilia out of the house for repeating all the prattlings of the town, and refused to send anymore work to her mother.



Cecilia returned home very miserable and related what had occurred. "Your chattering will reduce us to the greatest misery," said her weeping mother.



The little girl was called as a witness before the doctors; her fear was great when she found herself amongst these grave personages.



It was still worse when she was called upon to give her deposition at the Court, the little babbler this time had lost her tongue.



Cecilia threw herself in her mother's arms and promised to correct her fault: she has kept her word; she now works with her mother and always speaks in a sensible manner.

Imagerie d'Épinal. — PELLEUIN, imp. — édit.

