

Family Department.

EASTER JOY.—Carol.

Every flower that blossoms
Fresh from mouldy earth,
Sings of resurrection,
Whispers of new birth.
Every plant that dying
Seems to meet decay,
Only waits in patience
For an Easter day.

Seeds of promise scatter'd
Over all the land,
Spring to life and beauty,
Guided by God's hand :
And our souls more precious
Than all earth beside,
Surely shall awaken
At some Easter-tide.

Then let hearts and voices
Easter anthems sing :
Then let ALLELUIAS
'Thro' the glad earth ring :
For our CHRIST has risen,
And beyond the grave,
Over death and sorrow
He is strong to save.

MRS. J. M. TONCEY.

JIMMY'S EASTER.

BY CLARA P. ROSS.

Easter Day.

Almighty God, who, through Thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech Thee, that as by Thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.—*Amen.*

A great event was to take place at this Eastertide in the life of Jimmy Whittaker. Jimmy had not been brought up in the Church, indeed, he could hardly be said to have been "brought up" at all. He belonged to that unfortunate class of parents who seem to consider all responsibility regarding their children ended when they can stand alone, therefore Jimmy had "come up" on the street, which had been both father and mother to him.

During the preceding autumn the rector of the church in Jimmy's neighborhood, in seeking for stray sheep to gather into his fold, found this one lamb and brought him into the Sunday-school. Not very lamb-like did the boy look, and very uncomfortable did he feel among the decently dressed children whom he met there. But soon behold Jimmy decently dressed himself, for his friend, the rector, thought this a case in which it was well to "make clean the outside," trusting to cleansing the soul within by slower process.

It had not taken long to discover that Jimmy had a sweet voice, and for two or three months he had been rehearsing with the choir, preparatory to singing the service in the church. Now, on this Easter Eve, he was to be "baptized into the death of Christ," and on the morning of Easter Day he was to sing among the white-robed choir in the chancel.

The boy had a vague hope that none of the "fellers," his comrades of every day, would learn about his baptism until it was over; he dreaded a little what they might say about it, but the rector had made him see that his parents should be told, and his mother had even consented to be present when the sacrament was administered.

So, in the sweet spring evening, before the service began, Jimmy "was made a member of Christ." His mother kept her promise, and sat among the shadows near the door; doubtless she had strange thoughts as she saw her son surrounded by friends with whom she had no part, and taking upon him the vows of a Master whose service she had never known.

Jimmy had not felt like joining in the usual Saturday games that day, but had kept in the little room under the roof, which was called his own. There he had learned the collect for the morrow, and now, as he rose from his knees, with the baptismal water on his brow, its words came to him, and he had a feeling as if "the gate of everlasting life" had "opened unto him."

Jimmy was up so early on Easter Day that it seemed he might have risen to see the sundance, as the Old World superstition says it does, for very gladness, on that morn of morns. He dressed himself with utmost care, and the descended to the kitchen, hoping to snatch a mouthful of breakfast, and be off before the other members of the family should appear, but his mother sharply bade him.

"Wait till things is ready, can't ye?" which the boy was forced to do.

Presently his father came into the common room, looking dirty, ragged, unkempt. While they were at breakfast, he said:

"Jim, I've got a job on a yacht, stripping her for the painters, and I'm going at it to-day. You're big enough to help; I guess I'll take you along."

For a moment words failed Jimmy, then he stammered: "I can't, father, it's Sunday, and I'm going to sing in church."

"Heh!" roared his father, pausing with a mouthful of food suspended. "Is that what ye larn at church? I thought the Bible said 'Obey your parents.'"

Poor Jimmy! He couldn't argue about it. There were the two commandments, "Keep holy the Sabbath Day," and "Honor thy father and thy mother." The boy was puzzled. His religious education had not contemplated such a confusion of ideas.

But, to his infinite relief, no more was said about it: indeed, his father had not really intended keeping the boy from church; when he had spoken of it, his wife had asked him:

"Don't ye know which side your bread is buttered?" and Mr. Whittaker had concluded that the new suit of clothes, also other benefits, settled the question.

Nevertheless, Jimmy escaped from the house as soon as he could, and fled to the welcome shelter of the church.

It was early still and it seemed an endless time, to the impatient boy, until he stood amid the white-robed throng, himself in the same pure attire. Then the doors were swung open, and as they marched, with a burst of triumphant music, into the dim, flower-scented church, he thought again of the "gate of everlasting life," which seemed opening before him. He felt as if his heart were in his mouth and he were singing it out of his lips.

Many people in the crowded congregation noticed the boy's devout face, and wondered who he might be that sang so evidently "with the spirit and the understanding also." The service went on to the beautiful Collect for Easter Day.

Jimmy's heart answered to that, his mind was full of "good desires;" how he would try to obey his father and mother, and bear with the saucy little ones; how he would guard his lips, that he say no unkind word, or tell an untruth, how he would do all that his boy's heart conceived to be his duty.

When the service was ended, Jimmy marched down the aisle and out of the church as if in a dream. It required several minutes for his unaccustomed hands to properly dispose of the vestments he had worn, so he was nearly the last boy to leave the choir-room, and when he did so, his heart failed him at the sight of several of the boys of his neighborhood waiting for him. He tried to pass them without notice, but

one yelled out, "Hello, Saint Jimothy!"

Another said, jeeringly, "Oh, he's too pious to speak to us fellers now."

Jimmy felt his cheeks tingle, but worse was to come. "Say," cried one tormentor, "was the water cold last night, Jim?"

"Don't he look pretty in a night-gown?" was an exclamation which exhausted the boy's patience. His cheeks flamed, his eyes flashed, and his hands clenched themselves. In one moment he would have struck the nearest boy full in the face, but a thought crossed his mind, that "mind" into which God had put "good desires": "What am I going to fight about? The Church! The very things that have taught me not to fight!"

Miss Larkins, the boy's Sunday-school teacher, had labored to lead her small flock to think, to rely on God for help in times of temptation—those times which came, alas, so often to them. Her patient lessons came to Jimmy's thought now in one flash, and in the words of that morning's collect, "Thy continual help." The boy's fists relaxed, and the revulsion of feeling was so great that the tears sprang to his eyes, but the "help" was there! In a half-jocular tone which his experience quickly told him would be best, he said,

"That wasn't a 'night-gown,' that was a surplice. Were you in the church this morning?"

He had met them on their own ground. The boy who had called his precious surplice a "night-gown" answered:

"Yes, we was there, but we couldn't get near, it was so crowded, so we came away."

He did not think it was necessary to say that they had made such a racket that the sexton had quietly requested them to retire; nor did Jimmy know this, so he said, though with a quaking heart:

"Come again this evening. The church will not be so crowded, and you can hear the singing better."

"You looked fine, Jim," said one of the boys in a conciliatory tone.

But they had reached the boy's home by this time, and he rushed into the house straight to his own poor room, and threw himself on his knees by the bed, unmade still, alas, and likely to remain so. There, with none but God to see, he let the tears come.

"I was going to fight," the boy thought, "not two minutes after I the church. Where are all my 'good desires'? I should think I did need 'continual help to bring the same to good effect.' 'Twas 'special grace' prevented me, sure," and at the thought of that the tears had their way again.

Jimmy did not know that "prevented" in this case meant "going before;" he took the literal meaning, and perhaps it was as well. But the "special grace" "had gone before" Jimmy, putting "good desires" in his heart; "gone before" Miss Larkins in her earnest lessons about the "continual help;" "gone before" the kind rector when he sought the boy and brought him into the Sunday-school. Ah! we do not realize, we seldom think how that "special grace goes before" us always, guiding and defending.

Jimmy held a long communion with himself that day, and then he went down to the common room to find the little ones quarrelling, and his mother bending over the hot stove getting dinner.

"You've come at last, have you?" she snapped. "You've been long enough; do take that baby."

So Jimmy took the baby, and soon had him quiet; then carried the small chap about on his hip while he helped his mother set the table. He felt a little shame-faced at this unaccustomed act of kindness, and made an excuse that he was hungry and wanted his dinner, which indeed was true, as he had eaten little breakfast, but really it was the "continual help" for which he had prayed which was bringing his "desires" to "good effect."

Then, while the mother's heart was warmed by his little attention, Jimmy said, hesitatingly: