

An Easter Offering

(Lena Blinn Lewis, in the Michigan 'Advocate'.)

The rain came down in torrents, melting the light snowfall and sending it in every direction in tiny running streams.

'Oh, dear, how dismal!' and with a face as gloomy as the weather, Grace Cheshire turned away from the window just as the maid came in with the morning mail.

Grace sat on a low stool by the grate, and looked over the collection of letters and papers.

'Well, dear, any news from anywhere this morning?' said Mrs. Cheshire.

'Come, sit here by me, mamma, and we will see.'

'First, here's an announcement of Madam McHenry's millinery opening. Of course we will go. I wonder what my hat will be this year, mamma? Something lovely, I know. The new shades in pink are superb, and I think I will have pink trimmings.'

'A note from Nell, and she is going to give a dinner the day before Easter. I am to assist her. Good! Decorations are to be Easter lilies and palms, with red carnations for tone and color. Perfectly exquisite.'

'I shall certainly need a new dress for that, won't I, mamma? How would a black satin skirt, with one of those sweet Dresden silk waists, do? That would suit me exactly.'

'Oh, I wish it didn't rain. Do you think Thomas would take the carriage out? I am just crazy to go and select my dress.'

'It would be very imprudent, Grace, and there is plenty of time before Easter, nearly two weeks.'

Grace tore open the next letter.

'From John, and he is coming home next Friday, will remain over Easter. I am so glad, glad, glad!'

Mrs. Cheshire was as happy as her daughter and said tenderly, 'We love John, don't we, Grace?'

'I guess we do. What will we plan to give him a royal good time? A party?'

'I think brother John will enjoy a quiet visit with us much better than any display we could make, and you know, Grace, Easter is a sacred day to us all, but I fear you sometimes forget it.'

'O yes, I know, and, dear me, it's so hard to remember John is going to be a minister. I wonder if he will be as jolly as he used to be. I suppose Mr. Hamilton will have him up in the pulpit, and—well, I'm glad he is coming, minister or no minister,' and Grace proceeded with the mail.

'Here is an invitation to Miss Jones's musical, and one to Kittie's to tea to-morrow, and—what is this?'

Grace read it with sober face, then replied to her mother's questioning glance.

'It's a note from Mr. Hamilton, asking if I will make an Easter offering, to be used in sending flowers to the hospitals, etc., and he wishes it to be my own free gift. What does he mean by that, mamma? I am sure I have nothing to give, only what comes from you.'

Mrs. Cheshire smiled and said softly, 'Think about it, Grace.'

Grace took up the 'Ladies' Home Journal,' the last of the mail matter, and went to the window seat to read. She slowly turned the pages until she came to the 'King's Daughters.'

'Oh, that makes me think. I am on the programme for a paper on self-sacrifice at the next meeting of our King's Daughters. That society is getting to be a perfect bore. I don't know the first thing about self-sacrifice.'

'It means very much, Grace.'

'I presume so, for missionaries, deaconesses and those people. I hope it will rain so I cannot go.'

'Why, Grace, you make me sorry. Brother John would—'

'John? Why, I had not thought of him. I'll get him to write my paper for me. It's right in his line, isn't it, mamma? I guess I'll go after all.'

The days had passed rapidly, and John was at home from college. He and Grace were sitting in the library talking of various things, and he asked about her work in the society of King's Daughters.

Grace had said to her mother that morning: 'John is not at all stiff and dreadful, as I expected him to be.' But as he approached the topic she disliked she felt very uncomfortable, but at once suggested that he write her paper for her.

'Have you thought very much about your subject, Grace?'

'No, not at all. I don't know anything in regard to it. Oh, of course I know what self-sacrifice is, in a way, but then, I could not write a paper.'

John drew his sister near to him. She was only seventeen and seemed very girlish, but he realized she was at a turning point in life, and he wished to lead her in the right direction.

It was growing dark when he left the library, and Grace was alone.

She had learned so much in that hour, and somehow she could not help thinking of her plans for the new dress and hat, and her pleasure in them were gone.

She saw herself as she had not before. 'Selfish, selfish,' kept coming to her mind, and suddenly she remembered the note from Mr. Hamilton, her pastor. Her face grew brighter and her worried heart was calm. The black satin skirt and sweet Dresden waist would be her Easter offering.

She went to her brother's room, and to his pleasant 'Come in,' she answered:

'O John, it's all so clear now. How blind I have been, and, John, I guess I'll not write a paper.'

'No? Why not, Grace?'

'I am sure I would rather talk to the girls, and tell them how I have learned my lesson of self-sacrifice.'

John's heart rejoiced and he said reverently:

'Praise God.'

The King's Daughters met, and many wondered what had happened to so change Grace Cheshire, and her influence was felt in more than one heart.

Nellie Mason's dinner was pronounced a success. Grace looked very pretty in the simple white cashmere (her last summer's graduating dress) with a spray of smilax and a carnation as her only ornament.

Some one was heard to say, 'What a happy face Grace Cheshire has,' but they did not know the secret.

When Grace awoke the next morning the Easter bells were ringing, and her heart was full of praise.

At church John smiled at her from his seat by Mr. Hamilton, and when he made the closing prayer and Grace bowed her head, she felt a sweet peace steal gently into her soul, and she realized that the Sun of Righteousness had risen, not only in Judea ages ago, but in the life she now consecrated to his service, and she joyfully sang the last hymn:

'Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated, Lord, to thee.'

God wants his children to find out that his hand is always within reach, no matter how dark it may be.—'Ram's Horn.'

For Parents.

Whenever I speak to parents, two fathers come before me. One lived on the Mississippi river. He was a man of great wealth. One day his eldest son had been borne home unconscious. They did everything that man could do to restore him, but in vain. Time passed, and after a terrible suspense he recovered consciousness.

'My son,' the father whispered, 'the doctor tells me you are dying.'

'Oh,' said the boy, 'you never prayed for me, father; won't you pray for my lost soul now?'

The father wept. It was true he had never prayed. He was a stranger to God. And in a little while that soul, unprayed for, passed into its dark eternity.

The father has since said 'that he would give all his wealth if he could call back his boy, only to offer one short prayer for him.'

What a contrast is the other father! He, too, had a lovely son, and one day he came home to find him at the gates of death. His wife was weeping and she said:

'Our boy is dying; he has had a change for the worse. I wish you would go in and see him.'

The father went into the room and placed his hand upon the brow of the dying boy, and could feel the cold, damp sweat was gathering there; the cold, icy hand of death was feeling for the chord of life.

'Do you know, my son, that you are dying?' asked the father.

'Am I? Is this death? Do you really think I am dying?'

'Yes, my son, your end on earth is near.'

'And will I be with Jesus to-night, father?'

'Yes, you will soon be with the Saviour.'

'Father, don't weep; for when I get there I will go straight to Jesus and tell him that you have been trying all my life to lead me to him.'

God has given me three children, and ever since I can remember I have directed them to Christ. I would rather they carried this message to Jesus—that I had tried all their life to lead them to him—than have all the crowns of the earth; I would rather lead them to Jesus than give them the wealth of the world.—D. L. Moody.

Love Divine.

Purer than the purest fountain,
Wider than the widest sea,
Sweeter than the sweetest music,
Is God's love in Christ to me.

Why love me so?
I do not know;
I only know

That nothing less than love divine
Could save this sinful soul of mine.
—'Herald and Presbyter.'

The Find-the-Place Almanac

TEXTS IN COLOSSIANS.

April 7, Sun.—The Firstborn from the dead.

April 8, Mon.—Having made peace through the blood of his cross.

April 9, Tues.—You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath reconciled.

April 10, Wed.—To present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.

April 11, Thur.—Christ in you, the hope of glory.

April 12, Fri.—Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

April 13, Sat.—As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.