

## FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

## ASCENSION-TIDE DECORATIONS.

BY Y. O. M.

Now the brightest joy of spring-time  
Gladly duteous we would bring,  
Bring our wealth of golden glory,  
Gold for Him who is our King;  
To the Father's throne ascended,  
All this human warfare ended.

Bring the golden, bring the azure,  
That reflect the heaven above,  
Telling of the regions glorious  
He prepares for us in love,  
Who is ever interceding,  
God made man for sinners pleading.

Bring the choicest, bring the brightest,  
Loving hearts and blossoms fair,  
Minds that grasp the truth in fulness,  
Skillful hands and reverent care;  
Till with gold His altar gloweth,  
Where the King Himself bestoweth.

For we mourn Him not as orphans,  
Though He reigns above the sky,  
He is near us, He is with us,  
Gives Himself in mystery;  
For our endless consolation,  
Gives the foretaste of salvation.

—The Churchman.

## TWO FRIENDS.

## CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

"Well, Master Reggie, I don't expect there's anything'll ever teach him but the four walls of a jail! Books indeed! What does the likes of he want with book learning. He can steal chickens and set traps without knowing how to spoll their names, I warrant you. No, no, Master Reggie, you're better without him, that you are. And if he didn't teach you no harm, that was all his deepness, it was. He was just waiting to make sure of you, that was what it was, and then there's no knowing what he wouldn't have done."

There was a decided vaguoness in this accusation which made it hard to contradict, and Reggie only answered:

"Well, Sam, what harm can he do me if he comes here when we're gone? And you might find him out if he does, and then you might write and toll me. I'd give you our address when I know it. And mother would see what was best to be done. Do, there's a good old Sam."

"Well, if your mamma knows about it, Master Reggie," said Sam, in a voice that showed signs of yielding.

"I'll ask her this very day," said the boy joyfully. And then you'll promise, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, I'll promise you fast enough if your mamma says so. But they won't likely come back again, Master Reggie; don't you go to think it."

Mrs. Lacy was quite willing that Sam should agree to what Reggie wished, but unhappily for him she rather shared in the gardner's conviction that Nat's return was most unlikely.

"You see, Reggie dear," she said, "that there is no reason why these people should come here any more, and there are many reasons why they should not. I have heard that several of the men would have been taken up had they remained one day longer. And you know that might even be the case with Nat."

"Oh, mother, you don't think so," interrupted Reggie, "surely you don't!"

"He had never been taught better, dear, and he might have done what law punishes without being worse than many children who give way to temptations of a different kind."

Reggie colored but his mother's arm was around him as she spoke, and he felt that as she loved him, she would not be hard upon Nat.

"Perhaps father may think of some plan of finding him out," said Mrs. Lacy. "I should be really glad if it could be managed, Reggie, only you must not build on it too much, or I fear you will be disappointed."

There was a half-shy, half-frightened look on

Reggie's face when he stood by his mother a few days later, waiting for Mr. Lacy's arrival. Mrs. Lacy congratulated herself, however, on his expression being more open than it had been even for some time after she came home, and trusted that the shyness would soon pass off.

It was indeed a happy meeting. Mr. Lacy was delighted to see the improvement in his wife's looks, and Reggie had no cause to complain of the warmth of his greeting.

"He is a dear boy, Arthur," said Mrs. Lacy, when they were alone together.

"Of course! I quite expected to hear that. One thing I am quite glad to see that you haven't been much worried by him. I think I shall have to judge for myself though, as you are certainly not an unprejudiced witness."

"But you must let me tell you that I am quite sure that Miss Everson did not manage him properly. I am not accusing her for I believe she did as she thought right. But Reggie is easily led, and I don't think he would be easily driven. He is very obedient to me."

"Is that not because you only tell him to do what he wishes? And if he is easily led by you, may he not be so by others who would not lead him so well? Did you ever find out the facts of that story Miss Everson wrote to us?"

"Oh, Arthur, there never was such a case of 'much ado about nothing.' I will tell you it all: but Reggie was wrong in the beginning though."

"Well, what was the low company?"

"Reggie was not allowed to go outside the garden, and he did go, and this went on for months without Miss Everson finding it out. So far he was wrong, of course, and he knows it now; he said that to me of his own accord. But the low company was the most harmless possible. He made the acquaintance of a poor boy, who belonged to some worthless tramps, I fear; but as far as the boy himself was concerned, all that he did to Reggie was to tell him about wild animals and their ways: the child has a very precious hedgehog that 'Nat' gave him. And then, the strangest thing of all, he actually got Reggie to teach him to read. He could read words of one syllable quite easily by the time Miss Everson found them out."

"It is a strange story certainly, Lily! Do you feel quite sure that it is true?"

"Indeed, I do, Arthur. No child would have thought of inventing such a thing. You could not help believing it if you heard Reggie."

"You don't think him untruthful then?"

"No, indeed, I do not. And I think that even with Miss Everson it was more that he concealed things than that he said what was false. I am very glad that I came home though, for I fear he was thinking that it was a necessity to be at war with those set over him."

"Did Miss Everson's story agree with Reggie's?"

"Yes. She told me that she came upon him with the boy as she was driving past, and that was just what he said. Of course she did not know what they were doing, and it does not seem to have entered his head to tell her."

"And what does she say about the boy?"

Mrs. Lacy hesitated.

"Well, she certainly said that he was a very bad boy, but she did not say how she found out."

"But surely she would not say it without knowing?"

"I really think it was only because she knew he belonged to a bad set of people. It was a natural enough conclusion to come to. And Reggie would not tell her anything about it, so she felt confirmed in her convictions."

"I hope she was not right, Lily."

"I feel sure of it, and so will you before long. And in any case the boy is gone. Only I have promised Reggie to try and befriend him if I can, and he is hoping that you may hit on some scheme for finding him out."

"Well, we must wait and see about that,"

said Mr. Lacy. "And I suppose we must set off on our own travels before long."

"Yes, I hear from Miss Everson that she is quite well again, and hopes to be home soon, and I think we had better leave first. She certainly would not approve of my way with Reggie, any more than I do of hers."

"And which do you think I should side with?" asked Mr. Lacy, smiling.

"I haven't the slightest doubt upon the subject," was the reply.

"You don't mean to say that you expect me to approve of the spoiling system?"

"I expect you to judge by results! I don't at all mean that Reggie is perfection, it would be very strange if he were. But I think he is really trying to do what is right, and really sorry when he does wrong, and do you think we can look for more? And there are many things which Miss Everson thought wrong that neither you nor I would call by so harsh a name. Besides, she had an endless string of rules, the breaking of which was considered as great an offence as real wrong doing."

"Well, I suppose I must wait and see. I am afraid I am no more unprejudiced than you are though, for he seems to be a nice, bright little fellow."

Reggie also had conceived a very pleasant impression of his father, and indeed, notwithstanding his doubts, he had been altogether more hopeful about him than about his mother before her arrival, so that all promised to go on well. Their stay at Westhampton was now very limited, and Mr. Lacy was away a good deal during the time that remained, looking at different houses that he thought might suit them. At last one was found, and the day of their departure was fixed. Reggie had no friends to whom to say good-bye except Sam, and they had a great many farewell talks. During one of these, Reggie in the fulness of his heart insisted on giving him the hedgehog. And Sam was so far touched as to conch his thanks for it in language more befitting the giver's estimate of the gift than his own.

"And I will look out for that Nat of yours, Master Reggie," he said spontaneously, "and I'll write and let you know about him, if so be as I do hear anything. Perhaps the missus could get him into a Reformatory, and that might be a good thing, it might."

Happily Reggie did not know that a Reformatory was a place for boys who had been convicted, but were too young to be sent to prison, so he did not feel it necessary to be indignant on behalf of his friend.

"That's a good old Sam," he replied. "You'll ask all the tramps that come, won't you?"

"That would be a pretty business, I guess, Master Reggie! And t'would be easier if one knew the boy's other name, wouldn't it?"

"I never thought of asking him," said Reggie, with rather a blank look. "And I don't believe he knew mine either; so he might be quite near us, and never find out that he was. But at any rate I should ask every one."

"Some'at like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay," muttered Sam to himself. However he thought it was of no consequence whatever. He had only volunteered the promise to please Master Reggie, who, now that he was going away, had quite resumed his old place in his affections.

Another week passed, and the Lacys had gone, and Miss Everson and Hannah were once more at home. More completely at home than they had been for years.

Miss Everson gave a sigh of relief over her release from responsibility, and rejoiced in the dead stillness of the house, which was no longer disturbed by little hurrying feet, carelessly shut doors, or even an occasional whistle. It would have been an occasional satisfaction to her had she heard that Reggie had been sent to a boarding-school; but she felt sure that was likely to follow soon, now that Mr. Lacy had come home. The more that as Mrs. Lacy had