

Children's Department.

The King's Little Flower.

Ruthy stood in the south door-way, under the big maples, watching the yellow Worthington bus come rattling up the country road. It turned in at the gate, and the panting horses drew up under the trees, while a pale young lady jumped out and walked slowly up the path.

"Yes, it must be Miss Emily," she said to herself, as her mother came in from the kitchen to welcome the newcomer; and she herself slipped into the north bedroom to see that everything was fresh and sweet and cool, though she had satisfied herself upon that point at least five times since the 6.30 train whistled. Then she slipped out again by the north door before Miss Emily got inside.

The next morning Miss Emily was sitting very still at her white-curtained window, that looked out through the honeysuckle vines and across the big orchard. It was very still and sweet there, and she leaned back in her easy rocker with a long sigh of restfulness. The wind blew softly across the grass, and seemed to smooth away the pain that throbbed at her temples.

All at once she caught sight of a little face peeping in at her door; it was Ruthy, with a fresh posy for her vase. She stood a moment on the threshold, looking shyly in, herself so like a sweet pink flower that Miss Emily smiled.

Miss Emily's face was very sweet always; and when she smiled her eyes had a way of shining, and when she said, softly, "Come here, little flower," Ruthy crept up to her with the posy clasped in her hand, and looked straight into her face. Miss Emily kissed her cheek.

"What are you?" she asked; "a little pink rose fresh from the garden, or a daisy, or a little wild flower?"

"I am Ruthy," the child answered.

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Ruthy and Miss Emily grew to be great friends, and they had long talks together that reached straight down into the child's innocent little heart.

Sometimes they talked about the King, for Miss Emily knew the King well, and loved him, and it was the brightness of the light of his happy kingdom that made her face so sweet and her eyes so shining.

"Yes," she said one day, "I am sure the King loves flowers. Wouldn't you like to be a little flower yourself and blossom for Him?"

Ruthy looked up with wondering eyes. "How can I?" she asked.

"Ever so many ways," answered Miss Emily, brightly. "You have

found out some for yourself already. One morning, I know the King looked down and saw a little girl helping her mamma to wipe the dishes, when I just know she wanted to go out into the yard and see if the big yellow pansy had opened yet."

Ruthy laughed gleefully.

"Why that was me!" she said.

"And the King said to the angels that were with Him: 'See this little heart's ease, how it is growing!' Then the angels turned and watched, and the King smiled down at the little girl."

Ruthy looked up, with sudden grave sweetness in her eyes.

"That must have been when I felt so happy; and it was because the King smiled," she added, softly, half to herself.

"Are you trying to be a flower, Miss Emily?" she asked, suddenly.

Miss Emily's face was very bright, and she bent and kissed the upturned face. "Yes, deary, I am."

Then Ruthy put her lips close to Miss Emily's ear, and whispered softly: "I am going to try to be the King's little heart's-ease all the time."

"Dear little girl!" said Miss Emily. And her eyes said: "I am so glad!"

There were a great many ways that the little heart's-ease learned to blossom for the King. Papa grew to watch for a little maid at the gate when he came up from the fields, tired and worn, after his day's work. No matter how worn and grave and weary his face might be, it always brightened at the sight of her, and, by the time they reached the well under the apple tree, all the lines would be smoothed away from his forehead. The same little maid shone like a sunbeam all around the house, helping her mother in the hot kitchen, or in the spring-house, or the pantry; for hadn't Miss Emily said that one way of being a flower was to be happy and glad, and to help other people to be so? Sometimes the little flower blossomed for old Miss Martin, across the road in the brown cottage; sometimes she brought a cup of cool water for some dusty wayfarer.

It is a long time ago that Ruthy learned how to blossom for the King. She remembers so well the day Miss

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Emily went away to the King's country; she was glad to go; she was so tired, and in the King's country there was rest. Ruthy herself laid the white lilies in her hands, and, with them, the little heart's-ease blossoms.