

The Family Circle.

THE CHILDREN.

Found in the desk of Charles Dickens after his death.)

When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And the school for the day is dismissed,
And the little ones gather around me
To bid me good-night and be kissed,
Oh, the little white arms that encircle
My neck in a tender embrace.
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,
Shedding sunshine and love on my face.

And when they are gone I sit dreaming
Of my childhood, too lonely to last;
Of love that my heart will remember
When it wakes to the pulse of the past;
Ere the world and its wickedness made me
A partner of sorrow and sin,
When the glory of God was about me,
And the glory of gladness within.

Oh, my heart grows weak as a woman's,
And the fountains of feeling will flow,
When I think of the paths, steep and stony,
Where the feet of the dear ones must go;
Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them;
Of the tempests of fate blowing wild;
Oh, there is nothing on earth half as holy
As the innocent heart of a child.

They are idols of hearts and of households;
They are angels of God in disguise;
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still beams in their eyes.
Oh, those truants from earth and from heaven,
They have made me more manly and mild,
And I know how Jesus could liken
The kingdom of God to a child.

Seek not a life for the dear ones,
All radiant, as others have done,
But that life may have just as much shadow
To temper the glare of the sun;
I would pray God to guard them from evil,
But my prayer would bound back to myself;
Ah, a seraph may pray for a sinner,
But a sinner must pray for himself.

The twig is so easily bended;
I have banished the rule and the rod;
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,
They have taught me the goodness of God.
My heart is a dungeon of darkness,
Where I shut them from breaking a rule;
My frown is sufficient correction,
My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old house in the autumn
To traverse its threshold no more;
Ah! how I shall sigh for the dear ones
That meet me each morn at the door.
I shall miss the good-night and the kisses,
And the gush of their innocent glee,
The group of the green and the flowers
That are brought every morning to me.

I shall miss them at morn and at eve,
Their song in the school and the street;
I shall miss the low hum of their voices,
And the tramp of their delicate feet,
When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And death says the school is dismissed,
May the little ones gather around me
To bid me good-night and be kissed.

—Charles Dickens.

A "MAJOLICY" JAR.

It was all to honor the pastor's home-coming, and the entire Sunday school, from the tots in the infant department to the balloon-sleeved young ladies in Miss Morgan's class, were taking an active interest in the decorations. It wasn't everybody's pastor who could take a trip across the water and come back with new color in his cheeks, and the people of West Church meant to make it a day of rejoicing.

Rebecca went home seriously, her "quarterly" clasped in a shabby little gray glove. What could she do to show how glad she was to have Mr. Seymour back with them once more? She would like to do something—there wasn't a child in the Sunday school who loved him more than she did. Ever since the day when she went before the standing committee and they thought her too young to unite with the church Rebecca had loved Mr. Seymour, for he had slipped his hand over hers, and made her brave to answer the questions put by those grave deacons. How she wished she might have some little flower to put with the others around the pulpit. But it was no use wishing—her mother could never "afford" it.

Yet she broached the subject at dinner. "It's out of the question, Becky," the tired mother said, decidedly. "He'll have flowers enough from the others; he won't need yours, and you haven't got any, anyway."

"I know he won't need them," Rebecca

said with a long drawn breath of disappointment, "but I just thought I'd like to do something."

The shadows of the maples were lengthening when Rebecca set out for her regular Sunday visit with Mrs. Brown, an invalid neighbor, whose small home retained the sunshine like the row of green plants in her front window or like her cheery, wrinkled face.

"Come right in and set down, Becky," she said, as the childish face smiled in at the door. "I'm right glad to see you, I am so. Been to church, I suppose? That's right. I'm glad your ma's bringin' you up right. I used to go as regular myself, when I was able to. I wonder now if you can tell me the text."

"Yes'm," answered the little visitor, promptly; "And now abideth faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." This repetition of the morning's text was a part of these Sunday visits.

"Good," said Mrs. Brown, approvingly. "Mr. Seymour's comin' home this week, they tell me, Becky."

"Yes'm, next Friday."

"What's the matter, child? You look sober. Ain't you glad he's comin' back?"

And then Rebecca told her all about it, how she longed to do her part and how impossible it would be.

"Well now," and Mrs. Brown's wrinkled features grew quite beautiful as she looked down into the troubled little face, "I reckon we can fix that up between us. I reckon I could give you a plant. Some of my lilies is most ready to blossom now."

The delight in Rebecca's face was tempered by a look of mortification. "O Mis' Brown," she gasped, "I didn't say that as a hint!"

"Law, child," with the utmost good nature, "I didn't suppose you did, but I want you to have a nice part in the fixin's, and we'll pick out a plant this minute that'll be in full blow by next Sunday."

The selection was made—a thriving young lily, with swelling buds that gave every promise of changing to white flowers in a few days.

"Reckon it hadn't ought to be in that can," said Mrs. Brown, thoughtfully. "It don't seem suitable someway for a church, though I always kind of liked it myself. It looks so cheerful, that red does."

The lily was planted in a tomato can with a picture of one of those gaudy fruits blazoned thereon.

"I'll tell you what, child; we'll fix up some kind of a cover for it—calico or muslin; a little ways off it'll have the effect of bein' one of those decorated jars, you know."

Rebecca beamed. "How good you are, Mis' Brown," she said, and then she rose on tiptoe to press an impulsive kiss on the older face.

Mrs. Brown's piece-bag was sorted the very next day, till a piece of cretonne—a "beautiful pattern," as its owner remarked—was chosen, and the old hands frilled and gathered it around the tomato can. Rebecca drew a long sigh of gratification. "It's just lovely," she said.

Mrs. Brown was satisfied. "I reckon my hands ain't lame if my feet be," she remarked, complacently. "It does look right nice, if I say it myself. A little ways off it'll look like a majolicy jar, and majolicy is real fashionable, Becky."

It was Saturday afternoon at the church and the pulpit was transformed into a garden of beauty. There were palms with green branches outstretched like fingers, and ferns with slender curling fronds, white lilies everywhere and bright colored roses, while simple meadow daisies with great golden eyes looked out from the empty spaces. Mrs. Allison and Miss Barker stood one on either side of the pulpit stairs to survey their work with great satisfaction. A little figure came in at the door bearing a snowy lily in a gaudy flower-pot and walked down the aisle.

"Who is that?" asked Mrs. Allison, in a low tone.

"That little Thompson girl in my class," whispered back Miss Barker.

The child swallowed once or twice before she could find voice to speak. "It's for Mr. Seymour," she faltered, "to go with the others up there," and she placed it on the pulpit stairs.

"What a beautiful lily," said Miss Barker, kindly, "such a pure white."

"Yes'm," said Rebecca, more courageously, "we fixed the jar on purpose, Mrs. Brown and me," and there was a look of innocent pleasure on her face.

Dorothy Allison joined the little group, nodding to Rebecca with childish friendliness. "Why, you've brought a lily, too; how pretty it is, and it's bigger than mine. See that one on the little stand is mine—next to the end. It's a different kind from yours, but it is just as white and sweet."

"I wish," said Rebecca, "mine could go up next to yours. They'd look nice together, wouldn't they?"

"How ever shall we manage?" asked Miss Barker, with a look of comical perplexity as she surveyed the jar, its little owner having taken her departure. "It can't go on the stand, where this ridiculous little arrangement will show," tapping the cretonne frills, "and yet I can't bear to hurt the child by tucking it out of sight."

"I'll tell you," said Mrs. Allison, "we'll cover the jar with smilax, wind it all around, you know, and then let it stand next to Dorothy's."

"Mamma, that will hurt Rebecca's feelings," said Dorothy, solemnly. "She told me she was going to have a beautiful jar, someone was helping her fix it up. She won't like it covered, she'll guess why you did it."

"It's the only way, dear, and she looks like a sensible child."

Dorothy's face grew sober, even sad, for a struggle was taking place in her small heart. There was a way that it could be arranged without hurting Rebecca's feelings, only it would lacerate her own terribly. You see Uncle Will had given Dorothy the dainty jar which held her precious lily, and its delicate tints seemed to emphasize the purity of the white petals. Could she let her new treasure be covered over with smilax, just to keep Rebecca's in countenance?

"Mamma," Dorothy spoke with decision. "S'pose we fix mine up, too, with smilax—won't that make it all right?"

"Why, you sweet thing," exclaimed Miss Barker, "it would be to bad to cover up your lovely jar, though you are a darling to think of it."

"I wouldn't do it, dear; what would Uncle Will say?" Mrs. Allison suggested.

It was too much for her good resolution. If her own mamma and her lovely Sunday school teacher thought her sacrifice unnecessary she need not persist in it, surely.

"This is work Dorothy might do," said Miss Barker. "Suppose you wind the smilax, dear. I'll show you how, and your hands are just the right size for it," giving those diminutive members an affectionate squeeze, "Rebecca will see how much prettier her jar is covered with it."

Dorothy set about the work promptly, and yet there was a little flush on her face as her small fingers wound the pretty green vine over the figured cretonne.

"Through already?" Miss Barker said, when Dorothy stood soberly surveying her work. "And how pretty it is!"

"Are you going, Dottie?" asked Mrs. Allison. "Won't you stop at Strong's and ask him to send two more palms immediately? We must have them to cover that bare place. Tell him to hurry."

Saturday afternoon must be a great time for Junior Endeavor meetings, for, her errand done, Dorothy passed no less than three churches from whose windows floated strains of Junior hymns. One was The Sunshine Song:

Slightest actions often meet the sorest needs,
For the world wants daily little kindly deeds.

Before Dorothy's eyes came a vision of Rebecca's true love offering covered with smilax wreath; it may have been a peculiar association of ideas, but Dorothy could not banish it from her mind. Then came the ringing chorus. Dorothy did not want to listen, somehow, and yet she lingered a moment, her small foot mechanically beating time on the stone pavement:

Scatter the sunshine all along your way,
Cheer and bless and brighten every passing day.

Dorothy and the man with the palms reached the church at the same time. "I've come back," she said, rather obviously. "Please let me have my jar a minute, and—some smilax. I want to decorate it."

Mrs. Allison and Miss Barker looked at her quickly but something in the pink, childish face stopped them and they forbore to comment.

It was a pleasant coincidence that, her work just finished and placed by Rebecca's offering, Rebecca herself should shyly enter the church. Dorothy went to meet her.

"I just stopped in—I thought they wouldn't care, and I wanted to see the flowers," she said, timidly, her eyes seeking for one particular plant.

Dorothy slipped her hand over Rebecca's. "I'm so glad you came. Those are our lilies up there on the stand. They look like twins, don't they—all covered up with smilax, just alike? Mamma always says that natural things are prettier than artificial, so I suppose the smilax is even prettier than the jar." She could not truthfully put it in the plural—she left it to Rebecca's imagination which "jar" was in question.

Rebecca surveyed them thoughtfully, Dorothy listening anxiously for her first words. They came slowly, but were eminently satisfactory. "It is prettier," Rebecca said, decidedly, "even prettier than my jar, and I thought that was beautiful."

The last lingering trace of regret fled from Dorothy's mind at that, and the green smilax seemed suddenly glorified.—*The Congregationalist*.

HOW TO DRESS A GIRL.

It is a very common saying that it is an easy matter to dress a little girl, but very difficult to clothe a boy. This saying must have originated some years ago, for in these days there is no difficulty whatever in buying everything needful for a boy at any of the ready-made clothing establishments, and at far more reasonable prices, and infinitely more satisfactory in every particular, than the same clothing made at home could possibly be. To dress a girl as she should be dressed requires a great deal of thought and time, unless one is fortunate enough to be able to walk into one of the French establishments and give a carteblanche order for everything. In these days there are few who can do this, and it is a serious question to all mothers how to attain the best result with the least expenditure of money. To begin with, shoes and stockings, which are extremely en evidence with little girls, must be carefully chosen. Until a girl is eleven or twelve she should not wear heels on her shoes; they seriously injure the shape of the foot and are otherwise injurious to her physical health. Spring heels, as those heels are called which are only raised enough to have the foot placed in the proper position when walking, should always be worn. For school wear pebble-goat or straight goat shoes are the best. Calf-skin, even in the lightest quality, is not desirable, as it is very apt to produce corns, and children's feet are exceedingly tender. For dancing-school or for dress wear patent-leather tips with cloth tops, or patent-leather tips with kid tops, are the proper thing. Slippers and low shoes should be avoided, as they are apt to induce bad habits in walking and standing. All children will stand on the sides of their feet if possible, and in slippers and low shoes the habit grows apace. No child can get along without two pairs of shoes which