

Family Department.

MY MOTHER CHURCH.

BY M. F. MAUDE.

Author of "Thine for Ever, God of Love."

"The prayers of my mother, the Church of England, what prayers are like them?"

Life of George Herbert.

"When he called for prayers, the question was asked, 'What prayers?' 'Always the Church prayers,' was his reply. I never before realised so fully that prayer of our Church, 'Suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.'"

Life of Henry Venn Elliott.

My Mother Church! Thy holy prayers
I haped with infant breath;
And oh! I hope that they will rise
From my cold lips in death;
For from the very Fount of Life
Thou drawest undissolved
The pure sweet waters of the Truth
For every thirsting child.

By Thee upon my infant brow
The holy sign was set,
That marked me for the coming strife,
Unconscious babe, as yet;
But willingly, in ripper years,
I heard Thy call to stand,
Grasping the Banner of the Cross
Thou gavest to my hand.

And oh! If many faithless prove
In an unfaithful age,
Let me but cling with deeper love
To my sweet heritage;
Still, though of youth and vigor shorn,
Let me that standard clasp,
Until by stronger hands 'tis borne
From my last dying grasp.

Then, in Thy fold, with "voices from Heaven,"
Oh, lay me down to sleep,
Close to the dear and faithful dead,
Where angels vigil keep;
Till the last trumpet's thrilling blast
Shall pierce the upheaving sod
And the glad wakers rise and spring
Into the Light of God.

—Church Monthly, C. Igany.

Easter Eggs.

BY JOSIE KEEN.

Ethel Stanley had taken a deeper interest than usual in the Lenten services, partly because she had arrived at an age when she could better appreciate them, and in part because their rector had such a kind way of interesting the young in the events preceding the crucifixion of our Lord. Good Friday, with its solemnities, had passed; Easter had come, and its joyous anthem, "The Lord is risen," had just poured forth from their Sunday-school organ, when Ethel, as she turned from the chapel to enter the church, was overtaken by two of her intimates.

"Ethel, do wait a minute!" Exclaimed Kate Treadway. "Nellie and I have been trying to catch up to you to ask if you intended to have any colored eggs this year."

"Colored eggs?" What do you mean, girls?"

"Why have you never had colored eggs at Easter?"

"Not that I remember. Mother, you know, has been rather ill for the past two years and I'm not good at remembering very far back, yet it does seem to me that I must have heard something about them. I heard mother this very morning tell Bridget we must have a supply of fresh eggs for Easter Monday. But, Kate, what do you mean by colored eggs?"

I cannot explain it now, Ethel, for the bell has almost done tolling and we ought to be in our

seats. Dr. Minturn says nothing annoys him more than to see the children of his parish straggling in late to church, for it shows irreverence to the house of God, and makes him fear we have not paid much attention to his teachings."

"That's true," replied Ethel; "but, girls, can't you come round early to-morrow and tell me about the eggs? School, you know, does not begin again until Wednesday."

"Ask your mother; she must know all about them, and perhaps will color some for you. We will, though, bring ours to show you."

Ethel entered church with her companions, and as she took her seat the voluntary from the organ, floating with sweet strains around her, and the beautiful Easter flowers arranged in emblematic devices about the chancel and altar, quite banished all thought of her conversation with her young friends. And it was with deep interest she now took part in the expressive service. The sermon from Dr. Minturn also helped her to more fully understand the greatness of Christ's sacrifice and the finished work when He rose from the sepulchre. Still there was much her young mind could not fully comprehend, and on their return home from church Ethel had many a question to ask of her parents.

"Now, dear mother," said she, "you have told me so much about Passion Week, Good Friday, and Easter. Won't you please tell me something about Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week, and what the girls mean by Easter eggs?"

"Is that what you were lingering to talk over with Kate and Nellie Treadway?"

"Yes; they asked if I intended to have any colored eggs for Easter Monday, and I did not know what they meant."

"Can it be possible that I have never colored any eggs for you, Ethel? Well, since you have been such a good, steady girl all through Lent, I must see what I can do to help you keep Easter Monday in the old-fashioned way."

"How are they colored? and why do we especially use eggs at Easter?"

"One question at a time, dear. To answer your last question first. It is said that eggs are an oriental symbol of life in a sepulchre, for what they contain breaks forth into life; and so, during the festivities following the resurrection of Christ, eggs in various forms, have had a prominent part. Children amuse themselves with gilded and bright-colored eggs. They are usually boiled hard, and in this form boys used to play a game called 'pecking eggs.' It was customary, several years ago, in Philadelphia, and possibly in other cities, for the boys to get out their balls on Easter-Monday for their first game in the park. And on that day, too, good-natured colored aunts would set up little stands with colored or plain hard-boiled eggs upon them for the boys to play 'pecking eggs.'"

"And how was the game played, mamma?"

"Upon the principle of win and take, and like many other games of chance, it sometimes brought its own punishment. Boys with their pockets full of these hard-boiled eggs would challenge others to 'peck eggs.' Holding the points of their eggs together, they give a slight tap; if both shells are cracked, they are even; if but one, the cracked egg is made over to be eaten by the winner."

"Ah! I see how they may become punished," exclaimed Ethel, with a merry twinkle in her eye. "The one who chances to have an extra-hard egg may crack and gobble up lots of hard-boiled eggs. Two or three at a picnic last summer were more than enough for me."

"Yes, dear, they are very indigestible. And no doubt, a too selfish use, or abuse, of this game of 'pecking eggs' has caused it to sink into disuse. At all events, it is much less in vogue among the boys than formerly."

"Now, mother, please tell me how they are colored."

"In various ways, Ethel. Some are colored bright red with cochineal; blue with indigo; bright yellow with chrome, etc. They look prettiest however, when mottled, or with flowers upon them like painted china. This is done by taking some chintze that has upon it small, bright-colored flowers. They are carefully cut out laid upon the egg, and the egg sewed up very smoothly in white cloth. They are then placed in a pan of hot lye water and boiled hard. The lye draws out all the coloring matter from the flowers and leaves their colored impress upon the egg. To mottle them you have merely to choose arabesque chintze, or bright calico, sew a piece smoothly upon the egg, and boil it in the same way. When cool and the cloth is taken off, they will appear in odd, fantastic style."

"I wonder if Kate knows how to prepare them in this way? I would so like to surprise her and Nellie with some real beauties."

"How would you like to give each of them an egg with their own name upon it?"

"Why, can such a thing be done?"

"Yes, dear in this way. Lightly trace with a faint pencil the letters of the name you wish, formed with spaces about them as for raised letters. Then with a slip of tallow, or any grease that will adhere without running, go over the letters. The eggs are then laid in any bright coloring matter and when taken out they will be red or blue, while the lettering will remain clear white."

"Oh, mother, how beautiful they must look? And I have just thought of something else. Why can't I use some of the pretty gilded decalcomanie figures I have upon the eggs, after they are boiled hard?"

"The very thing, Ethel. Some of those gilt beetle-bugs or brilliant butterflies you have would do nicely upon eggs. But as boiled eggs as well as raw are apt to spoil after a while, you might draw out the egg either by pricking a small hole at each end of the shell and blowing out the inside, or, if not disliking the taste of a raw egg, sucking it out of one end. These slightly marred ends can then be covered over with gilt paper, cut out in the shape of a diamond or star and glued on; then, ornamented as you suggest, they will keep for a long time."

Ethel was delighted with all the plans suggested, and early Easter-Monday with a basket of fresh eggs before her, she was ready, with help from her mother, to experiment upon them. Some proved a failure, others turned out beautifully, even beyond Ethel's expectations, and she was half-wild with delight over her dish of gayly-painted eggs. But while dancing about in high glee, she stopped suddenly, and her face grew so sober that her mother, who had been watching her, gently said:

"Of what is my pet thinking? The bright sunshine seems to have vanished. I hope no clouds of disappointment are to come in its place."

"No, indeed, mamma; I was thinking only of poor Jennie White and wondering if she ever in her life saw anything so beautiful in the way of Easter eggs. You know how hard it has been for her to stay shut in all through Lent, and not attend a single service; and she thought so much, too, of taking her elegant calls to church to be placed upon the altar. When trying to bring forward the buds, Dr. Minturn told her it would be a fitting act of self-denial for a Christian child to give her treasured calls to the church."

"Oh, that is true. Poor Jennie! Do you know if her plant was properly cared for after she was taken so very ill, or if she had her wish in having it placed upon the altar?"

"I heard at Sunday-school that the elegant large calla in the very centre of the cross that stood upon the altar was Jennie's offering to the church."