

Family Department.

EASTER GREETING.

By KARL GIERKE.

"Why weepst thou?"—*St. John xx. 15*

Why weepst thou? O greeting full of bliss!
O ever blessed Mary Magdalene!
This word refresheth us a mother's kiss,
Kissing all tears away. So hath it been
Also to me; methinks I hear it now:
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? It breathes in the warm air
After the winter's frost, on this spring day;
The flowers' sweet scent, the meadows green and fair,
The glorious sunshine, chase all cares away;
Singeth the lark, the streamlet murmureth low;
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Oh, raise thy tearful eyes!
Dost thou not know the Heavenly Gardener?
The Lord of the eternal Paradise
Walketh unseen among the flower-beds here;
O drooping rosebud! lo, He calls thee now!
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? For thy Lord's memory?
Has the false world, then, robbed thee of His smile?
Only look up—He is not far away;
The grave's dark night but claimed Him for a while;
In spite of bolts and bars, behold Him now!
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? For the world's cruel spite?
Oh, see! they thought most sure His tomb to make;
Their watch they stationed at the door by night;
But thou, O faith, He can work wonders now?
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Say, is thy sin the stone
Which weigheth down thy soul with fear and gloom?
Oh, look! within His eye-beams love alone!
Our guilt all both buried in His tomb;
The trembling conscience may have quiet now;
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Dost earthly sorrow shroud
With pain and heaviness thy spirit's light?
See, on Good Friday's night of storm and cloud,
Dawns in yon sky the Easter morning bright;
Therefore endure, believe, pray, hope on them;
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Is it thy some dear grave?
That which is deathless seek not 'neath the soil;
Earth only was it, which to earth they gave;
The spirit spread its wings, and soared to God;
He, as from sleep, shall wake the dead below;
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Seemeth the time so long,
That thou on weary pilgrimage must roam?
See, to receive thee 'mong the angels throng,
The Lord is come out (His Father's name);
The dusty shroud and casket soon shall throw;
Why weepst thou?

Why weepst thou? Some drop of comfort, Lord,
Thou canst in every cup of sorrow pour!
If here the bread of tears Thy dost award,
Within Thy kingdom we shall weep no more;
There angel harps shall cheer us soft and low;
Why weepst thou?

—Translated by J. E. A. Brown.

THE WORTH OF A BABY.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

It was a bad day for the Ledburys when John Ledbury quarrelled with his master, Dr. Reed.

Everybody in the country round knew Dr. Reed, with his compassionate, benevolent face, and his bald, with its fringe of white hair. There was scarcely a house perhaps not one, in a circuit of several miles, which he had not entered in some time of sickness and sorrow and where he had not been made welcome as one who brought comfort and help.

Then how did it come to pass that John Ledbury quarrelled with such a master? Dr. Reed lived in a house at the entrance of the village; a small house, yet quite large enough for a man with neither wife nor children. But if the house was small, the garden was unusually large, for Dr. Reed's hobby was a love of flowers; and many a time he had worn an old hat or great coat, long after it, was shabby, that he might spend the money upon some costly plant, or some improvement in his garden. John Ledbury filled the post of both groom and gardener to him, and as he been undergardener at Lord Huntington's, of Huntington Hall, he naturally concluded that he knew a great deal more of the proper treatment of flowers than his master. Late one autumn he left out some rare plants, after Dr. Reed had ordered him to remove them to the greenhouse, and they had every one perished in a sudden frost. No doubt the doctor was more angry than he need have been, and spoke more sharply than he should have done; but John Ledbury did a very foolish thing when he threw up the situation, with a vow never to speak to his old master again.

That was a very hard winter for the Ledburys. John had no idea that he should remain long out of work, for he expected that a sober, clever man like himself would be snapped up immediately. But none of the gentry in the neighborhood wanted a gardener just then, and he did not wish to leave his own pretty cottage, which stood just at the other end of the village from Dr. Reed's. His wife, Rachel, had had a baby only a few weeks before the quarrel; and Dr. Reed had been as attentive to her as if she had been Lord Huntington's lady. But she had not got up her strength again, and now she fretted sorely over the matter, sometimes taking John's part, and sometimes the good doctor's. It was very trying to her to have John hanging about the house all day, with nothing to do, except to find fault with the way everything was done. But before long worse troubles than that came, for all their money had melted away like snow in sunshine, and still nothing was to be heard of in the way of regular employment. Now and then Ledbury had a day's work in the gardens of the farmers about; but they did not require much ornamental gardening, and their own laborers were skillful enough for planting potatoes and beans. It came at last to John having to make many a dreary pilgrimage to the nearest town, where there was a pawnbroker's shop, carrying there, in secret bundles, everything that could be spared from home. Every day, and sometimes twice or thrice a day, Rachel Ledbury saw the good doctor ride past the cottage, with his face steadily turned away from it instead of turned towards it with his kindly smile. Sometimes it made her feel angry, but oftener, it made her heart ache and the tears start to her eyes, for she felt low and sad, and a word or two from him might have put her right again. As it was, John brought her some wonderful pills from the town, which were to make her quite well and strong again if she took plenty of them; but their effect was very slow indeed, and she seemed rather to grow worse than better. Not that there was much the matter with her, except care and anxiety and insufficient food, all resulting from John Ledbury's quarrel with her master.

Six months out of work is a terrible trial, especially through the winter, when fire and light cost so much, and warm clothes are needed, and good food is more necessary than in summer. The baby had suffered least so far, for at any rate Rachel could keep it warm in her arms; but Susie, who was nine years old, had to be kept from school because she had no shoes to put on, nor any decent frock to wear. She was not a child that fretted or complained much, but she could not hide how the cold made her shiver, or how the frost brought chilblains on her feet. Ledbury could not shut his eyes upon all this; but he had made a solemn vow never to speak to his old master again, and he

would rather die than humble himself to ask to be taken on again.

"Rachel," he said one day in the spring, "you'd not mind about leaving the old place, would you?"

She did shrink from it very much, for she had lived all her life in the village, and all her friends were there, only of late John's surly temper had driven them away from the house. Rachel was not altogether sorry for that, for she did not like them to see how bare and empty it was getting; and now, perhaps, it would be better to go away among strangers than come down to beggary where everybody knew her, though a sob rose in her throat as she thought of it.

"Could you get work somewhere else, John?" she asked.

"Oh, no fear of that," he said, confidently; "if we get away from a place where nobody knows nothing about flowers. There are scores of places where they'd be glad of a man like me."

"We'd better go to them, then," answered Rachel sadly.

"Well, I ought to go first," said John, "and choose a place that'll suit us. I might be away a week or two before I'm settled, for I'm rather particular. It's not often that a man like me has to seek for work."

It was the beginning of April when Ledbury set out to seek for work, resolved to take none but in some nobleman's or gentleman's grounds. He had had enough of gardening for a master who would interfere and order about his plants, and he was determined not to enter such a situation again. He did not tell any of his neighbors where he was going, or upon what errand. He had to leave his wife and children with no more than two shillings to provide them with food and firing till his return; but his pride was strong enough to make him certain that in two or three days at the furthest he would meet with a place that would be exactly fitted for him.

The baby was nearly eight months old now, and had learnt to crawl and laugh at him, and nestle in his arms with contented cooing sounds which he loved to hear. Somehow or other, the faces of his wife and Susie seemed a continual reproach to him, they were so sad and dull, with no cheerful smiles upon them; but the baby's face never reproached him. Besides, from being at home all day, he had nursed it and carried it about more than any of his other little ones, who had all died very young, except Susie. So the baby was dearer to him than any of the others had been, and it was a greater trouble to part with it when he left home.

It would have been a sharp and bitter sorrow to John Ledbury if he could if he could have looked in at his home six days after he left it. The baby had been taken ill the very day he went, and had scarcely been out of its mother's lap since. The soft, tiny limbs were wasted away almost to a skeleton, and the little face had never once brightened into a smile, such as had always greeted him when he came into the cottage. Rachel had not dared to send for Dr. Reed, but had tried to doctor it herself; trying first one thing and then another recommended to her by the neighbors. But the baby was sinking rapidly, never opening its little eyelids, and turning away from any food she could give it. She began to think it must die like the other babies, whom even Dr. Reed could not save; and she felt as if her heart would break.

"Susie," she said, "have you ever dropped your curtsey to the doctor?"

"He never looks at me, mother," answered Susie; "he's always looking at something else on the other side."

Rachel's heart sank within her, but she could not give up any chance of her baby's life.

"Susie," she said, after thinking it over a long time, "put on mother's shawl and boots, and run up to the doctor's and tell him baby is dying, like all the rest. Perhaps he'll come."

Very quickly was Susie dressed and at Dr.