



The Family Circle.

## REAPING.

Every one is sowing, both by word and deed;  
All mankind are growing either wheat or weed;  
Thoughtless ones are throwing any sort of seed.

Serious ones are seeking seed already sown;  
Many eyes are weeping, now the crop is grown;  
Think upon the reaping—each one reaps his own.

Surely as the sowing shall the harvest be—  
See what you are throwing over hill or lea,  
Words and deeds are growing for eternity.

There is One all knowing, looking on away,  
Fruit to him is flowing, feeling for the day—  
Will your heart be glowing, in the grand array?

Ye that would be bringing sheaves of golden grain,  
Mind what you are flinging, both from hand and brain,  
Then 'mid glad songs singing you shall glean great gain.  
—*Little's Living Age.*

## DOT AND DIDDY.

BY MRS. C. M. LIVINGSTON.

Dot was named for grandmother, whose name was Dorothy. Diddy's true name was Didymus, called after grandfather. Nobody could think of calling them by such long names when they were babies, so they had always been Dot and Diddy.

They had been busy preparing to-morrow's lessons ever since school; now it was getting too dark to see.

"It gets dark here before it does anywhere else," said Dot, drawing up to the cook stove and resting her feet on the hearth—"mean, dark, old room! I haven't half got my examples."

Diddy would almost make a light in a room, he was such a sunshiny boy.

"Never mind," he said, "you can do them this evening; cheer up, Thursday is New Year's."

"What of that?" Dot said almost petulantly, "New Year's isn't a bit better than any other day."

"What!" said Diddy in astonishment, "When there's no school and I can go coasting all day!"

"I can't," said Dot, "I s'pose I'll do just what I did all day Christmas; sweep, wash dishes, and mop and wash dishes. As if I wouldn't a great deal rather be in school. I don't see why boys should have all the good times; boys ought to do housework too."

"I will," said generous Diddy. "I'll stay home and help you all the forenoon, and you can go with me in the afternoon." This made Dot laugh and feel a little ashamed of herself, though she went on with her grumbling.

"Yes, likely mother'd let me go off with a lot of boys. I tell you I never did see much fun in Christmas or New Year's. I'd rather things would go right along, it's sort o' lonesome and gloomy such days, always."

"It isn't gloomy up to Morrison's," Diddy said, with a little sigh. "I stepped in for Jimmy to get him to go skating with me last New Year's. Whew! what a table they had, all dressed up in flowers and silver, and they had a big turkey and all the fixins', and a plum-pudding, and candies and nuts besides; they were all talking and laughing, and it looked so pleasant. They asked me to sit down and have some dinner."

"Why didn't you?" said Dot, sure if Diddy had accepted the invitation she would have heard of it before this time.

"S'pose I was going to let them think that I came sneaking round just at dinner time, like a dog or a beggar, to see if they'd give me something to eat?" said self-respecting Diddy. "I said no, thank you; I've been to

dinner, and that was true too, even if I didn't have any such big time at it as they did."

"Oh! dear," said Dot, "rich folks can have everything. I wouldn't care to be so dreadful rich, but I would like to have a carpet on the floor, and white tablecloths when we eat, and a nice dinner once in a while, and a room full of windows where the sun came in, and—"

"Children, stop your nonsense," said their mother, a careworn, anxious looking woman, who sat by the window, running a noisy sewing-machine.

"Diddy, get your coal and kindlings, and Dot, light a lamp and set the table."

Poor Dot, no wonder she coveted light and sunshine, and good cheer. Mrs. Wynn had been forced to work so hard to provide for them all since her husband's death; that she sometimes forgot that they needed anything but food and clothes, and shelter. She made pants and vests and had earned a comfortable living, besides paying what was due on their home, and laying up a snug sum in the bank.

The little brown house had four rooms, but the kitchen still served the purposes of sitting-room, workshop, dining-room and kitchen. It was an unusually gloomy room; the paint was dark, and the walls had on them some dingy, greasy paper; the floor was bare, and the one window looked square into the side of a barn; at this window Mrs. Wynn always sat, sewing on the machine, pressing, or making button holes. When meal-time came, the bare table was spread with whatever would give the least labor.

Dot was beginning to feel that their home was not the most cheerful place in the world, now that she occasionally got a peep into the pleasant homes of other girls. Then mother in the midst of her hard work had forgotten that she was ever a child herself, that boys and girls need play, as much as colts and kittens. She forgot, too, to brighten up the dark room with smiles and loving words.

Dot set the table and supper was soon disposed of, and Mrs. Wynn was just sitting down to her work again, when old Mrs. Dow who lived next door came in to see if Mrs. Wynn would not go to meeting with her.

"It's a real dark night and I'm afraid to go alone," she said. "There's a man from England going to preach in our church to-night, just passing through the city you know, so they got him to preach. It isn't really preaching either, they call it a Bible reading. I don't know exactly what that is, but he's wonderful smart I hear."

Mrs. Wynn "guessed not," she couldn't leave the children, and Mrs. Dow said: "Pity if they weren't big enough to stay alone a little while," and Dot and Diddy said, "Do go." "Well, I will, just to accommodate you," said Mrs. Wynn, at last. So after she had charged them not to move the lamp from the middle of the table, nor to open the door if anybody knocked, till they asked who it was, and not to meddle with the fire, she went, although she said she ought to stay at home and make button holes in a vest.

How glad she was that she did not stay. How little she thought that going to that meeting would change everything for her in the most wonderful way.

As Jesus met the blind man in the way, so now he met this tired, busy woman in the meeting, and opened her blind eyes to see that she was lost, and to see that he was her Saviour. She came home loving and trusting him; not the same woman at all who went out of that door two hours before.

Dot and Diddy were asleep, so she had a quiet time to think. Their talk before supper had come to her ears, even though the sewing-machine did clatter so; and Dot's complainings had made her feel cross, she hardly knew why at the time. She resolved now that this should be a New Year indeed to them all, that Dot should have a little more sunshine put into her life. It was late before she slept that night, she had so much to think of.

Next morning when she had sent home her bundle of work all finished, she went to work carrying out some of her plans made the night before.

There was a small room in the wing of the house that had never been used for anything except to put everything in, that anybody did not know what to do with. It had two windows, and "lots of sunshine," and a fireplace. It was cleared out in a hurry, and such scrubbing and scouring as went on

must have astonished the spiders who had occupied it so long. When it was all shining and had dried, Mrs. Wynn locked the door again; she was not ready to open that room to the public yet, there was a secret here.

Next, she went down town, and she actually bought a carpet! It was such a bit of a room that it did not take much; a bright, pretty carpet, white and red, and some white muslin curtains, coarse and cheap, but just as pretty as they could be; a round table for the lamp, a lounge frame, and some chintz to cover it, a rocking-chair and another chair or two, and the little parlor was furnished.

Mrs. Wynn had to work very hard to get the carpet made and down, and the curtains made and up, and all the other things done, but she did, and New Year's eve it was in order, the very cosiest room you ever saw.

Mrs. Wynn had kept the secret about the new room well, but she had not kept the glad look from her eyes, nor the happy tones from her voice. The children wondered, but did not know the reason.

They wondered still more, when next morning somebody called out: "Happy New Year," before their eyes were open. Mother had never done that before. They were more used to being wakened with: "Get up! Are you going to sleep all day? It's going on to seven o'clock." Dot and Diddy were soon up and dressed, and when they came out in the kitchen they gazed with eyes and mouths wide open. The table was set, and it had a white, nicely ironed tablecloth on it, and there was a good smell of johnny cake and baked potatoes. The door of the little rubbish room stood wide open; a fire snapped and crackled on the hearth and made the white walls glow with a rosy light. They got as far as the door and looked in; nobody spoke—at last Diddy broke into a laugh, and Dot joined, and finally all three laughed until they cried, and crying was what they wanted to do at first, for laughing somehow wouldn't let all the new joy out that this New Year morning brought them.

"Who did it?" they said, and "How did you come to do it?" and "How pretty!" and "How beautiful," and "Isn't this grand?" and "Who'd thought this old room would ever look like this!"

Then they both put their arms about their mother, and hugged and kissed her until she fairly gasped for breath, and that was something new for them to do. The Wynn family could never be again what they had been.

It seemed, though, as if wonders would never cease. Behold they had roast chicken with the "fixins" for dinner, and cranberry sauce and apple pie, besides candies and nuts. Then old Mrs. Dow in her best white cap and best black gown came to dinner, and that was new, too—company to dinner.

They were all just as happy as they could be. In the evening they popped corn and played games, mother, Mrs. Dow and all, and they laughed as hard as if they were young.

Before Mrs. Dow went home, mother brought out a big old Bible that had always been packed away out of sight, and she said: "Children, this New Year is going to bring new things to us. I have found a new Master, and now, 'as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.'" Then she read a sweet psalm, and Mrs. Dow prayed, and so this wonderful day came to an end, and Dot and Diddy decided that it was the very newest, and the very best New Year that had ever come to their house.

It came, because the dear Lord kept this promise:

"A new heart will I give you."—*Church and Home.*

## "SUCH AS I HAVE."

BY WILLIAM NORRIS BURR.

"It just makes me sick at heart whenever I think of poor Mrs. Stiles!" exclaimed tender-hearted Mrs. Warren, as she turned a teacup in the pan of hot water before her, and then proceeded to wipe it dry.

"Any new trouble, Sarah?" asked her husband, as he turned the newspaper he had been reading.

"No, I don't know as there is; but, dear me! I don't see how the woman could live if another drop of hardship should come to her. Husband in the insane asylum; her only daughter just dead, leaving those two mites of children; one son with all he can

do to get bread for his own family; the other son in Texas or somewhere; not a cent hardly to spend for herself, as I happen to know. I just think it's too bad; and if ever there was a deserving creature in this world, Mrs. Stiles is one."

"That's true, Sarah; but what can we do for her? Silver and gold we have none, you know, but such as we have I am sure I would be glad enough to give her, if I only knew what we could give that would help her any."

"Silver and gold wouldn't come amiss, I'm pretty sure," rejoined the good wife. "I can't tell any more than you what we've got that would do her any good; but she shan't lack for a comforting word once in a while. I couldn't sleep last night, just for thinking of her."

"There's a power of good in a little thing sometimes," remarked Uncle Jacob, who had been listening attentively to the conversation. Uncle Jacob, as he was called by all the Warren family, was Mrs. Warren's only brother, who recently had returned to their Ohio home after having lived several years in California and Colorado. "That winter I was down in that Colorado mining-camp, shut in there with all those rough men, I thought more of a letter from the folks at home than I did of silver or gold; and once when I got one from Mary that had one from Willie in it, I just went away from the men and cried. You see when Willie found out his mother was writing to me, he wanted to write a letter too; so Mary gave him a piece of paper and a pen, and he went to work to 'write papa a letter.' Great work he made of it, to be sure, for he wasn't three years old; but Mary sent it just as he folded it, and I tell you that piece of paper, all blotted and crumpled, was worth more to me then than a bank-note; and no bank-note could buy it now."

Tears came to the eyes of more than one member of that household, for Uncle Jacob's wife and baby Willie both had died the previous year.

Nelly Warren wiped her eyes, and leaned forward to stroke the cat, attempting at the same time to choke back a sob. Pussy jumped into her lap, and the little girl sat a long time stroking the soft fur and thinking.

"And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This was her "quarter verse." The teacher of the Sunday-school class to which Nelly belonged gave to each of her scholars on the first Sunday of every quarter a verse, the teaching of which she desired the scholar to apply specially to her character and life during that quarter. Nelly had at once memorized her verse, and was on the alert for opportunities of doing something for Christ by helping people about her.

"Remember, Nelly," her teacher had said to her, "that Christ takes note of every little thing; and if you can do nothing more than speak a kind word to a schoolmate, or gladden some heart by the gift of a flower, if you do it for him he will accept the service as done to him."

"What can I do for poor Mrs. Stiles?" was the question she was trying to answer, as she sat there, almost unconsciously stroking the back of the drowsy cat.

The question was still unanswered when the clock announced her bed-time; but as she went to her room she said to herself: "I'll go and see Mrs. Stiles to-morrow, and I'll ask the Lord before I go to show me what I can do to help her."

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"Mother, may I use the new scrap-book you gave me yesterday just as I want to?"

"Why, I think you may, Nelly, of course. I got it for you to keep those clippings in you think so much of. Don't you want to use it for that?"

"That's what I intended to do, but I have a new plan now. When I heard what you said last night about Mrs. Stiles I thought I'd like to do something to bring a little sunshine into her life, so I stopped there just now on my way home from school, and I asked the Lord to show me if there was anything I could do for her, and I think he answered my prayer right away. When I went in, Mrs. Stiles was reading a letter she'd just received from Rob Mason. You know she always thought a great deal of him, and he calls her 'mother' when he writes to her, and she says his letters are a great comfort to her; and he always sends her