



The Family Circle.

SAVED.

BY ROSE TERRY COOK.

Oh! how shall I abide the day,
The day of doom and dread,
When God shall roll the skies away,
And call the sleeping dead?

When all my sins unveiled shall stand,
And on His judgment book
The tribes of men, on every hand,
With eager eyes shall look;—

Drawn out in lines of living fire,
Or strokes as black as night,
By God's divine and righteous ire,
Arrayed to blast my sight!

Across that page Thy bleeding hand,
My Lord and Saviour draw!
Thy blood is Gilead's sacred balm,
Thy death fulfils the law.

That flood of anguish and of love
Shall cover all my shame;
And all my life in heaven above
Be glory to thy name.

RAY'S MISSION.

"I wish I could do something," Ray Severance dropped the needle she was threading with violet zephyr idly upon the dainty square of cream canvas and gazed dreamily into distance.

A large, pleasantly located room, with the afternoon sun streaming in through the carelessly closed blinds, a closed piano with a faint suggestion of dust and neglect about it, a few scattered books and papers, chairs and tables with a reckless demeanor of location, and an imperfectly dusted what-not with nameless trifles irregularly disposed about it. A little glimpse of a dining-room with light and flies holding supreme control over a metaphorical jubilee of enjoyment, a partially prepared tea-table, and a general aspect that very closely resembled untidiness. This was the scene.

Ray Severance, tall, slender and seventeen, with that subtle suggestion of "style" that made everything she wore and did seem namelessly graceful and indescribable about her: Ray, with her unusually brilliant record as a student in the city academy, and her proficiency in music and drawing, was the housekeeper here; her father was rarely at home; he travelled in the interests of his own commercial business; her mother was dead.

Handsome, hard-working Jack, nineteen-year-old Will, struggling with his book-keeping in his father's office and his scholastic desires, twelve-year-old Ralph, the school boy and torment of the household, and nine-year-old Ben, clustered around Ray, the only girl of the family and unconsciously looked to her; and yet this illogical, unreasoning young lady, who had lately given herself to the Lord, her heart warm with loving enthusiasm and zeal, and overflowing with desire to honor and glorify her Saviour, folded her hands and wished for work to do.

"What would you like to do?" The gentle query came from her companion, Grace Pemberton, a diminutive little lady with curling chestnut hair clustering about a fair forehead placid with settled peace and happiness, and a smile that pierced the shadows of life and warmed and gladdened and inspired, so joyous and loving it was.

"Oh, something grand and noble that would help others, and show them I really did mean to do honor to the cause of Christ."

"A generous wish," said Grace gently. "Is there nothing you can do?"

"Well, I might, only that I am so confined here at home I do not have time," said Ray, as she turned her work to shade the pansy she was making.

"And here?" was the mild suggestion from Grace, as she placidly worked a button-hole.

"Well, I don't know"—Ray looked round the apartment, then she laughed—"there is room for improvement surely, but the fact is, Grace, my room does not look like this;

I keep it in some kind of order, but the boy don't care for the fussy little trifles that I have, and I do the work the easiest way, and save hiring help."

"I am aware your room is perfect in the matter of neatness and attractiveness," smiled Grace. "I have rested there too often not to know that. Are you sure the brothers do not care?"

"Well," hesitated Ray, meditating a little, "I never thought they did. I always get their meals and have their shirts in order. Now, Grace, you're thinking of something. Tell me what it is. What have I done or what have I not done?"

Ray was called proud, but she rose and came over to Grace and sat down by her, looking earnestly into her face. "I believe you think I have a field of labor here that I have not discovered. Tell me about it." She took Grace's work gently from her hands, and held them in her own. There was no disputing that a strong affection, sweetened and broadened by this living love for their Saviour, existed between these two.

"I was only thinking, dear," said Grace with that winning sweetness of which she was so largely possessed, "in what a grand, beautiful useful place you stood. Remember, the boys have no mother. They cluster round their home with you as its joy and attraction."

Ray sat still, thinking soberly and silently. At last she said: "Grace, do you think they would notice if there were flowers in the rooms, and fancywork, as there is in mine?"

"Yes," said Grace unhesitatingly, "they might not notice each article individually, but the general effect of grace and beauty would impress them, and whenever their hearts recurred to their home, it would be to remember it as holding the strongest attraction of any place on earth. Ray, dear, it is your God-given work to make it all this."

"But I could not do so much work," said Ray, doubtfully. "It takes nearly all the time, as it is."

"Yes, I know," resumed her friend. "Do not do any more. Keep your strength and energy to minister to the minds and hearts of your brothers. Take your place as the nominal head of this home. Make it a happy, beautiful one, and hire some help. It will pay."

"I know the boys would be willing," said Ray. "They are very good to me though I don't stay with them as I ought. It is so tiresome when you want to shut the door on household tribulations, and forget them in a good time, to feel that you ought to stay."

"I know it," came the gentle, sympathetic answer, "but, Ray, let us remember 'even Christ pleased not Himself.'"

"And I do want to please Him," said Ray humbly and earnestly. "Grace, dear, you have given me new thoughts, a great many of them. I am not going to sigh for new work any more. I'll take what the Lord has given me cheerfully and try to do it well. Is there anything more?"

"Wouldn't you open the piano?" It was a gentle, telling suggestion, and Ray said eagerly, "Yes, I will. I never play for them, and they all love to sing."

"Then you have a new power to keep them with you evenings," said Grace enthusiastically, and Ray reproached herself as she thought how often even her little brother Ben spent his evenings in the street.

"You must stay to tea, Grace," she commanded, "and next time it shall be nicer," and with a faint remonstrance or two Grace complied. She opened the piano and played several spirited melodies, that Will coming in from work clapped his hands to hear.

As they rose from the well-spread table, for Ray took pride in her ability to cook well, and went into the sitting room, Grace said, "Let us sing something," and they all clustered about the piano, and sung song after song.

"Ray, are you going out?" asked Ben as Will left them, and Jack went up to his room, first promising Grace that he would see that she reached home safely.

Ray shook her head and smiled. "I was going to the library, but you'll go for me, won't you?" she said.

"Of course," said Ben promptly, "where's your book?"

"On the table," said Ray, "you might bring something we could read together, and—"

"Robinson Crusoe?" questioned Ben, brightening. "If you choose," said Ray; it

was a threadbare story to her, but if Ben liked it she would enjoy it with him.

"Don't stay long, will you?" she called as he closed the door, and he opened it long enough to say, "Only fifteen minutes."

"Boys, do you care if I hire a girl?" Ray looked across the table, and asked the question as Jack buttered a biscuit and Will sipped his coffee.

The boys looked amused, and Jack said, "What for, sis?" He was fond of his pretty sister, and he showed it in tone and manner.

"Oh, some extra work, and by the way, I don't seem to have much time with any of you. I think we ought to have some pleasant evenings here together, and if you will help me, we will."

"Count on me," said good-natured Jack. "What is to be the programme?" asked Will.

"Oh, reading and music, study and general improvement," answered Ray, merrily, "will you all come?"

"Do you admit checkers?" asked Ralph, growing interested.

"O yes," replied Ray, "but you will have to instruct me, Ralph."

"Well," said Ralph, "I will, sis. To-night, did you say? I promised the boys to go with them to-morrow evening."

"And that makes me think," said Ray. "bring the boys in when you want to, Ralph, you can have the dining-room."

"All right," said Ralph, as they rose from the table, and he went out of the room puzzled but happy.

"Well, we'll come," said Jack as he left. "What time does the curtain rise?"

"At half past seven," said Ray promptly, "with the piano open."

"I'll send up Mary Murphy," said Will as he shut the gate.

"Do, that's a treasure," called Ray after him, at which gentlemanly Will took off his hat, and bowed with a polite good morning, saying to Jack as they parted at the corner, "What freak is upon Ray now?" and receiving for an answer, "I do not know, but it is a pleasant one."

And Will, as he took down the ponderous ledger, thought "the pleasantest thing that has happened since mother died."

"It is a real shame," said Ray to herself, as she surveyed the bare walls of Jack and Will's room, and looked back into her own, pretty and carefully kept. They occupied the front chamber, the prettiest in the house, but it looked desolate and somewhat neglected. "It shall not look so long," decided Ray, as she industriously swept, while Mary Murphy sang, washed dishes, and scrubbed below.

"It looks some better," she announced to herself after she had worked an hour. The carpet was bright as sweeping could make it; the bed dressed in a new white spread heretofore sacred to the spare bed, but which Ray decided was not too good to be used; her braided pillow-shams with the dainty monogram "S" were added to the plump pillows. Ray brought up, with Mary's help, a writing-desk from her father's room, and arranged their books and papers, hung up and looped with ribbons some fresh white curtains, promising herself some lambrequins for their windows at the earliest moment of manufacture. Then she added a bright bouquet to the little table with its white cover, set the study-lamp on her prettiest lamp-mat in the centre, and pronounced it for the present done.

"How nice you look!" said Jack, coming in wearily and dropping down into the first chair, while he looked in a pleased way about. The room was cool and shaded with curtains drooped low, with open piano and invitingly scattered books, papers and music, a study table, and a domino box for Ralph and Ben. Ray had brought in her ivies, twined them gracefully about the pictures, pillaged her room of all the suitable fancy work, and dotted the whole with two pretty bouquets.

"Rests a fellow to see this," said Will, appearing in the back door. "Ray, you're an angel!"

Ray's eyes filled with pleased tears, even while she felt a regretful throb. No work! Ah, how she had been mistaken! These were not perfect young men, only home-loving, warm-hearted, and affectionate brothers, yet here they were gratefully praising her every effort for their comfort. This would be hers all the time, and the approving smile of conscience over the performance of these humble duties. "I'm afraid you have not been so happy as you could be at home,"

she said, "but I mean to do better now. I did not know you cared so much for these things," she finished, smiling at Ben, who came in rosy and damp from his hasty toilet.

"Some good fairy has been in our room," said Jack as he came down stairs. "Thank you, sis. I mean to stay there all the time."

"But we won't let you," said Ray; "and now attention, boys! if you don't fold the spread and pillow-shams every night they shall be banished."

"I give you my word of honor as a gentleman that ceremony shall never be omitted," said Will, while Ray laughed and called them to supper.

What need to speak of the happy evenings that followed, or of the bright months, even years, that succeeded this new era in the lives of this family?

Life was not all successes and smooth places for Ray. There were dark days, and discouragements, and troublous times for the young housekeeper. There were self-denials and self-forgetting, hard things to do, but the God who gave Ray her mission abundantly blessed the cheerful, loving willingness with which she labored. Ray lived to know, in a happy home of her own, that her brothers were earnest, Christian, temperance men, who looked back upon that home as the brightest spot, the most endeared, hallowed place in their lives.

They had always looked upon sister Ray as the infallible counsellor, guide and sympathizer of their every trouble and gladness; to her they ascribed their successful lives, their happiness, and their hope of heaven. And she said reverently, "Let no woman say there is no work to do who has a home, however lowly;" and she read, with happy smiles and tears struggling for ascendancy, upon the fly-leaf of the family Bible which Will had sent her from Harvard where he was studying: "Give her the fruits of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."
—Interior.

DAISY'S LESSON.

BY M. B. WALDRON.

"A froggie would a-wooloo go,
Whether his mother would let him or no;
So off he sat, in his opera hat;
On the road he met with a rat!"

Gaily sang Daisy, sitting on the rug on the piazza, arranging the drapery of her doll's overskirt.

A voice coming through the curtains of the long window at her back interrupted her.

"What do you know about frogs, Daisy?"

The child's bright face grew serious. "What do I know about frogs, Nell? Oh, ever so many things! I know a frog begins with a pollywog and grows into a tadpole, and by-and-by his tail drops off, and he's a frog. And sometimes frogs and toads get into the middle of great rocks and trees, and live hundreds of years without anything to eat or drink."

And Daisy returned to her doll-dressing with an air of wisdom.

There was a rustling sound behind the curtains; they parted, and out stepped a young miss of fifteen summers, who had her hair stylishly arranged, and her pretty dress relieved with dainty lace and ribbons, not at all such a looking person as you would expect to be interested in frogs.

"Come with me, Daisy, and I'll show you something."

Daisy laid her doll carefully upon a cushion and followed her sister.

Presently Nell stopped beside a bench in the back yard, and said:

"What do you see, Daisy?"

"I see an old pail with some water, and grass and weeds in it."

"Do you see nothing else?"

"Nothing, except some scum floating around on the top of the water."

"Well, look closely at the scum, as you call it. That is a gluey substance, and the black specks you see in it are frogs' eggs. I was out with Jack this morning, looking for beetles, and we brought this home. If you will watch these eggs every day, you will learn how frogs grow. Each female deposits about twelve hundred eggs in the water; then the sun shines on them and keeps them warm."

"Don't the mamma frog have any more bother about them, Nell?"

"No. You will see that each one of these eggs will turn into a tiny lump of jelly, and it will cling to the grass by means of a small sucker; then it will develop a tail, and it