

GIFTS FOR JESUS.

Little children! There are many
Who have neither time nor skill,
Gold nor silver, yet may offer
Gifts to Jesus if they will.
There are ways—Jesus knows them,
And his children all should know
How to find a flower for Jesus
Underneath the deepest snow.
How to wreath a lovely garland
Winter though it be and cold
How to give the rarest offerings,
Costing—something—but not gold—
How to buy, and buy it dearly;
Gifts that He will love to take;
Nor to grudge the cost but give it
Cheerfully, for Jesus' sake.
Does this seem so strange, dear children?
Yet 'tis surely nothing new;
All may give Him noble presents,
Shall I tell you of a few?
Well, sometimes 'tis hard to listen
To a word unkind or cold,
And to smile a loving answer—
Do it, and you give Him—gold!
Thoughts of Him in work or playtime,
Smallest grains of incense rare,
Cast upon a burning censer
Rise in perfumed clouds of prayer.
There are sometimes bitter fancies,
Little murmurs that will stir
Even a loving heart—but crush them,
And you give our Saviour—myrrh!
Flowers—why, I ne'er could finish
Telling of the good they do,
Yet I'll tell you how to plant them,
In what garden plot they grew.
Modest violets, meekest snowdrops,
Holy lilies white and pure,
Loving tendrils, herbs of healing,
If they only would endure!
And they will—such flowers fade not,
They are not of mortal birth;
And such garlands wreathed for Jesus
Fade not like the flowers of earth.
And I think you all must see, that
They are emblems, and must trace
In the rarest and the fairest,
Acts of love and deeds of grace.
Now, dear children, can you tell me
Have you still no gifts to lay
At the throne of our dear Saviour,
Any hour or any day?
Let us give Him—now—forever,
Our first gift—the purest—best,
Give our hearts to Christ, and ask Him
How to give Him all the rest.

The above lines were written by a little deaf and dumb girl.

CONCERT AT THE VIC'S.

Never was such a large gathering seen in the Armory hall as on the 12th inst. The concert which was given under the auspices of St. Patrick's Catechism was crowned with the most dazzling success. Rev. M. Callaghan presided. Before calling out the items he made a few well-chosen observations. He should welcome the audience. They might feel proud of themselves. If they looked for quantity they had it in a densely crowded hall; if for quality, they were in the midst of what represents our worthiest citizens and of what would yet shine conspicuously in the annals of our country. They came prepared for a treat and they would have a first class treat in the line of music and elocution. They would realize two things. They would see what an advantage it is to be educated and would find they may thoroughly enjoy themselves without risking anything whatever. They would be introduced to a number of remarkable midgets and ushered into a world of wonders which they did not anticipate. P. J. Downs and Fred Symons distinguished themselves as pianists; Allie Warner, Chas. McGee and Frank Doherty as elocutionists; Alice Hatton, her sister Carrie and Nellie McAndrew as vocalists. W. Sullivan was accompanied in his "Mazurka de Concert" by Prof. Fowler. Madeline Cullen made her debut in "Papa can't catch me." Her voice is sweet and bewitching. Everybody was astonished at the violin-playing of J. Shea—(see engraving on third page.) Master Shea has just reached his seventh year and has been studying the violin only four months under Prof. Sullivan. He plays his notes correctly and in perfect measure. All who took part in "The Dolls' Hospital," especially the matron, and in "the Antidote," made for themselves a host of admirers. Linda Conway won instant favor. She was ap-

plauded and encored in her song entitled "A little blonde in blue." She is not yet seven years old and was never at school. Arthur Nicholson and Jas. McNally riveted universal attention by a variety of the cleverest surprises. The entertainment lasted two hours, during which the interest manifested by the audience never flagged a second. A general wish was expressed that it would be repeated and all present registered a promise to return in February. S—FLY.

MARGARET.

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH.

THE days passed more wearily than ever in the little house by the sea; for December had come in, and Margaret felt that, as Christmas Day drew near, she must die. The sky grew greyer and greyer; and the sea seemed part of the sky, except where the white streaks of the breakers broke its surface. The fire in her little room glowed brightly, and a late chrysanthemum, rescued from beneath a great pile of brush at the end of the garden, perfumed the air aromatically.

There were two pictures in this room covered



LINDA CONWAY.

from sight; and, although Margaret was a Catholic, a lovely medallion done by a Bavarian priest, who served the church at the lighthouse, in which the Adoration of the Magi was represented, had also been veiled. Margaret's heart filled with bitterness at the sight of a child. What right had other mothers to joy when she had none? This wood-carving—so remarkable because the Child Jesus was exquisitely portrayed,—which she had loved above all her possessions a year or two ago, had become distasteful to her. She found no comfort in the wrapt and joyous look of the Mother; no delight in the lovely, dimpled face of the Child, which was a miracle of art. A dumb, sullen despair had taken possession of her. She was alone in the world, and the weird sob and moans of the Atlantic in wintry weather seemed to fall in well with her sad thoughts.

Early in the summer she had come down to the sea with her husband and child, the little Wilfred. June had been a dream of happiness,—sunshine and the glow of wild roses, and the dash of the foam on the white sand. Wilfred, who was four years old, had learned to run down to meet the flashing, white spray; and then, when the first drops touched his rosy feet, to rush back with open arms to his happy mother. The three were happy in themselves. The little house, the wild roses, the sea, and themselves, were enough—just enough. Sometimes Margaret felt that she had almost forgotten God in her happiness. On Sundays there was the trip to the little church beyond the lighthouse, through the briar-lined hedge, all aglow with pink and gold. She often said to herself, in a

kind of ecstasy, that she was happy. And day by day the little Wilfred bloomed, with his pink cheeks and his golden hair, like one of the roses.

But one day, on which her husband had come down to the sea-shore for part of his vacation, she left him and the child together. She buttoned the little fellow's blue and white bathing suit; and, thinking how pretty his golden curls were as they fell upon it, she bade the two she loved best on earth good-bye. She never saw them again. When she came back from her errand to the town, they were not in the breakers or on the beach. The sand glistened in the sunlight, and the spray rose higher and higher, as the tide came in. She knocked at the doors of the bathing houses, and there was no answer. Could they have gone home? She hastened thither. She called in vain: they were not there.

Margaret sat for a moment on the vine-wreathed doorstep and waited. "They are hiding from me," she said, yet her heart stood still as she said it. "They are hiding from me,—oh, yes, they are hiding from me!" But there was no movement, except that of the breeze among the vines; and the only creature that came near her was a huge yellow butterfly, which dashed against her hand, leaving a blotch of yellow dust upon it.

Heart-sick as she was, she noticed the golden dust, and wondered whether it was from a flower or not. Every emotion of that short time of waiting seemed etched in her memory. She could live it over again at will at any time in her afterlife. She arose from the doorstep, and went toward the pier. On this pier was hung the sign "Dangerous." Here was the famous undertow, the terror of even the stoutest swimmer. There was a small group on the pier, with glasses set for a distant view; and just as Margaret reached the place the life-boat touched the sand. Could there have been an accident; No; for the boat was empty.

In the distance they saw a steam tug; and farther off, far beyond the line of tossing breakers, a schooner gliding eastward. The crew of the life-boat were strangely silent. She went up eagerly to the one she knew best, gruff but kindly Captain Somers.

"Have you seen—?" she began.

He did not answer; he turned his head away. The smallest of the crew—a little boy who had often tossed Wilfred in his arms, and who had still the look of his own babyhood on his face—took her hand softly, and pointed with his to the sea. It was enough. Her whole being thrilled with the awful, unspoken news. It was enough; she knew the sea had taken them.

When she came to her senses, they told her—how old Captain Somers hated the task!—that her husband, with the little Wilfred on his back, had gone out far beyond the breakers. The crew had watched him from their station unconcernedly; for they knew he was an expert swimmer. Suddenly the little Wilfred relaxed his hold; his arms dropped from his father's neck and he disappeared. The crew saw the father's head disappear under water. When he came to the surface with the child, he was in a direct line from the fatal pier. The crew manned the boat. In vain. The undertow, like the water nymphs of the legends, like the naiads who drew young Hylas to his death, had carried Wilfred and his father beyond the reach of help. They were gone—that was all. The sea made no other answer. And in that ever-changing grave, without a cross or flowers, the best beloved of Margaret's heart lay through the golden summer, through the ruins of November, and now in the wintry December. The snow that fell melted into the ocean, like their lives.

For weeks she waited for their coming. She lived alone and waited,—alone, alone. Many a time in the night, when the hail tapped on the window or the door, she opened it eagerly, expecting to see the dear yellow curls gleam in the light of her lamp and hear the sweetest of all voices cry out, "I am here; mamma! Papa and I have been hiding among the rosebushes." One night, when the tap was louder than usual, she found on her threshold a little dead bird, cast from its nest by the wind against her door. Until this time she had been tearless; at the sight of the little creature, with its dragged feathers and torn wing, the tears came.

She would see no one all these months. She hastily went to town in the twilight for the necessities of life, and returned like a spectre. The priest of the church near the lighthouse, who had loved the little Wilfred, came to see

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