



The Family Circle.

GROWTH IN GIVING

BY MRS CHARLES.

Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine
It shall serve thee and thy brother.
Love divine will fill thy storehouse,
Or thy handful still renew,
Santy fare for one will often
Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving
All its wealth is living grain,
Seeds which milder in the garner,
Scattered, fill with gold the plain.
Is thy burden hard and heavy?
Do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden,
God will bear both it and thee.

Numb and weary on the mountains,
Wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,
And together both shall glow.
Art thou stricken in life's battle?
Many sounded round thee moan,
Lavish on their wounds thy balsam,
And that balm shall heal thine own.

Is the heart a well left empty?
None but God its void can fill
Nothing but a ceaseless Fountain
Can its ceaseless longings still.
Is the heart a living power?
Self-twined its strength sinks low,
It can only live in loving,
And by serving love will grow.

HONEST AND TRUE.

BY M. B. H.

"Honest and true" that was what little Ben Huntington had been called, ever since he had been old enough to talk, and that is a good thing to have said of any one, be it boy, girl, or man. Of course, Ben had faults, like every one else, although with him there was a certain manly, upright feeling, of always wanting to do as nearly right as possible, and when he did commit an error he not only bravely owned up to it, but was very repentant, and tried his utmost not to do it again. In such a son the parents had every confidence, and, as he was the eldest of a family of three, he was an untold comfort to them all. Sometimes when the two little girls annoyed him he was cross, and told them in round terms what he thought of them, generally asking their pardon an instant after, and being "no end sorry," as he said, "that he had given way to temper. But he had become rather used to having people look upon him as a model boy, and had heard so much of his good qualities, that without knowing it, he began to feel a little conscious of his merits, and that is a dangerous feeling to indulge in. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is a good text for any one to remember. Now, with all Ben's goodness, I doubt if he kept that verse very much in mind.

One day Mr. and Mrs. Huntington went to a neighboring city to do some shopping. "We shall not return until late at night, my boy," Mrs. Huntington had said. "I want you to stay home from school to-day and take care of our two little sisters. I need not tell you to be good to them," and she smiled indulgently, "but watch them that they don't fall into mischief, until we come back."

"All right," said Ben, "I'll do my very best to be Father Huntington to-day," and he put on a terrible frown, caught up his father's gun, and asked the little girls if they were not afraid.

Their arms were round his neck in a moment, and, between laughter and kisses, they smoothed out the make-believe frown, then they kissed their parents good-bye, and all three mounted the window-seat, and watched, as far as their eyes could reach, down the village street. At the corner they saw their mamma, and as she kissed her hands, and then the whistle of the train, and a moment after the car whizzed by the window.

"Now they're all gone," said Ben, "do, Benny, dear, amuse us some way."
And baby Jennie reproached her sister's with "Ee, maw, maw, Benny, maw maw more a nobody."

Ben was very glad to amuse them, so, putting on their hats, he took them for a little walk, taking a hand of each and chatting with them kindly and pleasantly as an older brother should. Ben had a garden and many garden utensils, and he let Bess and Jennie do some digging and weeding that pleased them

very much, and gave them a vastly important feeling, and then, as cherries were ripe, he climbed the big tree and filled his cup with beautiful, waxy ox-hearts; and while they sat on a bench, chatting and telling stories, the dinner-bell rang, and they jumped up, amazed beyond anything, to find that half of the day had gone already. What a lovely thing a big brother was to be sure! The little girls would have been very lonely but for him.

After dinner Ben got out the playthings, and lay down on the sofa himself to read a little.

"Mother said she was going to bring us each a present, if we were good," he said. "Suppose, Bess, that you see to Jennie for a little while, and give a fellow a chance to read. I want to finish this story."

"All right; we'll be awful good, Benny, dear."

And the two children sat down upon the library floor and began their play. Ben watched them a moment to see that everything was going on smoothly, and then took up his book with a pleasant consciousness of being one of the very best boys alive. Honest and true! Why, his mother had said to-day, that she would not have dared go away and leave two little girls with only one servant, but for her trusty boy. It certainly was very pleasant.

Now in the library stood a desk of Mr. Huntington's, in which his valuable papers and writing materials were kept, and which the children were not allowed to open, except when papa or mamma was by; then, sometimes Ben had permission to use pen and ink, or take a sheet of paper from it; but it was a generally accepted fact that the little ones were not to meddle with papa's things. To-day, Ben wanted a sheet of paper very much. There was a little carol in the story he was reading, that he wanted to copy, and he jumped up from the sofa to get the paper from his mother's desk, but remembered that he used the last sheet the day before for his composition.

"Bother! bother!" he said, rumpling up his hair, and considering what to do next. He wanted the carol. It was so pretty, and he had a great fashion of saving up bits of poetry, not only to read himself, but to mamma, who sometimes when he had found anything particularly nice, made up a little tune on the piano, and played and sang to amuse the children in the evening. And it was the very prettiest carol he thought that he had ever heard; besides, the book must be returned to-morrow on his way to school. Just then he looked up, saw the keys dangling in the key-hole of his father's desk, and thought, "Why, here's the very thing!"—then stopped—that was forbidden. Yes, but he was head of the house to-day—actually standing in his father's shoes, as it were. Of course, he was at liberty to do anything. Why, even the kitchen-maid had but that moment put her head in the door, deferentially asking his opinion about buttered toast or hot waffles for tea. She recognized his position clearly. Was not that enough? No, it was not exactly enough for a boy of Benny's honest, straightforward ideas.

He knew he was making a poor argument of it as he went along, but then, he wanted the paper, and so he indulged in a little more argument again, to strengthen his cause if possible. He had often taken paper from that desk before. Yes, but on the other hand, conscience said, "Your papa gave you leave, and he is not here to-day to do it now. He told you to be careful and not to do anything which you would not do if he were here. Now, Benny, would you unlock that desk if he were in the room?" "To be sure I would if he told me to, and he would tell me to—he's often done it—and—of course it's right enough."

Bess and Jennie had gone up to the nursery, to bring down the dollies, and he was quite alone. It surely was right, and yet his heart beat painfully as he unlocked the desk and began looking about for the paper. After a time he found it, then he thought how nice it would be to copy the piece right there at the desk. Of course he should tell his father of it the first thing, but as he was looking about for the ink and selecting a good pen, he suddenly espied a new volume standing among the account books and ledgers on one of the shelves.

He was certain that he had never seen it before, and took it down instantly to see what it was. It was new and very grand, with gilded edges and much fine engravings on the book—the very handsome book that he had seen in many a long day, and full of pictures too. Why, how funny that papa had put it in "here, and I never told him a word of it. Oh, if he could only look it all through! But just then Sarah put in her head again.

"Misther Edgerton's son is at the door, Master Ben, and would like to speak to you a minute."

"Oh, certainly," said Ben, "right off, Sarah."

He left the open book on the desk and bounded away.

Just to speak to him a minute," Sarah

had said, but boy's minutes are never to be calculated by a chronometer, and Roy Edgerton had a good many things to talk about beside the next day's lesson, and the prize essay for which they were about competing, and it was fully half an hour before Ben went back to the library.

Meantime the two little girls had come down stairs; Bess, with her china doll in holiday attire gathered up in her arms, and Jennie, with a long discarded feather that, in its palmy days, had once adorned her mother's bonnet. They were going to ask Ben to play "keep house and visit," when they saw the open desk and the pretty book upon it. They saw, too, that it was full of pictures, and, with childish curiosity, they eagerly pushed up a chair, mounting it to get a better view.

It really was a beautiful book. On nearly every page there was a fine engraving of some animal, with a short sketch of its habits and appearance, as well as the country from which it came; all of which was of no manner of consequence to the little ones so long as the pictures were pretty. They leaned on the desk delightedly, and turned leaf after leaf with many an "Oh! and Ah! of delight, never once thinking of harm, until, by an unlucky wave of Jennie's long feather, crash went the ink-stand over the book, making a great blot, and completely destroying one of the finest engravings.

Bess caught the bottle with considerable presence of mind, before its contents had dripped upon the desk or floor, and then telling Jennie, who began scolding her naughtily "fowser" that she could make it all right, she took out her little handkerchief and sopped the wet page thoroughly. She was very well pleased to see how nice it looked when she had finished. To be sure, the beautiful lion, who stood in the jungle, looked a little obscure, and she had in some places rubbed so vigorously that at the white paper almost showed through; but it was on the whole with a rather triumphant feeling that she told Jennie to come sit on the sofa, and she'd turn the leaves for her while they finished looking; then they'd be away from the ink and have a good time.

So Ben found them, laughing, chatting, and choosing between an elephant and a rhinoceros for an imaginary ride, and quite forgetful for the moment of the unlucky ink spot.

"Why, why, why?" he exclaimed in astonishment, "who told you you might take that book?"

"Me and Bess," said little Jennie. "Come Ben, and see the elephant wiv his hook."

"Oh, you dear, little goose," laughed Ben, "it's a trunk." And seeing that Bess looked very important and held the book carefully, he came to the sofa, leaning on the arm of it, looking it over with them, and stopping to read a word here and there. He thought as long as the book had been taken from the shelf, it could do no possible harm now to see the pictures.

"See what Jennie's feather did," said Bess, "but I rubbed it all out so nicely," and she turned to the ill-fated lion, disclosing to Ben's frightened gaze, not only the ruined engraving, but muddy, dark stains, on the opposite page, the result of Bess's closing the book before it had thoroughly dried.

She took her handkerchief out of her pocket, and said "It'll all wash out" with such a comforting air that Ben had not the heart to scold her; but he was in despair.

It was all his fault, he acknowledged—all his fault. It was the result of wrong doing in the first place. If only he had not gone to the desk at all! He opened the book to let it dry, and told Bess and Jennie to go on with their "playing visit," without a word of reproof to them, but—as he said to himself—his heart just dropped down in his boots and staid there.

What should he do? He leaned his head on his hand and felt as miserable as it was possible for a boy of Ben's nature to feel. His parents had trusted him so, and now they never could again—never—never. The pleasant day had all ended for him. He tried to play with the little girls and he put the book away just where he had found it, after the page was thoroughly dried. He was too miserable to copy the carol—indeed, he never wanted to see it again, and he finally went to the window, watching for his father and mother, in too unhappy a frame of mind for enjoyment of any kind. And then the carol dashed by with a shrill whistle, the lamps were lighted, and Sarah hurried to and fro, from the kitchen to the dining-room, while a whiff of something savory came in every time the door was opened. And mamma was so glad to see them again, and papa looked so pleased when Ben said "all right," and the little girls bimed in. How could Ben tell of the blotted book then? But his power of mind was all gone when his father patted his head kindly and his mother kissed him with such a loving smile.

When tea was over then came the opening of packages and banquets, and finally from out a mysterious white box, what should come

forth but two dolls exactly alike, except that one wore a pink sash and the other a blue. How the bright eyes twinkled and how eagerly Bess and Jennie hugged their new treasures to their hearts, with an utter forgetfulness of everything else in the world.

"And this is for you, my son," said Mr. Huntington, going to the desk and taking out—would you believe it?—the very book with the blotted page, "that had caused him all his unhappiness that afternoon. "It is a valuable and beautiful work, and I know you will like it. I bought it several days ago; but I thought I would keep it as a reward of some kind, and to-day you have been faithful enough in your trust to deserve it."

Ben gave a murmur, "Thank you,—but, father!"—and then stopped. How could he tell? His sisters were entirely too much occupied with the dolls to think of anything so entirely common-place as a book, and the unsightly blot on the engraving was of no consequence to Bess since her handkerchief had obligingly wiped it all off.

Ben kissed his parents and went upstairs with his book under his arm, pretending that the light was better there, but really to be alone and think. Up and down the stairs he paced, up and down, with only conscience for a companion.

"How very oddly Ben acts to-night," said Mr. Huntington. "He had scarcely anything to say when I gave him his book, and his face was anything but happy when he walked off with it under his arm. And now hear him walking to and fro overhead—I'm afraid something is wrong."

Mrs. Huntington dropped hands in her lap and listened. "Yes, something must be wrong. I think I'll go up and see him."

"No, no; let him come to us when he has made up his mind. If anything has gone wrong, it will do him no harm to think it over."

"But he said particularly that everything had gone right."

And while the parents were wondering over their son's strange behavior, the door opened and in he came. He walked straight up to his father and laid his gift on the table before him. His eyes were quite clear and determined now, and his face no longer overcast.

"Papa," he said, "I cannot take the book. I want you to keep it until you think I am worthy of it. I do not deserve it now. I was disobedient and told a falsehood, and I think you ought really to give it to some one else—some one who deserves to be called honest and true, and not to me." And forthwith he told the whole story.

It did not take him long to do this, or for his parents to listen and advise. What they said I cannot tell, for the door was closed, and how could I be expected to listen? But I know that when Ben came out again, although the book was gone, his face was radiant, and his heart lighter than it had been since his act of disobedience. He went straight up to his own room, and knelt down by his bedside, and I am sure that he asked earnestly for strength to overcome his faults.

Some weeks after this occurrence he found a beautiful illuminated text hanging over his dressing-table, and these were the words he read, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And beneath it lay the very book that he had refused to accept as a reward of merit. It was open at the fly-leaf, and stooping over he read, in his father's firm, clear hand, "To my dear son; as a reminder of the time when he proved himself honest and true in confessing a fault."—*Charles May.*

THE BIOGRAPHY OF "MOTHER" GOOSE.

At the Christmas festival of the Sunday-school of the new Old South church, Boston, the Rev. J. M. Manning made an address, in the course of which he stated the interesting fact that "Mother Goose" was not a myth, but a veritable person and a member of the Old South church. He said:

In the list of admissions for the year 1688 occurs the immortal name of Elizabeth Goose. I almost beg pardon of her memory for saying "Elizabeth," since by the unanimous verdict of the world, in whose heart her name is enshrined, she is known as "Mother" Goose. So, then Mother Goose is no myth, as some have thought, but once lived in Boston, in veritable flesh and blood, as the records of the Old South church clearly show.

The maiden name of this venerable lady, member of us all, was Elizabeth Foster; she lived in Charlestown, where she was born, until her marriage, then she came to Boston, where her thrifty husband, Isaac Goose, had a green pasture ready for her, on what is now Washington street, so including the land in 1724 about Temple place. She was his second mate, and began her maternal life as step-mother to ten children. These all seemed to have been lively little gooslings and to their number she rapidly added six more. Think of it! Sixteen gooslings to a single goose—assuming that none of them had been eaten up