



The Family Circle.

THE MASTER'S SERVICE.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

I knelt at the foot of the Master,
Who knew how my heart burned with love,
But I said: "Let me work in Thy service,
And so my devotion I'll prove."

And I looked on the far, waving harvest;
Saw the need of more laborers there,
And I said: "Let me haste to the reaping,
And my sheaves shall be golden and fair."

But he said: "Nay! My child; there are others,
Far stronger My reapers to be;
Stay thou still in thy place, and be watching
To do some small service for Me."

Then I looked on the green sloping hillsides,
Where the vineyards in terraces lay,
And the sunshine, so calm and so golden,
Made joyous the long harvest day.

And I said: "Let me go to the vineyards,
Where the clusters hang purple and sweet;
I will gather the largest and finest,
And bring all my spoils to Thy feet."

But he said: "Nay! My child; there are others
To gather the fruit of the vine;
Stay thou still in thy place and be quiet,
Nor thus at thy station repine."

Then I looked down the beautiful valley,
Where the lilies grew stately and fair,
And the roses blushed scarlet and crimson,
And scented the earth and the air.

And I said: "Let me gather the flowers—
Those flowers so fair and so sweet;
I will bring them in all their bright beauty,
And lay them with love at thy feet."

But he said: "Nay! My child; let the flowers
Bloom on in their fragrance and grace;
They are not for thy fingers to gather,
Stay, stay thou content in thy place."

'Twas a dream! But the meaning remaineth;
And now in the byways and lanes
I search for the clover and daisies,
And glean for the scattering grains.

My sheaves will be scanty and humble—
All others more stately and good;
But what joy, if at nightfall the Master
Shall say: "She hath done what she could."
—Observer.

CALLED TO BE SAINTS.

(By Helena Maynard, in The Standard.)

There was a discontented expression on the usually cheery face of Ethel Hastings as she knocked at Mrs. Estey's door one sunny September afternoon. I think that was why Mrs. Estey proposed that Ethel should run up to the nursery for a few moments while she finished writing a letter for the next mail, knowing that the cunning ways of the children would bring back the smiles. So they did, and when, a few moments later, Mrs. Estey joined them she found Ethel and five-year-old Robbie in great glee over a wish-bone.

"I've got the wish, I've got the wish. I'm going to be a soldier," cried Robbie.

"What did you wish for, Ethel?"

The discontented look again shadowed Ethel's brow as she answered slowly, "I wished I had a calling."

"A calling, what is that?" queried Robbie, while his mother said: "Are you sure you haven't?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Estey, I have been out calling, this afternoon, on some of the girls in my class that graduated last June. I found Anna Davis all absorbed in her painting. She really has a great deal of talent, and with every opportunity to cultivate it, I do not doubt she will one day become a noted artist. It is the same with Ella Bladis' music. She is going to Germany next month to study. Mary Morris is hard at work as stenographer, earning a good living for her widowed mother and little sister, while Alice Moreland is taking a medical course preparatory to going to India as a missionary. The young men of the class are all in business or in some higher educational institution. I am the only idler among them all."

"I have always thought you were very industrious, dear," said Mrs. Estey.

"Oh, yes, I always find enough to do,

but it doesn't amount to anything. I paint a little and play a little, but I haven't talent enough to make a specialty of either. Father isn't willing to have me take up anything for a business. He says he is abundantly able to support me and he wants me at home. Father is rather old-fashioned. I believe he thinks marriage is the only proper calling for a woman," she added, a little bitterly.

"It is not the only one, but a very blessed one, as I hope you will find some day," answered her friend.

"I hope so, too, Mrs. Estey," Ethel said frankly, "but I have never felt that it was something to seek for and strive after as some girls do. It hasn't come to me yet, perhaps it never will, and in the meantime—"

"In the meantime, Ethel, you have a real calling."

Ethel shook her head, but Mrs. Estey said, smiling, "I suppose you will take Paul's word for it if you don't mine."

"Paul's word?" repeated Ethel, wondering.

"Yes," said Mrs. Estey, "you are one of those who Paul says are 'called to be saints.' Isn't sainthood a calling high enough to satisfy all your ambitions?"

"It is altogether too high for me to aspire to. I don't remember Paul's words which you speak of, but I am sure they were not meant for common Christians like me."

"That is where you and so many others make mistakes. All of Paul's letters were written to common Christians, and from his rebukes and admonitions I judge the Christians of the nineteenth century will compare favorably with those of the first, and yet he addresses one letter to 'all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints,' while, after writing to the Corinthians in the same way as 'to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,' he adds, 'with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord; surely that includes you, doesn't it?'"

"I hope so," said Ethel, thoughtfully, "but a saint—Mrs. Estey, what is a saint?"

Mrs. Estey laughed. "You know, I am a Yankee, Ethel. What do you think a saint is?"

"Well," hesitatingly, "isn't it a very holy person, not perfect, perhaps, but almost so? One whose virtues and graces are quite beyond the attainment of average Christians?"

"Beyond their actual attainment, I grant, not beyond their possible and commanded attainment. By the way, Ethel, I have been much interested lately in a bit of word study that may help you. Turn to the dictionary and you can trace back the word 'holy' to the Anglo-Saxon root 'hal,' with the meaning 'safe,' 'sound.' Now that root 'hal' has several derivatives, one is 'whole,' others are 'health,' 'hale' and 'heal.' As health is the normal condition of the body so holiness is of the soul. Our idea of holiness, influenced, I think, by the teaching of the Middle Ages, is apt to be one-sided and narrow. It lacks the strength of that root 'hal,' the breadth, the wholeness. Physical health is the result of the harmonious working of all the bodily functions; so holiness or spiritual health is the harmonious developments of all the soul's powers and faculties—"

"Or we might say holiness is the absence of sin, as health is the absence of disease," said Ethel, thoughtfully.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Estey, "and you understand that we are responsible for the health of our bodies, why not for that of our souls?"

Just then the gate clicked and Ethel rose, saying, "Here comes some one else after one of your helpful thoughts. I'll take mine and be gone."

"Called to be saints," the words ran through Ethel's last waking thoughts like a chant, and she fell asleep to dream of spending her life in a leper colony with Father Damien. But the bright morning banished alike dream fancies and serious thoughts.

"Just think, Tom," she said to her brother, as they met in the breakfast room, "of a whole day at Fairpoint. It is Edna Marion's birthday, and she has invited Anna Davis and me to spend the day there. There will be a few other guests, and we are going boating and have our dinner on Hood's Island, and—"

"And have no end of a lark," interrupted Tom. "Are you sure she did not say anything about me going? I'm sure I should enjoy it better than standing behind the counter all day."

At this moment their father entered the room and took his seat at the table, saying, "Your mother has a sick headache coming on and will not be down. She said you might carry her up some tea, by-and-by, Ethel."

When Ethel did so she said, "Don't you want me to stay with you to-day if you are sick?"

But her mother answered, just as Ethel knew she would: "Oh no, dear, Nora can do everything for me that I need and I wouldn't have you miss your visit for anything."

Leaving a tender kiss on her mother's aching forehead, Ethel went down to the kitchen with the tray; there she was alarmed to find Nora sitting in the doorway, pale and faint.

"What is the matter, Nora," she exclaimed, and then followed a confused account of how she slipped, coming up the steps, and in falling had doubled her foot under her, spraining her ankle. It was so painful the poor girl could hardly step on it, but with Ethel's help she reached the lounge in the sitting-room.

While Ethel was bathing the ankle and doing it up, Tom came into the room. "Well," he said, "a fine beginning for your red-letter day!"

Ethel glanced up with a distressed look on her face, as she exclaimed, "Oh dear, I hadn't thought of it, but, of course, with mother sick, and Nora laid up, I can't go." "Oh, miss, my foot feels better already," said Nora; "perhaps I can use it now," and she started up, only to fall back with a groan.

"No," said Ethel, decidedly, "it will be some time before you can use it. You must not try it. There's no other way, except for me to stay at home."

"Don't be sure of that, until I have racked my brain a little," said Tom, "The children will be at school, what if father and I should take our dinners down town, and I could get Mattie Elder to come and stay with the invalids?"

"If Mattie could—that might do," said Ethel brightening up, but at that moment the office-boy brought a note from their father saying that his cousin, Miss Havard, was going through the city and would stop over from the ten o'clock until the two o'clock train and telling Tom to go to the depot to meet her. Tom read the note and passed it to Ethel, saying, "Misfortunes never come singly. I suppose I needn't stop to see if Mattie can come over."

"No, but I wish you would call and tell Anna that she need not wait for me. Oh, dear, why need she come to-day?"

"It is enough to provoke a saint," said Tom sympathetically.

The words brought back to Ethel Mrs. Estey's talk, and with a quick prayer that she might "make her calling and election sure," she busied herself making preparation for the stranger guest.

With Nora's half-done morning work to finish, her mother to wait on and dinner to get, Ethel found no time to spend in vain regrets. Miss Havard proved to be a very pleasant, intelligent lady who was on her way home from the annual associated charities meeting, and her accounts of the many forms of charitable work and of the noble men and women engaged in them interested Ethel very much, and she was sorry when the time came for her train. But when she had gone and Ethel stood at the kitchen table piled with dishes, she thought of the merry party on the island regretfully.

"Called to be saints," suggested memory.

"Well, I'm sure there's nothing saintly about dish-washing," thought Ethel, when instantly to her mind came the remembrance of a picture she had seen or read of; an old refectory kitchen with some half-dozen cherubs doing up the work with evident enjoyment, as if the scrubbing of pots and kettles was a celestial employment; and some way the artist's odd fancy helped her.

At last the dishes were done and Ethel was about settling down for a quiet hour in the hammock with the latest magazine, when she saw on her mother's work-basket Katie's new jacket. She knew it was al-

most done, and she also knew that Katie was very anxious to have it to wear the next day, so the book was laid aside.

As Ethel stitched away on the jacket her thoughts were busy over the conversation with Mrs. Estey the previous afternoon, and that evening she ran over there for a few moments.

"And how is my little saint to-night," was that lady's greeting.

"Oh, don't say that, I shall never deserve that name, but let me tell you of some that do," and she gave an animated report of Miss Harvard's talk, ending with "that's what I call saintly work."

"So it is," heartily assented Mrs. Estey, "but, Ethel, don't you see, most of the evils these men and women are trying to overcome would never have existed if the homes of these unfortunates were what they should have been, so isn't it just as saintly work to make and keep the influence of a home pure and wholesome and helpful?"

"Yes," said Ethel, hesitatingly, "but I should like to do more than that."

"More than that, oh, Ethel, that is not a little thing, and I have noticed that it is those who have been most faithful in their home lives that the Lord has called to what you might consider higher duties. But remember, dear,

"The highest duties oft are found,
Lying upon the lowliest ground
In hidden and unnoticed ways,
In household works, on common days,
Whate'er is done for God alone,
Thy God acceptable will own."

Here Robbie ran in to show Ethel his new drum, and the conversation was dropped, but Ethel has not forgotten it.

A BOY CONVERT BECOMES A PREACHER.

At a recent meeting in Boston, the Rev. E. Payson Hammond related the following: He said that more than twenty years ago he was holding meetings in Dublin, and a little boy nine years of age was converted. Now see what resulted from this boy's efforts for the Lord. While in Santiago, Cal., two years since, he heard of a man there who was doing a great deal of good. Every evening he preached in the open air to large crowds of people. A man who had been very wealthy had become desperate, and had started to throw himself off the dock. Passing where this young man was preaching the Gospel, he heard him repeat the text: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." These words at once arrested him, and for the first time in his life he realized that the Son of God had died on the cross to save him from everlasting punishment. He said to himself: "How foolish I am to commit suicide when I might have all my sins forgiven, for the sake of him, who in his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." At the close of the address he went to the young man, and with much emotion said, "What shall I do to be saved? Can God forgive me?" The young man brought him to the meeting and introduced him to me; I found the man trembling and weeping; he said: "What this young man has said to-night has saved me from committing suicide, but can I be forgiven and become a Christian?" Mr. Hammond said: "We told him he could, and after we had explained the doctrine of substitution to him he knelt with us and prayed to God for forgiveness. I believe that wicked man became a Christian. He at once abandoned his sinful life, and from all that I could see or hear of him he gave good evidence of having experienced a radical change of heart. How little did I think when I heard that little boy in Ireland more than twenty years before, praying:

"Jesus, take this heart of mine,
Make it pure and wholly thine;
Thou hast bled and died for me,
I will henceforth live for thee," —

that I should find him a preacher in California twenty years after, and by his words saving a man from suicidal death." Mr. Hammond closed with an appeal to every one not a Christian to come to Christ and be saved. At the close quite a number were found anxious about their souls; they were talked and prayed with by the Christian workers.—*Watchman.*