

TABLE MANNERS FOR CHILDREN.

In silence I must take my seat,
And give God thanks before I eat;
Must for my food in patience wait,
Till I am asked to hand my plate;
I must not scold, nor whine nor pout,
Nor move my chair or plate about,
With knife or fork or napkin-ring
I must not play, nor must I sing.
I must not speak a useless word;
For children must be seen not heard.
I must not talk about my food,
Nor fret if I don't think it good;
My mouth with food I must not crowd,
Nor while I'm eating speak aloud;
Must turn my head to cough or sneeze,
And when I ask, say "If you please."
The table-cloth I must not spoil,
Nor with my food my fingers soil;
Must keep my seat when I have done,
Nor round the table sport or run:
When told to rise then I must put
My chair away with quiet foot,
And lift my heart to God above
In praise for all His wondrous love.

JOANNA'S CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY MARY E. MANNIX.

LITTLE Margaret called from the bed where she sat, propped up with pillows. "Joanna, don't forget my Christmas tree. Last year you said we were too poor, but that you would surely have one for me this Christmas."

"Yes, dear, I have been thinking about it all the morning." Then in a low voice to herself, as she went on making button-holes, she said: "But where and how to get it, that's the question, and nothing to put on it if, by some chance or another, it be found."

"Joanna," continued the sick child, in the querulous tone which indicated a new accession of pain, "it makes me tired to see you always sewing like that. Your needle flies in and out, and it clicks, clicks with such a funny noise. Sometimes I like it, but to-day I don't."

"Dear child," said the patient sister, "I know it is tiresome to watch any one doing the same thing over and over, especially when one is sick. But I get two cents for every button-hole I make, and I must work hard from morning till night to put bread in our mouths."

"Come, give me a kiss, Joanna," cried the pale child, holding out her arms. "You are so patient, and I so cross. But my back hurts so to-day."

"Yes, darling, I know, I know," was the reply, as Joanna hastened to the bedside, where the sisters embraced each other, the little one smiling in the face of her dear sister, who had been everything to her for years.

They were orphans, the children of a Swiss artisan who had come to this country, hoping to better his condition. But sickness had overtaken him and his wife, and they died, leaving little Margaret as a precious gift to her strong, elder sister. Joanna learned to make button-holes from a neighbor, and soon surpassed her teacher in skill and speed. But toil as she would, she could never earn more than a dollar a day, and when Margaret was very ill not even that. But she had a brave heart, and managed to keep the wolf from the door.

It was snowing the next evening, when Joanna started out with a pile of work she had completed. As she left the room, Margaret, who was now well enough to be seated in a chair, near the fire, said, wistfully:

"Maybe, will you buy my Christmas tree to-night?"

"Maybe," replied her sister, with a bright smile. The smile faded as she passed down the stairs, for she had priced a very small one at the grocer's yesterday, and he had asked forty cents for it. But she had trust in God and, saying a little prayer in her heart, she went briskly into the street. Returning with two dollars in her pocket, she thought of going to the market-house for a small piece of meat—they had had none that day.

In order to do this, she was obliged to pass the old cathedral, where they were making preparations for Christmas. The church was brilliantly lighted.

"I will run in and make an act of adoration," she thought, and at once followed the inspiration.

The sanctuary was filled with cedar boughs, ladies were weaving festoons for the chandeliers,

and two great trees stood at either side of the altar. As Joanna arose from her knees, the sexton was carrying out an armful of broken branches. When she reached the sidewalk, he was about to put them into an ash barrel that stood on the curb, when a sudden thought inspired her.

"Oh, sir," she said, timidly as a child, for all her sixteen years, "might I take a few of these branches for my little sister?"

"Of course, my girl," said the good-natured sexton, "you may have them all, if they're not too much for you to carry."

"O thanks!" said Joanna, eagerly clasping her arms about the huge pile of boughs. "Now I can make a Christmas tree," she thought, as she hurried along with her treasure, which, on reaching home, she hid in the little entry closet. Then, running down to the green grocer's on the first floor, she bought a slice of ham for supper. Fortunately Margaret did not ask the cause of her delay.

When the child was asleep that night, Joanna went out into the hall, brought forth the cedar boughs and, by lopping off a broken end here and there and placing them together, made quite a respectable looking, miniature tree. Filling a flower-pot with earth, she planted her Christmas tree, pressing it down firmly and covering the top of the pot with a quantity of shells which lay on the shelf in the closet.

"To-morrow," she said, softly, "I will buy a few sheets of tissue paper and fold it in plaits for the outside. Then Margaret will have her Christmas tree. But the next thing will be, how to fill it. God will help me, I feel sure; I would not have found this if it had not been for that little prayer." Replacing the flower-pot and its tree in the closet, she said her prayers fervently and crept into bed.

She was up betimes in the morning, and had breakfast quite ready when Margaret awoke.

"Sister," said the child, "I have been thinking that I could very well do without a Christmas tree after all. Let us have sausage and potatoes for dinner, with a cranberry tart, and that will be enough. Don't bother about the tree, Joanna."

But Joanna only kissed her pale cheek and looked very wise. After breakfast, she went down to the shop to buy a bucket of coal, and while waiting for the man to bring it, she took up the morning paper and saw therein the following advertisement:

LOST—On Wednesday evening in or near the cathedral, on Duane street, a valuable diamond ring. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving it at No. 986 Jefferson avenue.

"That is where Mrs. Taylor lives," thought Joanna; "I have often seen her go in there. She is so kind and good to the poor, it is a pity she should have lost her ring. Very likely she was helping to decorate the altar."

Thus Joanna was reminded of her Christmas tree, and she peeped into the closet to see how it looked in the daylight. It made a very creditable appearance. As she was about to close the door, she saw something glisten among the green branches. Taking the flower-pot in her hand, she parted the foliage, and there, caught between the branches, was a beautiful diamond ring.

"O, how glad I am," she exclaimed. "It must be Mrs. Taylor's ring which dropped from her finger into the rubbish and the sexton carried it away. I will take it to her at once." Making some excuse to her little sister, she hurried away and soon found herself at No. 986 Jefferson avenue, where Mrs. Taylor, attired for the street, opened the door.

"O, ma'am," explained Joanna, "I have found your ring. I saw the notice in the paper, and I ran upstairs and found it on my little Christmas tree."

"This is my ring, certainly," said the lady, taking it from the girl's hand, "I am very much obliged to you. But come in out of the cold and tell me how you could have found it on your Christmas tree."

In a few moments the kind lady was in possession of the facts. Question followed question, and with great tact and delicacy she learned the story of the two children, being filled with admiration for Joanna's courage and industry, as well as her affection for her little invalid sister.

"And now," she said, finally, "for the reward. I had thought of twenty-five dollars, but in this case I shall make it fifty and never lose sight of you again, if I can help it, for it all seems to me like a special providence."

To her surprise, Joanna replied: "No, ma'am! I can not take anything. But if you will only give me a few little things to trim up Margaret's Christmas tree,—you know all about those things—I shall always be grateful."

No amount of persuasion could induce the young girl to accept the money, but she gave Mrs. Taylor her address, and that lady promised to call sometime during the day. She did so, followed by a grocer's boy bearing a great hamper filled with provisions of every kind. A separately package, privately conveyed to Joanna, contained ornaments for the Christmas tree.

Night had fallen before the good lady took her leave. She was surprised and pleased at the neatness of the room, comfortable and pleasant in the midst of the most bitter poverty.

"We have lived on crackers and tea, with once in a while a bit of meat, but I always managed to keep a good fire and a clear hearth for the little one," said the brave cheerful girl.

We shall not attempt to describe Margaret's joy on awaking Christmas morning to find the tree beautifully trimmed and filled with candles by her bedside, not to speak of the gifts which lay on the table beside it. Joanna had already stolen out in the starlight to the five o'clock Mass. Nor can we do justice to the surprise and pleasure of the sisters when, just as they were about to sit down to their breakfast, a colored man entered from a neighboring restaurant with quail, or toast, and chocolate in a shining pot, to say nothing of the plate of hot cakes, the like of which the poor children had never seen before.

"Wif Mrs. Taylor's compliments, and she wishes you'se a Merry Christmas, an' I'll call for de dishes."

Nor to the happy morning hours,—which the delighted Margaret spent in looking over sundry books full of pleasant stories and bright pictures, while Joanna went from room to room in the house wishing her neighbors a Happy Christmas, and leaving sugar plums in every one.

Nor to the afternoon,—when mindful of them still, Mrs. Taylor came in on her way from Vespers to tell them that she had found a bed for Margaret at the Children's Hospital, where she must get well, while Joanna could go to her and assist with sewing, as her seamstress had been taken ill, and she was badly needed.

Nor to the tearful thanks of the children, as they clasped the hands of their kind benefactress when she rose to take her leave, promising to send for them early the ensuing week.

Nor to the glory of the Christmas tree, in all its bravery of tinsel, silver stars and golden balls, outshone by the lovely candles, green and blue, and red and white and yellow, gleaming like twinkling stars from every bough.

Nor to the fervent prayers of gratitude, in the midst of which they fell asleep, their arms around each other, on this the happiest Christmas Day their chequered lives had ever known.

And so my little story ends.

"If there were more Mrs. Taylors!" exclaims the moralist beside me.

"There would be more Joanna's," says the wise child at my feet.

And I can not say her nay.

—The Messenger.

A judge joking a young lawyer, said: "If you and I were to be turned into a horse or an ass, which would you prefer to be?" "The ass to be sure," replied the lawyer. "I've heard of an ass as being made a judge, but a horse—never."

A little fellow, three years old, visited the Zoological Gardens, where he saw a monkey, with whose antics he was greatly pleased. Upon his return home he was asked what he saw, and his prompt reply was, "A little boy with a tail."

Ex-Governor Furness tells a story of Judge Broady which, coming from anyone else, might demand some corroborative evidence. Governor Furness' story is that on one occasion Judge Broady left his office and on the outer door he posted a card with the words: "Back again in ten minutes. Take a seat and wait." "At the foot of the stairs," says Governor Furness, "Judge Broady happened to remember he had forgotten something. Slowly he climbed the steps and once more he became submerged in his own thoughts. At the door of his own office he paused and read the card on the door. Then the judge deliberately sat down and waited for himself to come back."