



## The Family Circle.

### EASTER.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Go back, my soul, to the sorrowful day  
When they led thy Lord to be crucified;  
Follow him over the stony way,  
By hate betrayed and by love denied;  
List, through the silence of ages gone,  
To the tears that dropped in that desolate dawn.

When the sacred robe had a deeper dye  
From the blood that streamed at the victor's  
stroke,

When the angels leaned from the frowning sky,  
Ere the clouds with their fatal lightnings broke;  
Go back, my soul, o'er the vanished years,  
List to the ring of the Roman spears.

For Jew and Roman together stood  
On the awesome mount where the nails were  
driven

Deep to the heart of the shrinking wood,  
Through His hands and feet, in the sight of  
heaven,

And the sun grew pale and refused to shine  
When death drew near to the Man Divine.

O Death, that came with the serpent's guile  
Through the gates of Eden long ago,  
Henceforth we, dying, may dare to smile  
Full in thy face, thou relentless foe;  
For the Love on the cross that bowed to thee  
From the power of Death hath set us free.

Three days in the sepulchre bound he lies!  
Tenderly come with your spice and myrrh,  
O beautiful women, with tear-dimmed eyes,  
Past wan grey olive and deep green fir—  
Come where the pure sweet lilies bloom;  
Come to the door of the rock-hewn tomb.

"He is not here!" He has left the prison  
That had not a fetter to hold him fast:  
Life of our life, the Lord hath risen;  
The night of our bondage is gone at last,  
Sing of the Love that was strong to save;  
Sing of the glory beyond the grave!

But think, oh! think, on the Easter morn,  
Of the price that the Lord to the utmost paid,  
When His cry "Tis finished!" afar was borne,  
To the heavenly heights and the hades' shade,  
And swift and glad let thy worship be,  
O soul of mine, for He died for thee.

He died for thee, and for thee arose,  
With the thorn-prints plain on the kingly brow,  
For thee He conquered the last of foes,  
And the scars of the battle He wearth now,  
Oh, sing the Love that was strong to save;  
Sing of the glory beyond the grave!  
—Selected.

### THE MOTHER'S LAST PRAYER.

Charles Crandall was dying, and in the whole town of Allanton, where he was born and bred, there was probably but two persons who mourned his untimely end. Those were his patient, faithful wife, and his physician, Dr. Arnold. Charles Crandall had been a young lawyer of exceptional talent, and had married a beautiful girl with a handsome fortune, but he was led into intemperate habits, and in a few years his wife's fortune was wasted, and they were reduced to poverty.

He was a gentleman by birth and breeding, and yet he did not scruple to steal his wife's watch, and even her wedding ring, to satisfy the cravings of his appetite.

He was only thirty years of age, but now the end had come. Crandall had been wounded in a drunken brawl, and though the wound would have proved a mere trifle to a temperate man, the feverish, poisoned blood of the drunkard made it a fatal injury. For some hours he had been lying in a more conscious condition than usual, apparently thinking deeply.

"So this is the end, Arnold," he said feebly to the doctor, who was bending over him.

Dr. Arnold bent his head in assent.

"Well, it's the best thing for Mary, and little Harry. Pity it wasn't five years ago, before I came to this. Where's Mary?"

"She went out a few minutes ago. She'll be back directly."

The dying man sighed.

"It's been a hard master, Arnold—drink, I mean. I did try to break off; I swear to you I did; but it held me tight. It never

gave me time to be sorry for my wife, or myself, or to see where I was going.

Dr. Arnold said, kindly and gravely, "It is useless to look back now, Charles. Think of other things."

"Yes!" cried Mrs. Crandall, who entered at that moment and threw herself on her knees by the bedside, "there is but one thing to think of, my husband. Throw yourself upon the mercy of Him who can save the worst sinner, even at the eleventh hour. Cry unto Him; for you repent; ah, you repent, I know!"

"Repent," he repeated faintly; "I don't know. I can't feel anything much. There's a dark cloud over my mind, and I can't think now. Don't let Harry ever touch a drop, Mary. It's too late for me."

Mrs. Crandall, left a widow, found her situation rather ameliorated after her husband's death. Friends who had kept aloof in disgust at his habits were now willing to assist her, to the extent of educating her son. For herself, she needed no help beyond supplying her with orders for the fancy work by which she had supported her family for some years past. Though she did not acknowledge it to herself, her husband's death was a relief. His life and bad example had been a perpetual menace to the future welfare of their son—that son in whom all the hopes and joy of her life centred.

He grew up handsome, bright, and free from all bad habits. His mother, without laying bare before him his father's wrecked life, had yet inspired him with something of the same horror with which she regarded spirituous liquors. She had no fear that he would ever touch them; but when she discussed the subject with Dr. Arnold, he shook his head.

"Don't be too secure," he said; "and never relax your watchfulness. You are too fond of him to be as firm as you ought; but you are a good, pious woman, Mary, and, if you can make your son a good Christian, you need have no fear. In all my experience as a physician, I have never seen a confirmed inebriate thoroughly reclaimed, nor one with inherited proclivities restrained by anything but religious convictions."

When Harry Crandall left college, Mr. Marston, a friend of his grandfather's, gave him a place in his counting-house. The young man was capable, industrious and honorable, and soon became a favorite with his employer. One Saturday evening he returned home radiant with delight.

"O mother," he cried excitedly, "do you know Mr. Marston has raised my salary, and I'm to get fifty dollars a month? He says next year he expects to raise it again. I'm invited to a dinner party, too, at his house to-morrow; the very first time any clerk in his establishment has ever been thus honored. Are you not delighted?"

His mother smiled lovingly at the bright, handsome face of her son; but a sudden thought struck her.

"Invited to dinner to-morrow," she said. "But you forget, Harry, that to-morrow is the Sabbath."

"No, I don't; but it's a case of necessity, you see. It's just like a king's order, and I'm obliged to obey. You surely wouldn't have me insult my employer, who is advancing my interests in every way, by telling him I couldn't go to a dinner party on Sunday, at his house, because I thought, or you thought, it was a sin? Just like telling him to his face he was all wrong himself. You don't know Mr. Marston. He would be furious, and probably dismiss me. We can't afford to do that, mother. You must know it."

Yes, she did know it. But she did know, too, how wrong it was to give a consent to what she considered a desecration of the Sabbath. There are good, pious mothers in the world, who, unfortunately, sometimes in an hour of strong temptation become weak Christians. When Mrs. Crandall, the next day, laid out her son's dress suit, not for church, but for a dinner party; when she saw him arrayed in it, without further remonstrance—she made the first rift in the armor of right with which her teachings had incased him. A little rift, perhaps, but enough to shatter the whole fabric at the first attack.

There was quite a large party assembled at Mr. Marston's when Harry reached there. They were, most of them, wealthy, fashionable people, whom he had often

heard of and seen, but into whose society he had never expected to be thrown. He was, however, too well educated and gentlemanly not to feel at ease among courteous, well-bred people. The young lady whom it fell to his lot to take in to dinner, a Miss Evelyn, was a very beautiful and witty girl, and Harry had often heard of her satirical speeches. He stood somewhat in awe of her at first, but she knew too well how to make herself charming for this feeling to continue.

When wine was passed around with the first course, every glass was filled but Harry's, who refused it. His host was near enough to him to observe the omission, and called out to a servant, "Stephens, you have forgotten Mr. Crandall. Fill his glass."

"Thank you, but I never drink wine, Mr. Marston."

He colored hotly with false shame as he spoke, and saw a half smile on the faces of the guests.

"Pshaw! nonsense!" cried Mr. Marston in his dictatorial manner. "A glass of good sherry never hurt any one but some weak-headed fool who is afraid to trust anything but cold water. But if you prefer it, of course I won't press you."

Harry was ready to sink through the floor in his confusion. He looked up, to see a mocking smile on the beautiful lips of his neighbor.

"Is it possible, Mr. Crandall," she said, laughing, "that you are really one of those temperance fanatics? I've heard a great deal of them, but I never met one before."

"I do not belong to any temperance society," he said, wincing at the contemptuous tone with which she spoke. He did not add, "I have promised my mother never to touch a drop," for it seemed to him a childish thing to say, as if he were still tied to her apron strings.

Miss Evelyn was an extremely vain young lady, and it struck her at the moment what an excellent joke it would be if she could charm the young teetotaller into drinking a glass of wine. It could do him no harm, and that total abstinence doctrine ought to be put down in good society. So she made herself as entertaining as any beautiful and intelligent girl could be; and after a time turned to him with a brilliant smile: "It is very un-gallant of you, Mr. Crandall, to have allowed me to drink several toasts without joining in them. You have forgotten your duty as an escort. But then, to be sure, I am not afraid of a glass of wine, which you are, you know. Now I am going to propose a little toast, just between us. Let us drink to our future friendship, for we are going to be friends, I am sure. No gentleman can refuse such a toast."

Bewildered by her smiles and the tones of her voice, Harry mechanically held out his glass to be filled. He drank it, and in one swift moment he felt a keen pang at having broken his solemn promise to his mother. But then he remembered he had also made a promise to keep the Sabbath holy. She had not pleaded very urgently against his going to this dinner party, and why should she object when circumstances had actually forced him to take a glass of wine? But nothing but his aroused appetite forced him into the second and third glasses he swallowed before leaving the table.

Miss Evelyn watched him with an amused smile, little dreaming that she might better have stabbed him to the heart, than tempted him to this act.

When Harry left Mr. Marston's house that evening, without being actually intoxicated, he felt dizzy, and rather unsteady. He would have liked to get up into his own room, without passing through the sitting room, where he knew his mother would be awaiting him. But that was impossible; so he entered the apartment, trying to look and act as usual.

"Had a delightful day, mother," he cried with affected gaiety. "But I'm just dead tired and sleepy, and I'm off to bed. Tell you all about it to-morrow."

But his flushed face and thick speech had told her that which made her fall on her knees, and bury her face in her hands, as her son left the room. The curse was upon her again; and any of you who know how a mother can agonize in prayer for the being-dearest to her will not need to be told how Mrs. Crandall spent that night.

I will not follow Harry Crandall in the

year which followed. There was repentance, and temporary reformation, but from the first his mother had no hope. She trod again the *via dolorosa* she knew so well of old, but her feet were more sorely wounded, and her strength had failed her with hope. Harry lost his situation, and was gradually drifting into a drunken vagabond, when his mother died suddenly. At least it was sudden at the last, though she had known for months that her days were numbered.

To say that her death was a blow to her son was to say very little. He loved her with all his heart, and that heart was not yet numbed by intemperance. He had always intended making her happy by reforming, and now he could never make her happy again. After the funeral, he returned to the empty house, and, in a passion of remorse and grief, he threw himself into his mother's vacant chair, and laid his face on the table that stood near it. An hour passed, but, weeping and groaning, he kept the same position. He felt that he would go mad if this torture did not cease. Well, a drink would settle his nerves, and take away this terrible ache at his heart. He half rose to go out, when the sudden motion threw to the floor his mother's old Bible, which was at the edge of the table. As he picked it up, a written paper fluttered out. He saw it was his mother's handwriting, and through a mist of tears he read what he knew must have been her last prayer.

"O blessed and merciful Lord, who alone can help my beloved son, stretch forth Thy powerful arm, and raise him from the gulf in which he is drowning. My love, my prayers have not availed to stay his downward course; for I have sinned in the weakness of my great love for him. Bless my death, now so near, to him and let me speak to his soul from the grave as I could never do with my living lips."

The last words of the prayer were blotted out by her tears; but what he read smote the unhappy young man to the soul. He sat motionless for a few minutes, and then, with a half-articulate cry, "Help me, Lord, help me," fell on his knees. That night was spent in wrestling with the fierce temptation of drink, and cries for "help."

Is He, the Merciful, ever deaf to that cry? Does He ever stand aloof from the penitent sinner? I do not say that Harry Crandall found it easy to return to the right path, but, through sore conflicts, he did return. To-day there is no man more respected in the town of A— than Harry Crandall. He has a fine family, a good, pious wife, and he is as happy as a man can be who remembers past sins, and how, but for the infinite mercy of God, they would have been the means of his losing his soul. —Mrs. Marie B. Williams, in the *Congregationalist*.

### THE PAST IS PAST.

The past is past beyond control;  
Leave it and go thy way;  
To-morrow gives no pledge to thee;  
Thy hope lies in to-day.

Even to-day is not all thine,  
Its ending none can tell.  
God gives the moments one by one;  
Take them and use them well.

A LITTLE GIRL once got into the habit of going to an upper room or loft where apples were stored. As she went from time to time to steal the forbidden fruit, she met with an oil painting that greatly troubled her. The eyes of a large face seemed to follow her in whatever part of the room she went, and they appeared to be saying to her, as she stooped down to take up the apples, "Ah, I see you! it is very naughty. You are sure to be found out." This so annoyed the little culprit from time to time, that she was determined to put a stop to the threatening of these two staring eyes; so she produced a small knife, or a pair of scissors, and cut them out. Ah! but there were still the two large holes in place of them, and she never could look at them without thinking of the eyes, and what they used to say to her. She had put out the eyes, but she had not, nor could she, get rid of her conscience. Moreover, the very means she had used for sinning without rebuke only served to discover her guilt; for when what had befallen the painting came to be found out, it led to such enquiries as at last to reveal the whole truth.