

"SARAH JANE'S FOLKS."

BY ALICE M. EDDY.

"It ain't the bein' sick," said Sarah Jane, tossing wearily on her pillow; "it's the bein' sick here on Mellen Street!"

"Tellen Street's well enough," responded Mrs. Higgins, pouring out medicine with a jerk. "You might be over in Bottle Alley, or up in Jones street over a saloon. Besides, if you don't like Mellen Street, why, I don't see where you're likely to be but Mellen Street unless you'd rather go to the hospital, which you wouldn't. You'd better be thankful for what you've got."

"Oh, if I had just one of my own folks to come and sit along o' me once in a while!"

Mrs. Higgins came over to the bedside with blandering kindness to pull the spread straight and toss up the pillow.

"I'm sorry for you, Sarah Jane," she said, "I suppose it's kinder hard not to have no friends nor nothin'—not countin' me, which I'm sure I'm doin' my best for you. But then, after all, I do know but bein' the way 'tis, with you give up by the doctor, and not havin' long to live, why, I a'n't sure but what it's just as well that all your folks is dead and gone. You a'n't likely to be lonely in the other world, and you'd ought to consider it a comfort that there won't be nobody to be grieved after you when you're gone."

"I do know that's much comfort," said Sarah Jane, forlornly. "It makes a sight of difference when you have folks to drop in when you're sick. I know I had the measles when I was a young one, and it was real kind o' pleasant, with ma and pa and the rest of 'em comin' up to see me. Ma she told me stories sometimes in the night. I wish I had some one to come and see me now."

How did it come that just at that moment Mrs. Higgins, turning away with a reproving face, saw a carriage before the door?

A moment earlier or a moment later, and it would not have been there. The two young ladies within it had stopped only to look at the number on the house, but in that moment Mrs. Higgins saw them; saw the bright, eager faces leaning out to examine the doorway; saw the baskets of flowers heaped on the floor of the carriage, and hurried out.

"I do believe it's folks from the church," she said to herself. "I warn't goin' to ask 'em to come, bein' she warn't a member, but if they like!"

"Be you lookin' for number fifty-two?" she cried from the door-step, "because if you be, this is the one, and Sarah Jane she's just inside, and just hankers after some one to come and see her. She's awful sick too. Be you lookin' for her?"

Madge and Joy, outside, looked at each other with momentary hesitation.

"It looks clean," said one to the other in an undertone.

"And such a dismal place to be sick," said the other. Then they each caught up a bunch of bright flowers and sprang out of the carriage.

"We weren't really looking for Sarah Jane," explained Joy, standing on the door-step, while her companion tied the horse. "We came from the Flower Mission, and we were trying to find a little boy who was hurt last week. But we have plenty of flowers, for we are going to the hospital afterward, and we'll come in if anyone is sick here. Is it a little girl?"

"It's a girl," said Mrs. Higgins, in a voice painfully audible, as she led the way into the sick room. "Leastways she's ben a livin' out. She's that kind of a girl. She came here to board between times, much as a year ago, and she helped take care of me real well, last winter, when she was out of a place, and I was laid up with rheumatism. So I'm helpin' her now. Turn about's fair play. She a'n't got long to live now, and I guess I can stand it till she gets through!"

The girls looked at each other again; this time with glances of horror. The sick woman must have heard. But Sarah Jane showed no signs of wounded feeling as they entered the room. She lifted her hollow eyes to theirs in mute curiosity and interest. It was a long time since faces so bright and pitiful had looked down at her.

"We came from the Flower Mission," began Madge, with a little hesitation, holding out her bunch of white verbenas and honey-suckle. Sarah Jane seemed fairly to devour them with her eyes, but she spoke fretfully in answer.

"I a'n't no heathen, and I don't want no missionaries!"

"Oh, but it isn't that kind of a mission!" cried the girl eagerly, forgetting her shyness at the sound of the offended voice. "I oughtn't to have begun in that way. I only mean that we've brought you the flowers because we're so sorry that you are ill, and we want to help you a little if we can. Do take them."

"All that mission means is sending," said Joy, coming close to the bedside. "And it isn't we that send the flowers, you know, out just our Father in heaven, and he sends them for all His children. We only call it a mission because we know that He sends them to us who have bright and sweet things about us to try to share them with our brothers and sisters who haven't as much."

Sarah Jane put out her hand for the flowers, with tears in her eyes that ran over and dropped upon the verbenas, as she held them up to her cheek.

"They're like home," she sobbed. "We had honeysuckles to home." But I think that it was the word "sisters" which brought the tears.

"Now, Sarah Jane!" broke in Mrs. Higgins, over Madge's shoulder, "a'n't you ashamed to go on so! But you see, Miss, she's weak like, and a'n't responsible. I never think of mindin' her ways. You can see by her face that she's next thing to a corpse already, and I tell her she'd oughter think of the other world, an' leave this'n alone. But she worries an' gits homesick, spite of all I can do."

"But I don't believe the Lord wants us to forget the pleasant part of this world, even when we are going into the other," said Madge, in her gentle voice. He made them both, you know, and he loves us while we are here as much as he does after we go to his own country. I'm sure he doesn't want us to forget."

"A person can't think about dyin' all the time!" wailed Sarah Jane, looking up appealingly into the clear young eyes.

"I wouldn't think about it unless I chose!" said Madge, with youthful defiance. "It's living, and not dying, that our Lord brought, and it can't be wrong to think of life more than death. What sort of a place was it—your home?"

Poor Sarah Jane! how she brightened at the question. No one had ever asked it before since she had "lived out" in Baintville. She broke out into an eager story, looking from the verbenas and honeysuckles to the listening faces that seemed to "really care."

"Oh, such a pretty place! There a'n't nothing here like it. There was mountains and hills all around, green and blue, as far's you could see. And flowers! Oh, my! You never seen such flowers as we had. Ma, she favored 'em always, and pa he didn't mind 'em, and we kep' bees anyhow, so we always had a garden full. Folks used to stop goin' by, to look in our yard, 'twas all so sweet. Where other folks had grass we had ladies' delights, thick as spatter, thick as a field o' clover, and the air all sweet with 'em. Some folks think they ha'n't got no smell! You just wait till you smell a million of 'em all together, and the bees hummin' over 'em! One night I dreamed I seen 'em again, and little Samantha, the baby, you know, the first of us all that died. Why, she was runnin' round in 'em in her pink apron and pickin' of 'em just the way she used to. And there was beds of poppies and roses in among 'em, and long by the fence was sunflowers and mornin' glories, and up by the door was hollyhocks, and down beyond was the orchard. Oh, my! Oh, my! I wish I was back there!"

"Are your people there now?" asked Joy.

"They're all dead," said Sarah Jane, solemnly. "Ta'n't no use talkin' about 'em. They're all gone, and there a'n't a soul in the world to mourn for me when I'm dead."

"But there'll be some to rejoice with you there!" whispered Madge.

"And you know very well," said aggrieved Mrs. Higgins, "that I've told you a dozen times I'll mourn for you myself. I've brought out my old black caliker on purpose, 't I had left after he died. I've got to wear it out sometime. And everythin' will be done as decent as if you had a whole pile of relatives. You hadn't ought to worry about that, I'm sure."

"Is the woman a ghoul?" whispered Joy in the ear of her friend.

"Well, I a'n't worryin' 'Mis' Higgins," replied the sick woman. "I know you'll do your best, and I'm obligated to you. But all the same, nothin's like home."

"But your home isn't really lost, you know," said Madge very gently. "You know our Father saves for us every beautiful thing that we lose here upon earth. Saves the best part of it—the soul at any rate. Nothing is ever lost, and you must be glad to know that the home joy is all safe in the heart of God, waiting for you."

"I can't think about heaven," sighed Sarah Jane. "I do know nothin' much about it. I a'n't had time. It'll be like such a strange place—I'm half afraid—do you s'pose it would really be anything like home?"

"I know it will be," said Madge, earnestly. "Just as surely as that our Lord himself is the Elder Brother of us all—the dearest and the closest Friend that we can ever have, loving us better than we can ever dream of loving. You will feel that as soon you see him, if you have never known him here. Only speak to him and ask him to comfort you, and he will."

"I never thought of it that way," said Sarah Jane, wistfully. "I wish you'd come again."

"We will," answered the girls, together. And then as they rose to go, Joy began to sing softly. It was easier for her than to speak, just then. Madge joined in, under her breath, and even Mrs. Higgins unbent her grim features at the sound of a hymn which she heard often in church, and therefore knew to be safe doctrine:

Here in the body pent,
Absent from Thee I roam.
Yet nightly pitch my roving tent
A day's march nearer Home.

My Father's House on high,
Home of my soul, now near
At times to Faith's unceasing eye
Thy golden walls appear.

Oh, then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love;
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.

Then they said good-by softly, and went out, leaving Sarah Jane quite calm and peaceful, with the verbenas and honeysuckles on her breast.

It was a little thing—only a half-hour out of two young lives full of overflowing work and pleasure. The girls felt shy of speaking about it, even to each other. They did not often talk in that way when they went out with flowers. "Somehow, I couldn't help it," said each of them to herself.

They had no idea of what they had done for the lonely heart that lay dying with "none to mourn." Sarah Jane saw their faces and heard their voices, sleeping and waking, through all the week that followed, while the flowers breathed out their fragrance by her bedside. Across the vision of far-off, lovely hills and blossomy gardens would come the grave, sweet look that had met her own as she talked of home; or the sound of a soft voice, singing, "My Father's house on high." The faces of mother and sisters that had looked pitifully down at her in the darkness for so long, seemed now to be whispering Madge's words, "The home joy is waiting in the heart of God," and now and then came a dim vision of another face, indistinct yet glorious, before which Sarah Jane trembled in her dreams, saying wonderingly, "The Elder Brother?" Surely it was a mission from God, which brought Madge and Joy to number fifty-two, on that June morning.

They came again in another week, with hearts and faces full of tenderness for this desolate sister, but she did not need their pity then. The door of the little house stood open as they drew up their horses before it. A bit of rusty crape was tied to the bell handle, and Mrs. Higgins stood on the steps in the black calico, very grave and important. A number of children were peeping in at the door, but she did not drive them away. Mrs. Higgins was of the class of women who put on a certain funeral dignity, when there is "a death in the house."

She met the girls with subdued voice and something of real sorrow under the outside hardness. Sarah Jane had been her charge for weeks.

"She's gone," said Mrs. Higgins, leading the way again into that dreary room, solemn now with the still presence of the death an-

gel. "Yes, she went off quite easy, night afore last. The minister, he's comin' to the funeral this afternoon. I'm going to do it all up decent, as I told her I would. Whether 'twas that, or whether 'twas somethin' else, she got easier in her mind to 'rds the last. She warn't a member, you know, but I do believe she's with the Lord. That night she laid kind o' still for a long time, with her eyes wide open, 's if she was watchin' for somethin'. Once or twice she moved her lips, 'n one time she spoke so's I heard her, 'Home joy!' says she. But after awhile I see she was goin' fast, and I thought I'd step to the door and get Miss Stiles, next door, to keep me company. And just as I was goin', Sarah Jane she started up in bed with her face all alive, and throwin' out her arms 'My own folks!' she cries out; and then, droppin' back on the pillow, sorter inquirin' and all tremblin' and shinin' in the face, 'An Elder Brother!' she says, and when I got to her she was just breathin' her last."

Madge and Joy, awed and silent, stole up to the bare coffin and laid their flowers there. They had brought ladies' delights and roses, "to seem like home." The velvety leaves were wet with tears as they laid them down.

"Be you some of her folks?" asked one of the inquisitive children as they went back to the carriage. And Madge, turning on him a face luminous with one glimpse of the grand kinship which "binds the world in one with Him who loved us," answered impulsively, "Yes!"—*Advance.*

PRIMARY TEACHERS.

1. Endeavor to prepare the children's minds to receive the particular instruction you are wishing to give, by finding something in their own experience in analogy with it, and thus proceed from something they know to something they do not know.

2. In your lesson always endeavor to make one point prominent, and let your whole instruction bear upon it, like rays leading to a common center.

3. At the conclusion of each lesson, gather up the crumbs; that is, collect and arrange whatever has been brought forward, and let the children repeat, according to the elliptical plan of teaching, the substance of the lesson in order that what they have received and been exercised upon may be fixed in their memory.

4. Draw from the children, by proper questions, the fact or precept you may wish to bring out, and then imprint it on their memories by simultaneous repetition.

5. Before you give a lesson, consider by what series of questions you can lead the children to the point on which you wish to engage their attention. It is very easy to tell a fact. Some teachers will simply narrate it; others, by the elliptical plan, will suggest the ideas to the children and allow them first to supply the word; others again, make it obvious by suggestions and acting. Neither of these plans accomplishes the object of cultivating habits of thought and attention. Consider always that you have given a bad lesson if you have told the children much and they have told you little.

6. Avoid questions that can be answered by yes and no, and do not suggest to the children the answers they ought to give; as, for example, by stating two things, one of which is the answer to the question.

7. Keep the children but a short time at any mental exercise, and as soon as it is over relax their minds by some physical recreation.

8. Do not allow the children to speak in a loud tone, as it excites the mind and wears the body. Give whispering lessons, and lessons in a low tone occasionally, that they may feel their power to regulate their own voices.

9. When children get dull and inanimate raise your voice, and repeat your words faster.

10. Avail yourself of the effect of sympathy upon the children, and they may be governed almost entirely by it.—*Christian Teacher.*

WAFFLES.—Take a quart of milk, add to it a quarter of a pound of butter, four eggs, yolks and whites beaten separately, and enough flour to make a thin batter. Butter the waffle irons thoroughly, and bake quickly.