



The Family Circle.

THE LITTLE MAID THAT SLEPT.

Sombre folds the windows shroud,
Phantom figures come and go—
Hearts that must not beat too loud,
Muffled footfalls, whisper low,
Cool deft hands—about a bed
Where, 'neath fevers scorching sway,
Lies a little restless head,
Tossing, tossing, tossing aye.
But the hour of fate draws nigh,
And the mid-sun overhead
Shrieks and drops from out the sky—
Yea, the child is dead!

But she lies so dimpling-fair,
In her bed-gown long and white,
With her waves of heavy hair
Drowning neck and shoulder bright,
With the flower-lip just apart,
Half way budded to a smile—
Pure young heart, O sweet child-heart,
Hardly smirched with human guile!
Life so bright on cheek and brow
And those thin white lids of hers—
Fancy whispers, "Softly now,
Softly—see, she stirs!"

But the twin hands fairy-small,
Crossed above the bosom's snow,
Never rise and hang and fall
With the breath's soft ebb and flow.
Yea, the breaking mother-heart,
Throbbing close, in anguish prest,
Vainly would its warmth impart
To the blue-veined marble breast;
Kisses win no kissed reply,
Yea, the pet-name softly said
Lures no smiles to mouth and eye—
Truly, she is dead.

First to heaven He turns his eyes
One long moment, as in prayer,
Then upon the maid that lies
Lapt in slumber still and fair,
Lo, His hands just touch the clay;
"Little maiden; wake, arise!"
And the sharp sweet light of day
Smites in lightning on her eyes,
And the blood's swift tide again,
Like a stream its chain that breaks,
Sings through every tingling vein,
As she sighs, and smiles, and wakes.
Lips that laugh and eyes that weep,
Throat that thrills with stifled scream!
Little maiden, thou didst sleep—
Oh to know thy dream!

Frederick Langbridge, in *Good Words*.

LUCY'S TROUBLES.

What are we to do with our troubles? Everybody has troubles, little people as well as big ones, home troubles, and school troubles—some which we make ourselves, and some which others make for us.

"I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me and delivered me from all my troubles," said King David, long, long years ago. But I can tell you of a little child who cried unto the Lord, and He heard her and delivered her out of her troubles, for God is no respecter of persons. Old and young and little ones too He cares for all.

Lucy was a little girl who, like all other little girls, had a birthday once a year. But she was more fortunate than tens of thousands of poor little girls, for she had always presents on that day, many and handsome. This birthday that I am to tell you about she began in unusual happiness, soon to change into, for her, unusual misery. Amongst the many presents which she found lying on the side-table, when, all smiles and hopes, she entered the breakfast-room, was one in a long, narrow parcel. It was the largest of all, and it was from auntie, loving, generous auntie. What could it be? It would at least be sure to be something very, very nice. After a hasty and happy glance at all the rest of the things, Lucy begged mamma to open this long, narrow parcel. The string was cut, the cover was unfolded, and lo! a beautiful white satin-paper box, with gilt edges and gilt corners, appeared. But the box was not the present, it had something in it. So on tiptoe of excitement Lucy lifted the lid; still the present was not seen, only pretty lace frilling all along the edges inside the box, which covered whatever there was beneath. "What could it be, with such a very pretty box to carry it and such delicate frills to cover it?" thought delighted Lucy, and she turned the frills back and looked un-

derneath, but only to see a roll of paper. Then the roll of paper was lifted out of the box and carefully unrolled, when, what do you think she found? a beautiful blue parasol! It had a smooth white handle, which doubled in the middle, a white silk lining, and a deep white silk lining and a deep blue fringe; and it was as delicate and pretty a thing as the heart could wish. At the sight of it Lucy was in ecstasies of delight. At once she put it up and strutted round the room with it, happy as a queen. In a minute or two a thought struck Lucy. She went to the window and having looked out into the road, she turned to her mamma, and said in her most loving way, "Oh, mamma! do let me go out for a walk. It will be so nice to go for a walk." "Well, yes, my darling, you may go, though it is not a very nice day." "And with my parasol?" asked Lucy. "With your parasol!" exclaimed mamma, and then looking out of the window at the dull very February sky, and with a smile on her kind face she added, "There is no need of a parasol such a dull day as today."

Now this day was, as mamma had said, dull, and mist lay on the fields. It looked, too, like rain. But poor Lucy, almost in tears at her mamma's decision, pleaded, "Oh, do let me take my parasol! it may be fine. The sun might come out. Do, dear mamma, do let me take it." Now Lucy's mamma was very fond of Lucy, and she did not want her to do a foolish thing and to be laughed at by all the girls of the village: so she said, very gently, "No, my pet; you may go for a walk, but not with your parasol." Then Lucy burst into tears, and forgetting that it was unwise as well as naughty to be self-willed, she said, "Oh! mamma, it is unkind, it is unkind." At length, as it was Lucy's birthday, and her mamma was especially unwilling on that day to grieve her, Lucy was permitted to go her walk and to take her parasol. Lucy was delighted, but Lucy's kind mamma was very sorry, almost angry.

Gay and glad, away tripped Lucy down the village, all the way thinking how people must admire her blue parasol, then into the fields, to return home another way. The foot-path in the fields was of wet and slippery clay, and the clay stuck to Lucy's boots. So as she was mounting a stile,—which was like a little ladder up one side of a hedge-bank and down the other,—at the top round, her little foot slipped. She fell forward with all her weight on to her blue parasol, and sad to tell, crushed the beautiful silk into the mud, and broke the handle right in two. Poor Lucy! When she stood over her ruined treasure and saw what she had done, how miserable she was, and oh, what tears she shed! She had hurt herself, but that was not the reason for her misery and tears—her mind was in trouble. Her first thought was of her mamma, then of her own self-will, then of what auntie would say. With broken heart she picked up the parasol, and as best she could, rubbed off the dirt from the silk with her handkerchief. But what could she do with the handle? "Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?" she sobbed, as through blinding tears she looked at her broken present. Then Lucy thought of God, and of how her mother had taught her that God heard prayer, and she wondered if God would hear her prayer, and if He would mend her parasol, and help her out of her great trouble. Then she said to herself she would try. So away she trudged, looking for a quiet corner in the field where nobody could see her, and when she had found one, putting the broken pieces of the handle together and pressing them with all her little might, broken-hearted and wretched, she knelt down, shut her eyes, and prayed. It was an earnest prayer. Then she looked at the parasol handle and gently tried it, but it was broken still. And again she shut her eyes and prayed even more earnestly than before, "O God, do mend my parasol!"—and then thinking of her own self-will—"I will be a good girl if you will. Oh, do mend it." Then she opened her eyes again, and gently touched the broken part, but only to find that it was not mended. So poor Lucy had another good cry, and wished, oh how much! that she had done what her mamma wanted her to do. But it was all too late now, and God would not help her. At length she arrived at her home, rang the bell, and at the opening of the door, rushed into her mamma's arms, and told her mamma her trouble, and added "and I asked God to mend it, and he won't. I've been so naughty. Oh, mamma! do forgive me;" and she fell into her mamma's arms and sobbed as if she must sob her little soul away. Now, the sight of the greatness of poor Lucy's grief, and especially the fact that Lucy had thought of God in her trouble, softened and pleased mamma so much, that she replied at once "Oh yes, Lucy, I'll forgive you; don't cry so. Let us pray together, my pet, that God may help Lucy to give up her own will." So what Lucy most feared—her mamma's displeasure—passed away, and they prayed. And Lucy loved her mamma more from that day, and mamma loved her Lucy more. She had another parasol, and, what was more precious to

Lucy, another and a better spirit. And so God answered Lucy's prayer. She cried unto God in her troubles, and he delivered her from them. Only her way out of them was one and God's way out of them was another—a way, too, as Lucy knew in the end, far better than hers. He did more than she had asked: He turned away the anger of her mamma; He gave her, too, a whole-handled parasol; but he gave her far more—a wiser mind, a more submissive will, and the beginning of a happier, more loving, and more beloved life.—*Rev. Benjamin Waugh, in Sunday Magazine.*

MABEL'S QUESTIONS.

BY MISS ROSE PORTER.

Miss Thankful Bennet and Mabel Grant sitting in the library of the old stone house at R.—Miss Thankful in her crimson-cushioned arm-chair, the young girl on a low stool at her feet, the old lady's hand resting caressingly on the girl's bowed head, while in low voices they talked of those questions that are wont to stir young hearts—and old, too, for that matter. This is the picture we hold before you, while we bid you listen to their talk. It was Mabel who spoke first, saying:

"My life,—it seems so useless. I seem never to have sought anything really worth seeking; pleasant things have come to me, and so, month after month, I have gone on, from one good time to another, letting years slip by. Think how many! I will be eighteen to-morrow! Please help me to begin a different way of living, dear Miss Thankful. I am so dissatisfied when I look backward, and there are so many things that puzzle me; that dreadful little 'Why are things as they are?' not for myself, but I mean the troubles and sufferings that come to other people. Oh it puzzles me so—'Why are things?' The question lies like an unsolved, unsolvable enigma at the threshold of so many, many events and queries."

Miss Thankful was silent for a few minutes, then she said:

"The twilight is deepening, but bring me that vase of flowers Arthur and you gathered this morning. I think I can see them."

And Mabel brought them, wondering had Miss Thankful forgotten her question about the puzzling "why," and her longing to live a more satisfactory life? No, the old lady had not forgotten.

The flowers were almost all roadside and field blossoms. Miss Thankful looked at them earnestly before she said, pointing to a beautiful plume-like stem of golden-rod:

"Where do you find that, Mabel?"
"Quite up on the hilltop," Mabel answered; "it had the happiest home, where the early morning sunlight fell on it, and where at night star-beams could nestle down amid its golden flowers."

Miss Thankful smiled as she touched a sprig of blue grass, saying, "And this?"

"Oh, that grew on a dreary sandbank; but spite the burning rays of the noonday heat the little stem budded and bloomed," answered Mabel.

Then Miss Thankful pointed to every one of Mabel's flowers, asking of them all the same question. The last thing she touched was a bit of wild grapevine, laden with tiny grapes just beginning to be kissed into purple ripeness; and Mabel told how the vine twined for support around a great oak tree that had been lightning-blasted.

Then, very quietly, Miss Thankful said:

"Did not God know why the lupin most needed the sandy soil, the scorching rays of the sun, to bring forth its flower? Did not the Lord know why the grape-vine needed the storm-shattered oak to twine about, that its fruit might ripen? the golden-rod, the hilltop and morning sunlight? Ah! child, be content, the Lord who cares for the blossoms of the earth He careth and sendeth just what is best for His children. Leave your question then, of 'Why are things as they are?' at the foot of the cross, believing He who knows the full meaning of the cross never will send one pang which is not needful; believing He knows why some need the arid sand, like the lupin, others the smile of sunlight and starlight to bring the 'fruits of the spirit' into bloom and ripeness. So leave your enigma question with Him, content that while God manifests Himself in different ways to His children, in all the ways he is a Father, if we have the child's heart of trust."

Miss Thankful said but little more to Mabel that evening. The only reply she made to her first question, "Help me to lead a more satisfactory life," was:

"I can give you but one receipt, child, for this satisfactory living, and my telling it will be of no help to you unless you act on it—'Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.'—Just then the servant came in, bringing lights; one by one the family assembled; the tea-bell rang; for,—life does not

make long pauses for quiet talks. Well, it need not, for wisdom-words somehow seem to mean more when they are brief, just like our love-names that are not precious for their length, but for their fullness.—*N. Y. Observer.*

AMATEUR ART DECORATION.

In conversation with a lady not long since (and she is only the type of a large class) she said: "I took drawing lessons at school, of course, because it was expected of me, and because the other girls did; but I had not the slightest interest in them. Since household art has become popular I have essayed several little things, and I discover that I have a decided taste in this direction. The long and short of it is," she continued, "I have determined to give up society and devote myself to art. Accordingly I have begun at the foundation, and am now taking drawing lessons, and I find them delightful." With plenty of means and luxurious surroundings, this lady has heretofore led a monotonous, aimless life of fashion. Already she has a glimpse of the boundless source of happiness and improvement which lies before her. Time will no longer lie heavy on her hands as she enters with zest and enthusiasm upon this new career.

Our young people of both sexes are equally interested in decorating china and pottery, carving, fret sawing, painting in oils and water colors, and the like. Let those who frown at fancy work as a "wicked waste of time" observe these young amateurs when they meet. Eager to compare notes and to exchange bits of information as to methods, or to tell of the last new collection of bric-a-brac, they have little time for personal gossip or silly flirtation.

Why not encourage the children of the family to gather about the library table in the evening with their decorating, their knitting, embroidery and carving? If their friends come in, so much the better; let them join in the circle too, from which father and mother need not be excluded.

How much more cheerful such a fireside than the one to which a fair maiden belongs, who once said to us, "Father don't like fancy work, and he hates to see me sewing on anything that is pretty. He says I ought to be sewing for the poor instead of wasting my time. He does not read to us, and seldom says anything, so you may imagine our evenings are dreadfully poky. Mamma sits with her basket of mending, and looks so tired of it all. If no one comes in, I am glad enough to hear the clock strike nine, so that I can go to bed and end the dreary day."

How a few gay colors would have brightened that young girl's life! Supposing her father had laid aside his cigar and brought out a volume of Ruskin, or read aloud a few chapters from Mrs. Spofford's book on Household Art, or from Prime's new work on Pottery; if the weary mother could have persuaded herself and her husband that she was doing useful work if she should make some of the thousand pretty things that are devised for home adornment, how she would have been rested by the change! How delightfully would have passed the evenings for them all!

We do not wish to defend any occupation which is a waste of time, neither do we advocate recreation in place of real work, but people must and will have some amusement. An occasional relaxation from the dull routine of daily work is an absolute necessity. Is it not well, then, to encourage that sort of diversion which tends to refine the taste, which cultivates the intellect and leads the way into larger fields of usefulness and knowledge?—*Christian Intelligencer.*

STRONG OR WEAK MEN.—We mistake strong feelings for strong character. A man who bears all before him—before whose frown domestics tremble, and whose bursts of fury make the children of the house quake—because he has his will obeyed, and his own way in all things, we call him a strong man. The truth is, that is a weak man; it is his passions that are strong; he, mastered by them, is weak. You must measure the strength of a man by the power of the feelings he subdues, not by the power of those which subdue him. And hence composure is very often the highest result of strength. Did we never see a man receive a flat, grand insult, and only grow a little pale and then reply quietly? That was a man spiritually strong. Or did we never see a man in anguish, stand as if carved out of the solid rock, mastering himself? or one bearing a hopeless daily trial, remain silent, and never tell the world what it was that cankered his home peace? That is strength. He who, with strong passions, remains chaste—he who, keenly sensitive, with manly power of indignation in him, can be provoked, can yet restrain himself and forgive—these are strong men, spiritual heroes.—*Robertsons.*