

Young People's Department.

ONE ST. MICHAEL'S DAY.

(From *The Young Christian Soldier*.)



ANNA and Katharine Mervin lived in a little farm-house, under the shadow of a great cliff which rose three hundred feet above the road, and was beautiful in the soft gray and brown color of its rocks, grown over with sumach bushes, feathery blossoming clematis, and blackberry vines. On the narrow plain at its base ran the country road on which stood the children's home, with its little garden sloping down a bank to the mountain river, roaring and wild in spring and autumn, but in summer a slender stream trickling among the pebbles and boulders of its bed. Farther down, where the river basin widened into a fertile interval, were the Mervin fields and pastures.

It was more than two miles through a pine forest to the church in the mountain village. St. Michael's was a small, simple structure, yet more than large enough for the few country people who made its winter congregation. But in summer, when the mountain village was crowded with rest and pleasure-seekers, the congregation overflowed the church, and standing beneath the trees near the open door and window, joined in prayer, hymn, and anthem, and with eyes resting on the dark pine-forests, wide, fair meadows and purple mountains, sang, "O all ye green things upon the earth, O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord, praise Him, and magnify Him forever."

In the summer, Anna and Katharine enjoyed their Sunday walk, except sometimes when the dust was deep and stifling, and the heat was scorching, even in the shade of the pines. In the winter, the sharp north wind swept through the forest aisles with bitter blast, and feet and hands and face were often aching when the children reached church; and sometimes, when the snow was very deep, or when a whirling, blinding storm was abroad, they could not go at all. But the pleasantest time of the year for a long walk was the autumn, when the air was cool and crisp, and the cliff above the cottage was a glowing mass of crimson, orange, garnet, and scarlet, and the golden-rod tossed its gay plumes, and starry white asters and purple Michaelmas daisies made a garden of

the wayside. Anna and Katharine were glad that then came their own dear church's name-day, the beautiful Festival of St. Michael and All Angels.

On the St. Michael's Day, after the girls' confirmation, they set out together for the forest walk to church, feeling that they were in a higher way to take part in the festival, since they were not merely to be present at, but to share in, the holy feast. They were silent as they walked through the shadowy pines, or they would keep their words and their thoughts for Him whom they were to meet in Holy Communion.

The church was bright with autumn leaves, and the altar was fair with white and golden flowers. The girls' clear young voices rang out joyfully in the hymn,

"They come, God's messengers of love,
They come from realms of peace above;"

and they listened to the rector's words on the loving guardianship of the holy angels who seemed so near to the little kneeling company, that when they softly sang the "Holy, Holy, Holy!" they felt that they were indeed linked in their worship with "all the company of Heaven."

After the service was over, as the girls walked slowly down the avenue, under the mountain-ashes, Mr. Leverett, the rector, joined them, and asked them to go home with him to the rectory, where they were soon seated in the library, looking at the angel pictures which Mr. Leverett brought for them. The first was Guido's glorious St. Michael vanquishing Satan, a picture which many of the young Christian soldiers know well, but Anna and Katharine, in their simple farm-house home, had never seen the great pictures of the world.

The St. Michael's photograph which the children best liked was not Guido's, but one by Schoen, which represents the fair, youthful-faced angel standing upon a grim, horrible dragon with clutching talons and claws, one of which is threateningly grasping the angel's spear, while he, with a glad serene face, thrusts its point triumphantly into the mouth of the beast. Resting upon St. Michael's clustering locks above his noble brow is a small cross; it was in this sign that he easily and fearlessly vanquished the terrible evil one, and this was the picture which held the girls' eyes, while