

## The Children.

### Who Loves the Trees Best?

Who loves the trees best?  
 'I,' said the spring.  
 'Their leaves so beautiful  
 To them I bring.'  
 Who loves the trees best?  
 'I,' Summer said.  
 'I give them blossoms.  
 White, yellow, red.'  
 Who loves the trees best?  
 'I,' said the Fall.  
 'I give luscious fruits,  
 Bright tints to all.'  
 Who loves the trees best?  
 'I love them best,'  
 Harsh Winter answered,  
 'I give them rest.'

### Winning the prize.

The bell of the Mayfield school had just rung, and the scholars came trooping in. When the boys and girls had taken their seats, the teacher, Miss Brown, told them she had a surprise for them. Judge White, the wealthiest man the town of Mayfield could boast of, had offered a prize of twenty gold-pieces to the scholar who could write the most original poem relating to Easter. The contest was open to only the boys and girls of Miss Brown's room, and they would be given one week in which to prepare the poem. On Easter night the contestants were to recite their poems, and Judge White was to decide on their merits and award the prize. The poems must be original, and the children must compose them without any assistance.

Miss Brown concluded by saying she hoped all of her scholars would try for the prize, since nothing could be lost and much might be gained by earnest effort.

As the teacher announced this wonderful offer, all eyes were turned upon Grace Lawrence and Edith Smith—the "poets" of the school. Every one felt sure that either Grace or Edith must win the prize. The two girls were quite different in disposition, for Grace was an only daughter of wealthy parents, while Edith's father was dead, and her mother sewed hard to earn enough to keep her little daughter in school. Edith lived with her mother in a small, brown house, in a poor part of the town. Grace lived in a large house, really a mansion, and had everything she could wish for. She was naturally spoiled, as she was the only child left to her parents of four that had been born to them, and was delicate. She was inclined to be vain, which was to be expected, perhaps, and was somewhat selfish in her play, but she had a kind heart and was liked by her schoolmates. Possibly the fact that she lived in a fine house and gave a good many parties had something to do with their fondness for her.

Edith had a sunny nature, and never complained if her clothes were not so nice as those of the other girls. Her mother called her "Little Sunbeam," and declared she could never do without her. Edith was always willing to yield her own wishes, and, although her mother had moved to Mayfield only a year before, she had won a great many friends—so many, indeed, that Grace was quite jealous of her, and seldom lost an opportunity to wound her feelings. Some of Grace's own friends had taken Edith's part at times.

Edith often felt very sad, and wondered why Grace treated her so cruelly when she could be so kind to others. She, too, would have liked to be friends with her, but Grace gave her no opportunity to show any friendly spirit, or to speak to her; and so Edith contented herself by never replying angrily to the unkind things Grace said to her, and by always saying pleasant things about

her to the other girls. Her mother's favorite rule was, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and she had impressed this upon her little daughter's mind.

But to go back to my story. As Edith was walking home for dinner she was overtaken by May Gibson, who asked her if she was going to try for the prize.

Edith responded modestly that she had thought of trying, but that she knew she could not write very good verses and was almost afraid to try. May hurried on to overtake Grace and her chum to whom she told that Edith was going to win the gold-pieces, if she could.

Grace meant to try, too, and she felt almost sure of winning if Edith did not enter the contest; if she did, there was a good deal of doubt in her mind. So she said scornfully, "I should think she would be ashamed to stand up in her old patched muslin, and heavy shoes!"

She thought that if Edith heard this speech she might decide not to compete, and then the coast would be clear for her. Edith did hear, for she was but a short distance behind. The tears filled her eyes, but she brushed them away and hurried on home.

The week passed rapidly. Edith prepared her poem as carefully as possible. Mrs. Lawrence (Grace's mother) had subscribed for a paper for Edith which gave suggestions for poems, for she knew the little girl loved to write. She was a kind-hearted woman, and had helped Mrs. Smith to secure customers for whom to sew. In this paper suggestions were given for an Easter poem, although the writer must choose the subject and arrange the words to rhyme. So Edith prepared her poem from this, and it was very good.

On Friday, before Easter, as Edith was passing Grace's desk, a sheet of paper fluttered to the floor. Edith picked it up and discovered it was Grace's Easter poem. She did not intend to read it but a word attracted her attention, and as she glanced it over she saw it was much the same as her own, with a different subject. Then she remembered that Mrs. Lawrence had spoken of subscribing for the paper for Grace, and it was evident that Grace had prepared her poem from the same paper.

Her own name came first on the programme, and Edith knew that—having heard her poem—Grace would not speak. This would enable her to win the gold-pieces, which meant so much to both her and her mother. This was Edith's first thought; but, as her mother's favorite rule came into her mind, she dismissed the first idea as unworthy of her, and formed another plan.

Easter night came at last, and the church where the exercises were to be held was filled with expectant people. Grace Lawrence was attired in pink China silk, with pink ribbons in her glossy curls. When Edith's name was called she quietly answered that she had withdrawn from the contest. The judge looked surprised, and sorry as well, for Edith was a favorite of his; but he presently turned his attention to Grace, whose recitation was next on the list. When all had finished, the announcement was made that Grace had won the prize, and the shining gold-pieces were handed to her in a dainty, silken purse.

Then the judge cleared his throat. "I should like to know why Miss Edith withdrew," he said, "and doubtless many others would, also. Will she not come forward and explain? I feel that this is due to all."

Poor Edith—she did not know what to do. Tears filled her eyes and her cheeks flushed. Then she stepped to the judge's side, and told



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