

Children's Department.

Sweet Narcissus.

"How beautiful, how glorious it must be to do some great work in the world, to be able to feel that, humanly speaking, one has been the salvation of a soul!"

Mildred Lewis uttered these words as she finished a stirring biography she had just been reading, and shut the book.

"Few of us ever have the chance of accomplishing anything great," said her father; "if by that you mean something showy and large. But the noblest works are often invisible even to those who achieve them, because wrought by such small means. Nothing can really be greater than to do faithfully the quiet little duties of every day."

"That's like Kingsley's verse," said Mildred's brother John.

"Do the work that's nearest, Though it's dull at times, Helping when we meet them Lame dogs over stiles."

"The work that is nearest to me just now," confessed Mildred, "is to go to the soup kitchen. It is unpleasant under foot, with the sloshy melting snow, but it is in bad weather that they are most likely to be short-handed and need help. So I will put on my things and run off at once; and if I should come across a lame dog, Johnnie, I'll bring him home to you."

Five minutes later the girl's bright face had gone to shed sunshine abroad in the dreary February day, leaving, as it always did, a blank in the circle at home.

The soup was distributed, all steaming hot, and it was as much as the two workers could manage to serve it out fast enough to the hungry applicants.

"Whatever I should have done without you," said Mildred's companion, "I can't think!"



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"I shall take a car home," observed Mildred, shuddering at the sight of the icy wet; and at the next corner the friends parted.

"Penny a bunch, narciss! All sweet narciss!" piped a childish voice at Mildred's elbow, while the exquisite perfume of a bunch of frail white blossoms added its own dumb plea.

Looking down, the young lady met the wistful dark eyes of a little girl about ten years old. Very poor and shabby was her clothing, but her pale face was clean, and her pretty fair hair looked brushed and bright. A basket of sweet spring flowers was slung about her neck, but alas! it was almost full, for people seemed cold and cross that morning, and in too great a hurry to get out of the miserable streets to stop and buy.

Something in the child's face seemed to strike Mildred like a pleasant memory, though more she could not recall. She opened her purse to find a penny, but in doing so discovered that through carelessness she had come out so ill-provided with money that if she bought the flowers she would not be able to ride home. This, however, did not cause her long hesitancy: she had not the heart to disappoint the poor little thing after raising hopes of a sale. Besides, her own boots were strong and thick; the walk, though unpleasant, would not really hurt her, and perhaps by taking the flowers she might help the small hawker to get out of the cold and wet half-an-hour sooner; who could tell?

Such were the thoughts that flitted through Mildred's mind as she crossed the road, closely followed by the young suppliant. On reaching the pavement again she gave the child the few coppers she had, and selecting in exchange the two shabbiest bunches of narcissus the basket contained, hurried home.

"Why the shabbiest?" does someone ask? Because her only motive was to help the poor little sister. The flowers she did not really want, and she judged that the freshest-looking posies would be the easiest to sell to others. Mildred had learned to be thoughtful

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"It looks like it, I must say. It is too well made to be anything less, I should think."

"Then it is worth a lot of money," said Katie, with eyes shining. "Perhaps a whole pound!"

"Possibly. It is evidently a souvenir of somebody, and that would increase its value."

"Oh, mother!" said Katie; and after about a minute she added, with evident satisfaction, "Well, we're not sure it was hers; and if we were, we don't know her name nor anything."

"Have you ever seen the lady before?" asked Mrs. King.

"Ye-es," Katie was obliged to own. "I see her nearly every Tuesday, and mostly Fridays, too, in the morning. I think she goes somewhere."

"You must look out for her next Tuesday, then, and if you see her, ask her if she has lost anything."

"But, mother! Oh, mother, need I say anything if she doesn't ask me?" said Katie. "Oh, mother, need I?"

"Why, yes, to be sure! Else she might not guess about its falling into your basket at all; she might never think of it. And you must keep your eyes open, too, Katie, for notices in the shop windows about 'Lost.' Perhaps it will be advertised for."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Katie. "Oh, it does seem a shame! And perhaps she'll give us about sixpence for find-

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