

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

Thou loving Maker of mankind,
Before Thy throne we pray, and weep;
O strengthen us with grace divine
Duties sacred Lent to keep.

Searcher of hearts! Thou dost our ills
Discern, and all our weakness know;
Again to Thee with tears we turn,
Again to us Thy mercy show!

Much have we sinned, but we confess
Our guilt, and all our faults deplore.
O for the praise of Thy great Name,
Our fainting souls to health restore!

And grant us, while by fasts we strive
This mortal body to control,
To fast from all the food of sin,
And so to purify the soul!

Hear us, O Trinity thrice blest!
Sole Unity, to Thee we cry!
Vouchsafe us from these fast below
To reap immortal fruit on high!

—Selected.

MARGARET'S LENTEN RESOLUTIONS.

(From the Young Churchman.)

"Our sins, negligences, and ignorances."

Alice Huntington, how perfectly delightful! and to think of your coming through the rain, this dreary day!

It scarcely rains at all, Margaret; merely spits and drizzles by turn, replied the young girl, as her friend was unloosening the clasp of her damp ulster.

Of course you've come for a good long afternoon, Allie? Papa and mamma are both at Chelsea, and Nancy and I are keeping house alone; so you can fancy I have had rather a doleful time. There's a lovely wood-fire in the library; we'll practice our duets for a while, and then reward ourselves by doing a bit of fancy-work, for I see you have your bag. Then, just for the fun of the thing, I'll coax old Nance to give us afternoon tea, by the wood-fire. I'm not, generally, allowed tea, you know; but, of course, people who are keeping house for other people have a right to other people's privileges; that's my logic. Besides, you are a prime favorite with Nancy, who never tires of setting you up on a pedestal, and I can tell you, my neck sometimes aches from looking up to you.

Well then, laughingly retorted her friend, suppose, for the sake of variety, I step down, for this one afternoon, from Nancy's pedestal, and be so very foolish that you may rest your poor neck, by looking down upon me.

Chatting gaily, with arms around each other's waists, the girls entered the cheery library, where music, art, and literature, enlivened by a blazing wood-fire awaited them.

Then the duets were satisfactorily practiced, and as the girls prepared for the diversion of Kensington work, Alice drew from the depths of an embroidered work-bag one of Rose Fanchette Cury's charming tales, saying:

Madge, you read so charmingly, and I am so anxious to finish this smoking cap for papa, besides, she coaxingly added I know you couldn't endure to hear me stumbling over the most touching passages in the heroines' life. See, for instance, I've just lighted upon this. Come, and let us sit down, drawing her to the low couch between the windows. It wants the strength of youth to support such a weight of happiness, and the girls laughed merrily adding: Do you think, Madge, our combined youth could bear the weight of such an amount of other people's happiness? I've always found other people's troubles comparatively easy to bear.

Perhaps we will be better fitted for the great strain when we are refreshed by a cup of Nancy's tea, replied Margaret. I hope you've made it good and strong, Nannie. I am afraid I shall yet die of water on the brain. Mamma will persist in giving me such deluded beverages. Isn't this bewitching? Why its quite like grown-up Afternoon tea, as the good natured

servant placed a tiny tea-pot near the fire, whilst she arranged two cups and saucers, with cream and sugar, on a small table near.

Margaret had just fairly launched the bark of her heroine in the troublous sea of a romantic life, when, suddenly, a sound fell upon her ears, and caused a shadow on her bright face.

It was the bell of old St. Mark's, calling, just as it had for the last century, upon the faithful to remember the Lenten vesper service.

Last Sunday Margaret had felt much self-satisfaction at the earnest appeal she had made to the children of her Sunday School class, that they should at least offer to the dear Lord, Who, in love for them, endured the forty days fast in the wilderness, the sacrifice of giving up one hour from their play, each Wednesday and Friday afternoon, to join in the Litany service at St. Mark's, and yet she, herself, in this afternoon's pleasure, had utterly forgotten the service till reminded by the bell.

Ought she still to go? How ready the tempter is at furnishing abundant excuses to those who resist him, either feebly or not at all.

Surely, she thought it would not be polite to leave my guest; and probably she would not care to go. I should be late now, hasten as I might and so would disturb the little congregation.

Finally, looking out of the window, she found that the rain had really increased very much, and thought it would be quite imprudent to expose herself, particularly as she had only since recovering from a severe cold, been out once in a storm, and that was to attend Sallie Steven's Mardi Gras party.

Satisfied that the weather was a sufficient excuse, Alice again resumed her story, but somehow, in spite of the interesting romance, the voice of Conscience would make itself heard. Very vague to her mind now seemed the trials and triumphs of the fair heroine, as she saw the empty seat at St. Mark's, and remembered how she had, in her mind, blamed Sallie and Lou Ellis, whose hour for music practicing would not allow them to attend afternoon services, and wondered on a previous occasion, how Mrs. Severance could be just starting in her carriage, on a shopping expedition, right within sound of the church bell.

Alice exclaimed, presently:

What in the world has come over you, Madge? Do you know, you have read that same sentence over twice, and I am dying to know how Mrs. Chard got out of that scrape? I am afraid you are tired. Suppose we stop there, and have a chat.

Just then, Margaret, turning towards the window, saw two children, almost hidden from sight, by a huge umbrella, so like Joseph's coat, from its varied patching, that she at once recognized it as the family roof of the Schmidts. And so Adelle and Lena Schmidt, little German girls, —her own Sunday School scholars, living a mile and a half away—must be on their road to church; for as the bell ceased, the march of the four legs under the umbrella canopy, turned into a quick step.

Do look, Madge Alice exclaimed, at that funny picture, the curious old umbrella looking as if it had belonged to some of Noah's family, and those four red legs peeping out. Listen! Aren't they having a good time, as the children dashed, laughing merrily, through the puddles in hot chase after their precious umbrella, which an unmannerly blast of wind had snatched from their grasp. They don't seem to mind the inconvenience in their enjoyment of the umbrella's antics.

Yes; they are on their way to the Lenten service. Do you not see the Christmas Prayer-Books, carefully wrapped up in the Christmas pocket handkerchiefs, and Margaret hastily withdrew from the window, as, their prize recovered, Lena looked up towards the house, with eyes dancing with merriment; then blushed with shame that she had been unwilling to let her pupils know that she, just within sound

of the church bell, was yet to be absent from the service.

Somehow, the fancy-work, and Alice's bright talk, seemed to lose their charm, and finally Margaret broke one of the pauses, growing more frequent, by saying:

Dear Alice, I want to tell you why I seem so absent. I feel as if I have been altogether wrong. I began Lent with the written resolve that I would allow no trivial reason to keep me from the Wednesday and Friday afternoon service, at least; and I would not read any book of fiction during the solemn season. I urged my class to keep the same, and now the little German girls have come the long distance from their home through the rain, whilst I, living only two blocks away, have been reading a trifling story, whilst they are repeating the solemn words of the Litany. I do feel so conscience stricken!

I understand, said Alice, and her bright face grew thoughtful I have never been confirmed, Madge, and seldom hear of religious duties at home. Perhaps it would have been different if mamma had lived. I have always felt as if Lent was only for members of the Church.

Which you are, Allie, for you became one when you were baptized. Will you think it strange if I propose, as it is too late to go to St. Mark's, we should keep the hour here?

Alice gladly assented, and the young girls, kneeling side by side, repeated the beautiful Litany. As Margaret read: To forgive us all our sins, negligences and ignorances; to endure as with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit; to amend our lives according to Thy Holy Word, it was with full, pendent heart she cried: We beseech Thee to hear us, penitent Good Lord.

EMILIE FOSTER.

WHAT CAN THE LITTLE ONES DO?

"The fields are all white,
And the reapers are few;
We children are willing,
But what can we do

To work for our Lord in His harvest?"

There are some things they cannot do. They cannot go to foreign lands as missionaries. They cannot give large sums of money for the support of the mission cause. They cannot build churches in India or China or Africa, or out in our own far Western country. God intends that such things as these shall be done by their parents and their older brothers and sisters. And yet there are many things that even the little ones can do. Here is one thing which we find in the *Lutheran Missionary Journal* for this month. Read it carefully, for it may contain a seed-thought.

"In an industrial school in New York city, a little girl was presented with a pretty flowering plant as a reward for regular attendance and faithfulness in her duties. In this school, one Saturday each month is observed as a missionary day, and each child is expected to bring a cent. This little girl longed to do more. So she took her plant home, washed the window of their tenement-house room that her plant might get more sunshine, watered it, and kept the leaves free from dust. As slips appeared, she rooted them in tiny pots, sold them, and took the money to the school on missionary day. At the end of another school year she had gained in this way six dollars and fifty cents. When urged to keep part for her own needs, she said, 'Oh, no; my plant is a missionary plant.'—*Christian at Work*.

An experiment of a ten-days' mission in a rural parish has proved highly successful at Thorverton, Devon. There were separate services for men, women and children, all of which were well attended. A special feature was the constant attendance of the principal Nonconformists, who did not hesitate to confess the value of the teaching.