

The Family Circle.

From the Christian Times.

MY PRETTY. A MOTHER'S STORY. BY MISS MARY C. WADSWORTH.

My little Myra was the loveliest of children. But, had she not been so beautiful and winning to me, she would have seemed dearest and best, for I had successively laid three little ones in the grave before she came to gladden my lonely, childless heart.

I had all the theoretical consolations of religion. My pastor, and my Christian friends who dwell in the next town, had spoken to me of the duty of resignation, of the certainty that all the dealings of our Heavenly Father must be just and kind, of the glorious hopes that the future contained, of the prospect of eternal reunion.

When she was a week old, my husband went away upon a voyage. As he pressed his lips to her little soft cheek, he asked me to call her Myra—his mother's name. I had no wish to refuse the request, and Myra was the name I bestowed upon the child.

There was no more wild lonely days for me. My heart was full of joy, and the world was full of beauty. The ocean that had so often roared in his fury, and thundered at my feet, now spread before me calm and placid as the light in my Pretty's eyes.

The years glided happily away. My Pretty grew in grace and beauty. A quiet, happy child; a gentle, helpful girl, a sunbeam in our home—was she. She sang at her tasks quaint melodies that I sometimes thought she borrowed from the spirits of the shells she loved to gather upon the shore.

At last the thought that I had put far from me all her life, was now forced upon me. One who had devoted himself to the task of carrying the knowledge of Christ to the heathen, sought my Pretty for the companion of his life's labor.

The old sinful rebellion broke forth in my heart. In my madness I said, that rather would I lay down her sweet beauty in the ugly grave, than behold her abandoning her home and native land. The cause was good, but I would not lay my one eye lamb a sacrifice upon the altar.

My Pretty yielded, as she had always done, to my will. She loved the cause, and him who wooed her to devote herself to it, but she would not willingly fall in a child's duty, nor inflict a lasting wound on the heart that had always loved her. But from that hour her loveliness seemed to lose its earth-likeness, and turn to something ethereal.

And my child comforted me. "A little while, mother, a few days, I go before you. I shall not return, but you will come to me, and the brother and sisters I shall first learn to know in Heaven."

HOW SHALL I TRY TO BE USEFUL? "You can all be useful if you will, boys," said a teacher to his class one Sabbath.

"Well, only try." "I shall try," I asked out of the boys, timidly. "Keep your eyes open and your hands ready all this week, and tell me next Sunday if you have not managed to be useful in some way or other," said the teacher.

"We will," replied the boys. The next Sabbath those boys gathered round their teacher with smiling lips, and eyes so full of light they fairly twinkled like stars. He smiled in response and said: "Ah, I see by your looks that you all have something to tell me."

"We have, sir. We have," replied the boys in a chorus. Then each one told his story. "I," said one, "thought of going to the well for a pail of water every morning, to save my mother trouble and time. She thanked me so much and was so greatly pleased that I mean to keep on doing it for her."

"And I," said another boy, "thought of a poor old woman, whose eyes were too dim to read. I went to her house every day and read a chapter to her from the Bible. It seemed to give the old lady a good deal of comfort. I can't tell you how much she thanked me for."

"I was walking with my eyes open and my hands ready, as you told me," said a fourth boy, "when I saw a little boy crying because he had lost some pennies in the gutter. I told him not to cry for I would help him find his money. I did find it, and the little chap dried up his tears and ran off feeling very happy."

"I saw my mother was very tired one day. The baby was cross, and mother looked sick and sad. I asked mother to put the baby into my little wagon. She did, and I gave him a grand ride round the garden. If you had heard him cry, and seen him clasp his hands, teacher, it would have done you good; and oh, how much brighter my mother looked when I took baby indoors again!"

"Thus, by trying, all the boys had found some way of being useful during the week."—Sunday School Advocate.

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