

The Family Circle

GRANDMA'S ROSARY AND MINE.

When Grandma goes to say her beads
For all our family and our needs,
She sweetly says to me, "My dear,
Play nicely with your dollies here
Until I call. Then come to me
And bring your little Rosary."
I help her (Grandma says it's true)
With Aves ten, when she's most through.

She lays her hand, her gentle way,
Upon my head. "When children pray,"
She says, "the guardian angels take
The whispered Aves, and they make
(They do, indeed, right then and there)
The loveliest rosebuds of each prayer.
Some rosebuds white, some rosebuds red,
Red as the lips the Aves said;
Then with the posies off they fly,
Those happy angels, to the sky.

And all that Grandma says is true,
I see it in her eyes so blue
And clear and deep and kind,
That look right into mine and find
Those thoughts that cannot see a way
To get out in the words I say.

I see her sitting over there
In her old-fashioned rocking-chair,
The place (so I've heard father say)
She taught her babies how to pray.
And now the rosy altar light
(She keeps it burning day and night),
Sends rays that give the softest kiss
To her grey head—like this and this.

CHEERFULNESS A GREAT TREASURE.

There is no gift of human nature more fortunate to the individual and to mankind than a cheerful disposition—the happy faculty of looking on the bright side of things, disdaining to be influenced by circumstances, however untoward, holding our own manfully, and laughing in the face of fate. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us" against the saturnine, atrabilious member of society who obtrudes his gloom upon his fellows! We all know it, the funereal mood, paralysing wholesome thought and laying its pall upon us like a foretaste of death. What if rheumatism or toothache afflict us—shall we visit upon others the misery we endure? "Is life worth living?"

LAMPS AND CANDLES.

Lamps were employed long before candles were invented. As far back as recorded history goes we hear of their use. In some languages indeed there was but one word for both.

The first light was simply a torch. Then men improved upon that, and devised the scheme of obtaining light from porous fibre soaked in some animal or vegetable oil. Lamps of brass, bronze, and stone have been found in the Pyramids, as well as in old East Indian temples; and common terracotta ones were in general use for domestic purposes in Greece as early as the fourth century B.C. The earliest candles of which we have any record were those used by the ancient Romans, and were made of rushes coated with fat or wax. The first Christians made constant use of candles, and in course of time the Church adopted them for all religious services. No other light may be used on the altar for the celebration of Holy Mass.

We who obtain a brilliant light by turning a little thumbscrew find it hard to realise the difficulties under which our forefathers labored. Many of the masterpieces of great authors of antiquity were written with no other light than that from the fireplace or the uncertain flicker of a tallow candle, or even the flame of a dried rush.

THE OLD IRISH MOTHER.

I wonder if she is still in the old land, the blessed Irish mother, who put a cap around her comely face between the twenties and thirties and covered her brown waves from sight.

To her simple soul marriage meant consecration; the man who chose her need not concern himself about the little tenderesses; her affection was as fixed as the stars. He might be unreasonable, exacting, but her faith in the divine right of husbands was unshaken. She would have the children reverential to their father, even if she should have to romance a little to effect it, and with what loving sophistry she explained away his weaknesses.

She never understood constitutions, political or physical; but when sickness was in the family the pathetic care made the poor broth strengthening and the bitter medicine sweet. No sleep, no rest, no peace for her, while the shadow of death lay across the threshold; and how hard it was to die under her searching eyes!

But if a summons had really come, she would hold a crucifix to the dying lips, and the beloved son or daughter would carry the sound of her voice with them to heaven, for what Irish mother but could say prayers for the departing soul.

Not even the story of her country's wrongs could embitter her guileless nature. The mantle of her charity covered even the bloody "Sassenach," and sometimes secretly not daring to let it be known, she recommended them to the Virgin Mary.

If her belief in her husband was strong who could measure the confidence she reposed in the brave boys who overtop her at sixteen; anything evil in them, her glory and delight? Impossible. They are always white boys in their mother's eyes, however dark and desperate in the sight of those who dwell in palaces.

Her unquestioning trust and earnest teaching kept them pure and honest in their early days, and later when they discovered that their mother was only a simple, illogical, unlettered woman, their loyalty and devotion deepened, to find what wonders she had worked with her few talents.

What a tragedy Shakspeare could have woven around her, haunted all her life by a phantom ship at anchor in some harbor waiting till the children of her love were old enough to take passage and leave her forever.

How sorrowful must have been her joy on seeing them rise to the stature of men and women.

I wonder if she is still in the old land, stealing out of her lonely home at nightfall, and looking with her tender eyes always westward, and when no one is by, falling on her knees and lifting up her hands in such intensity of supplication that they touch the hem of His garment and His blessing falls on her flesh and blood in the far-off land.

If flowers emblematic of their lives could spring from the earth beneath, it would be easy to find the grave of the Irish mother.

Roses would be clustered on the emerald moss about her head, violets at the feet, and amongst the sweetest of the clover blossoms there would be lilies—lilies.—Exchange.

"TABLES."

You see, I'm learning "tables"—but not the schoolroom way, Just mother's way of teaching. Why, fifty times a day, She's ask me, "Six times seven?" as quick as any wink, And I'm supposed to answer without one chance to think?

Perhaps I'm drying dishes when my mother says to me, "Florence, shine these tumblers, and what was eight times three?"

Or maybe I'll be dusting, or teaching Rusty tricks, When mother calls and asks me, "Now what was twelve times six?"

At school the stupid figures seem hard, and all the same, But here at home with mother, they're just a kind of game!

It's fun to know the answers! I really like to play At learning all my "tables" in mother's funny way!

—Des Moines Register.

NOT VERY DEEP.

Coming to a river with which he was unfamiliar, a traveller asked a youngster if it was deep.