

## The Family Circle

### AMBITION.

If you would rise above the throng  
And seek the crown of fame,  
You must do more than drift along  
And merely play the game.  
Whatever path your feet may tread,  
Whatever be your quest,  
The only way to get ahead  
Is striving for the best.

'Tis not enough to wish to do  
A day's toil fairly well;  
If you would rise to glory, you  
Must hunger to excel.  
The boy who has the proper stuff  
Goes into every test  
Not seeking to be 'good enough,'  
But eager to be 'best.'

Aim high! And though you fail to-day  
And may to-morrow fail,  
Keep pounding steadily away,  
Some day you'll hit the nail.  
At no half-way mark ever pause  
In smug content to rest.  
Who would win honor and applause  
Must want to be the best.

The best must be your way in life,  
The best in sport or work,  
Success in any form of strife  
Falls never to the shirk.  
The crowns of leadership are few,  
The followers move in throngs,  
If you would be a leader, you  
Must shun the 'drift alongs.'

### THE LILIES' EASTER OFFERING.

The lilies slept in the warm brown earth, awaiting the Resurrection. The Star of Bethlehem had heralded the Christ-Child's birth; the snow-drop, emblem of purity, bloomed in fragile beauty for the Presentation; and the rose of Jericho exhaled its fragrant homage under the Saviour's feet, and drooped at the foot of the cross.

The Angel of the flowers looked on them with love, as he flitted by, so softly that the lilies heard him not, till their hearts thrilled with the Easter tidings, 'Awake! the Christ is risen!'

And the lilies awoke, resplendent in paschal beauty. 'He is risen indeed!' exulted the Angel. 'It is meet that the fairest flowers bloom for His altar.'

'Gather me first!' commanded a regal blossom. 'My place is next to the Presence, as befits the imperial lily, the emblem of majesty.'

'Not so,' said the Angel, in gentle reproof. 'Pride of position would be an unseemly offering to One Who was poor and lowly. What place seek you, little lilies of the valley?'

'Let us lie at His feet, dear Angel,' pleaded the tiny flowers, lifting their fragrant chalices. 'He placed us here in the shade where we were sheltered and happy. Let us lie at His feet, an offering of love.'

'It shall throb in His heart,' murmured the Angel. 'The sweetness of thy chalice shall overflow in the tabernacle.'

A stately crimson lily drooped on her stem when the humble flowers were chosen. 'Ah, my sorrow and my disgrace! gather me not!' she cried, as the Angel drew near; 'know you not that I am unworthy?'

'You are fair to see,' he answered gently; 'your petals glow red as the Precious Blood shed for man's redemption.'

'Once they were white,' lamented the lily. 'When He walked in the garden all flowers bowed low, I alone refusing Him reverence. His sorrowful gaze sank into my heart, and the blush of shame forever crimsoned my lustrous blossoms. Pride rebuked has naught to offer.'

'Offer Him repentance,' whispered the Angel. 'A contrite heart makes joy in heaven.'

And the lily grew glad at the Angel's words, and offered her tribute on the altar, where it glowed like a beacon of hope to troubled souls.

'My ways are lowly,' said the orange lily. 'I grow in humble gardens and brighten dreary places; I bend my head to the storm and open my heart to the sunshine, and all the time I am happy. A contented spirit is all I can offer.'

'It will please Him much,' said the Angel, accepting the gift; 'to cheerfully do His will is a noble mission.'

'My only gift is beauty,' said the lustrous cala. 'I have treasured it for Him. Take it, dear Angel. Let it shine on His altar, divinely transfigured.'

'Consecrated beauty, a contented spirit, repentance, humility, and prayer—truly a worthy offering to lay at His feet,' said the Angel.

'Honored are we,' said the Easter lilies.

—*Sacred Heart Review.*

### MUNKACSY AND HIS MASTERPIECE.

Some years ago (states *Church Progress*) a wonderful painting made a triumphant journey through the world. It is estimated that more than two millions of people flocked to see it. Christians and pagans, Jews and Gentiles, the highest and the lowest, little children and old people, continually surrounded it,—all moved by the skill which reproduced the scene when our Blessed Lord was arraigned before His human judge. The painting was the famous 'Christ Before Pilate'; the artist, Michael Munkacsy.

He had just completed a secular picture which had won the first prize at the Exhibition Universelle, when a Parisian connoisseur suggested that he undertake a sacred subject. He at first thought of a canvas with Herod for its central figure; but later there came into his mind the scene where Christ was haled before Pilate in the praetorium. As he walked through the streets he saw not the hurrying throngs of people, but the hungry faces of those who would crucify their Lord, and at night he dreamed of them.

He began his painting in 1880, and finished it in a year; more than half the time, however, being spent in preliminary studies. The canvas was twenty feet long and twelve feet in height, and contained more than forty figures. For the local color and architectural background he trusted to his imagination, being, of course, familiar with what may be called the appropriate stage-setting. Then he sketched in the figures—all but one,—working with incredible rapidity. In completing the details he employed living models for these figures, hunting them far and wide, and selecting them with extraordinary judgment.

One space remained empty—the fair white piece of canvas where the figure of Christ was to have place. He hesitated to undertake it, or even to make the slightest sketch of it; he hid himself from the sight of men, and for many days fasted and prayed and meditated.

One day, as he has recorded, after a long vigil and much weariness of mind and body, he knelt alone, when suddenly a luminous shape passed swiftly before his eyes and filled the waiting place in the great picture. Then the painter, trembling with emotion, seized his brushes and fixed his vision upon the canvas. It is not for us to say how much of this fulfilment of his hopes was due to an overwrought state of mind at the time; we know the effect of the picture upon the world, and that is enough for us.

Munkacsy received fame, wealth, and a title in return for his extraordinary labors; but after some

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