

## The Family Circle

### KEEPING LENT.

I'm just a little boy, I know;  
But now that Lent is here,  
I'll try to make these forty days  
The best of all the year.

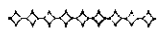
I do not have to keep the fast  
Like older folks, 'tis true;  
But there are many little things  
A chap like me can do.

I'll study harder than before,  
And never miss a class;  
And every morning I can go  
To church for early Mass.

Or I can keep away from cakes  
And candy every day;  
Or say some extra prayers, instead  
Of going out to play.

Whatever I decide to do  
I'll keep up all through Lent,  
So that I'll be much better when  
These forty days are spent.

—GEORGE MAKEJOY.



### "FOUR THOUSAND HAIL MARYS."

(By HILDA M. NOETZEL (aged 17), in the *Missionary*.)

Rosemary Walton knelt before the beautiful shrine of the Blessed Virgin in the magnificent edifice of the Holy Rosary parish. Her beads slipped between her fingers many times. It was just ten days until Christmas, so Rosemary must pray very hard if she would complete her four thousand Hail Marys.

"Dear Mother," whispered the child at length, glancing up into the serene, lifelike features of the mage. "please ask Jesus to make Daddy a Catholic. That is all I desire."

Blessing herself and arising, she quietly tiptoed out of the church.

"Hello there, pet. Come and see me for a little while," called Mr. Walton, carelessly tossing his newspaper aside.

Rosemary stood in the doorway of the luxuriantly furnished living-room, the afternoon sunshine pouring down upon her. She made a fair picture indeed, this lass of eight winters with the curling mass of golden brown hair, roguish eyes, and the fresh, rose bloom in her cheeks. Running lightly to her father's side, she seated herself on his knee, cuddling up very close.

"Now, darling," continued Mr. Walton, "you know it is very near Christmas, so you must tell Daddy your most longed-for desires."

Rosemary flushed painfully.

"I just want one thing, Daddy dear," she faltered.

"And that is?" her father encouraged.

"I only—just—. Oh, Daddy, I want you to be a Catholic."

Mr. Walton, looking down into the sweet brown eyes gazing so bravely, so earnestly up into his own, felt half-inclined to yield. But, have a mere child domineer him? No, he could not possibly tolerate it. Therefore, the next moment found the enraged man stamping madly up and down the room, talking loudly, wildly.

"Didn't I forbid you ever to speak of that again? Haven't I given you and your mother enough liberties? Allowing you to go to your Mass on Sundays or any day. And you being taught in a convent school."

Rosemary huddled in a corner very pale and trembling visibly.

"And still you torment me," stormed Mr. Walton, angrily, "telling me what I should do and believe. But come, I'll teach you whom you should obey."

Grasping the terrified child harshly by the arm, he dragged her from the room. Up two flights of richly-carpeted stairs he led her, over another narrow, bare stair-

case, through a low, cobwebby, ill-lit corridor, at the end of which he opened a door.

Rosemary uttered a shriek of horror.

"Daddy, please, Daddy, don't put me in there."

But Mr. Walton only grinned sneeringly, maliciously, as he thrust the now thoroughly frightened little girl into the dark, musty, forbidding room. Locking the door securely behind his captive, the man retraced his steps.

A few minutes later Mr. Walton answered the telephone in his home office.

"Who is it? Oh, Bankson. What's that you say? You have a customer to purchase the Clarendon Apartments?" (Mr. Walton was in the real estate business.) "Yes, I'll be right down. Good-bye." Hastily hanging up the receiver and donning his cap, he hurried from the house, in his excitement forgetting everything else, little daughter included.

"Ellen, do you know where Rosemary is?" inquired Mrs. Walton of the maid.

"No, ma'am. I saw her with Mr. Walton about half an hour ago."

"Most likely she is with him then," was the response.

Meanwhile, the little prisoner was pacing the floor of her cell. Rosemary was naturally a sensitive, imaginative child. Now in her present perturbed state of mind the slightest sound distracted her. The wind howling around the house seemed like the moaning and groaning of some far-away spirit ever pleading for release. Once an innocent little mouse unconsciously strode across Rosemary's daintily encased feet, adding greatly to the terror of that personage. Presently the little girl began speaking:

"How cold it is growing and how dark!" casting distressing glances about herself. "Dear Mary, pray for me! Sweet Jesus, help me, for I cannot endure it much longer. My throat feels so queer, and how my head does ache. Oh, I—. A short, sharp cry pierced the air as Rosemary, unconscious, sank to the floor.

"Alice! Alice! Where are you?"

"Right here, dear, in the library," replied Mrs. Walton. Mr. Walton entered the room, his eyes glowing in excitement.

"I've just closed transactions on the Clarendon. Sold it for a thousand more than I ever expected."

"Really! How fortunate. But wasn't Rosemary with you? She hasn't been seen since three-thirty, and it's almost six o'clock now."

The joy suddenly faded from Mr. Walton's countenance. A gray pallor spread over his face. Rushing by his wife, he fled up the stairs, two steps at a time, to the attic, Mrs. Walton closely pursuing him.

"Oh, my God! What have I done?" cried Mr. Walton, bending over the limp form of Rosemary. Gently raising the senseless child in his arms, he carried her downstairs. "Quick, Alice, call the doctor."

Rosemary was suffering from fright as well as from a severe chill. Extremely great care must be exercised if pneumonia were to be averted. Two trained nurses and several physicians were in constant attendance. Mr. Walton dared not approach his sick daughter. Remorse filled his breast. There was a haunted look in his eyes, as with bowed head he wandered listlessly from room to room. Business no longer concerned him; there were greater matters to be considered.

"Good morning, dearie. I've good news for you," were Mrs. Walton's greetings to her daughter. It was Thursday, and Sunday would be Christmas. Rosemary had been pronounced out of danger and was recuperating splendidly.

"Would you believe it?" went on Mrs. Walton. "Father Ward has promised to allow you to receive your first Holy Communion on Christmas morning."

"Truly, Mamma? And doesn't Daddy care?"

"No, darling, Daddy is delighted that you should be able to make it. Now, lie down again, dear, I want to tell you a little story."

Mrs. Walton then narrated the tale of a young lad who at the age of seven had been left an orphan. A wealthy uncle offered to take this boy. However, this man was not a Catholic, as the lad had been. And soon under the evil influence of his uncle, the mind of the youth became poisoned against anything pertaining to religion. Thus, he grew into manhood with hatred in his heart for Catholicity.

"Rosemary, this boy and man is your father.