

THE LITTLE CHILD-ANGEL.



ALL the little child-angels were busy in their gardens counting over their flowers, for they knew that it was Innocents' Day, and then they go down, once a year, and carry their blossoms to the children in the world below.

"I have such a big bunch of violets," said one. "I can go into the town and give one each to all the little children."

"And see my lilies!" said another. "How pleased they will be!"

"But I have only one white rosebud," said a third. "Nothing else has come out."

"But it is such a lovely one!" said the others, clustering round. "Don't grieve, darling," for the tears came into

the eyes of the little angel, because he had only one flower. "It is better than all ours together."

Then one of the big, grown-up angels came and told the little child-angels that the gate was open, and so they all flocked through and went down the great silver-stairs, carrying their flowers with them.

Now the little White Rose Angel, with his one blossom, turned away from the towns, because he had only one flower to give away, and so went right into the solitary parts, where the country lay all white under its robe of pure snow. Then he came to a lonely cottage, a very poor little place, far, far away from any other dwelling, and as he paused a moment he heard a sort of low sobbing like some one in great distress. "I will go in here," he thought.

Now, in the cottage, crouching over a dying fire, were two little

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children, a girl and a boy. The girl was the bigger of the two, and had her little brother in her arms, and she was trying to soothe and comfort him; but he cried and wailed, for he was but a tiny boy, and could not understand many things.

"When will Father come home," he said, "and bring us some food, and some more wood to make a bigger fire burn?"

"He is sure to be home in the morning," said the little girl, pushing the dying embers together to make them burn a little brighter, "and then we shall have both food and warmth."

Then the little Angel was very sorry, for, all of a sudden, he knew that their Father was lying cold and still under a great snow-wreath in the hills, and would never come home any more.

"Sing to me," said the boy. "Sing to me, sister, sing about the flowers."

And the girl, though she was very weak and ill, sang to him as he asked:

THE FLOWERS OF HEAVEN.

"The tall, white lilies, fair and sweet,
In Paradise bloom at our dear Lord's feet;
And on the earth He hath bid them blow,
That we, the flowers of Heaven, might know.

"And 'mid the meadows He bid spring up
The daisy white, and the buttercup;
Those, too, in Heaven, I think we'll see,
When we bow down at our dear Lord's knee.

"And the crimson rose, with its sharp-set thorn,
Like the Crown that once for us was worn;
That, too, we'll find by our dear Lord's side,
When at last we all go home to bide."

"I think I'll sleep now," said the boy, drowsily. "I ain't so cold now, I think. Good-night, sister!"



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“Good-night!” said the little girl. “I’m tired, too, so will go to sleep till Father comes in the morning.”

Then as they slept, tight-folded in one another’s arms, the little Child-Angel came softly and put his white rosebud in their clasped hands. And the Great Frost Angel paced the earth all that night through, and it grew colder and colder with his frosted breath; but the children slept on and on. And in the morning there were two new little child-angels in Paradise.

But when the people came and found the two little frozen figures, they wondered greatly, for in the tiny, ice-cold hands was clasped a lovely rosebud which filled the poor little cottage with its fragrance. And the Priest took the flower, when they laid the children to sleep in the quiet churchyard, and put it on the altar of the little hill chapel, and there it blossomed till Easter Morn dawned; and then was seen no more.

M. A. Hoyer.

Summarize the story.

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Directions: Put the words into alphabetical (ABC) order.

rosebud

clasped

blossoms

sobbing

warmth

wailed

distress

flocked

Directions: Match each word to its synonym.

1. pleased:

- a. angered
- b. delighted
- c. excited
- d. saddened

4. distress:

- a. glee
- b. greed
- c. hunger
- d. pain

2. flocked:

- a. cornered
- b. gathered
- c. rounded
- d. screamed

5. soothed:

- a. angered
- b. calmed
- c. cuddled
- d. raised

3. dwelling:

- a. bag
- b. garage
- c. home
- d. store

6. drowsily:

- a. angrily
- b. eagerly
- c. happily
- d. sleepily