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"Who will Riddle me the How and the Why?"

\_So questions one of England's sweetest singers. The "How?" has already been told, after a fashion, in the verses prefixed to "Alice in Wonderland"; and some other memories of that happy summer day are set down, for those who care to see them, in this little book--the germ that was to grow into the published volume. But the "Why?" cannot, and need not, be put into words. Those for whom a child's mind is a sealed book, and who see no divinity in a child's smile, would read such words in vain: while for any one that has ever loved one true child, no words are needed. For he will have known the awe that falls on one in the presence of a spirit fresh from \_GOD'S \_hands, on whom no shadow of sin, and but the outermost fringe of the shadow of sorrow, has yet fallen: he will have felt the bitter contrast between the haunting selfishness that spoils his best deeds and the life that is but an overflowing love--for I think a child's \_first \_attitude to the world is a simple love for all living things: and he will have learned that the best work a man can do is when he works for love's sake only, with no thought of name, or gain, or earthly reward. No deed of ours, I suppose, on this side the grave, is really unselfish: yet if one can put forth all one's powers in a task where nothing of reward is hoped for but a little child's whispered thanks, and the airy touch of a little child's pure lips, one seems to come somewhere near to this.\_

\_There was no idea of publication in my mind when I wrote this little book\_: that \_was wholly an afterthought, pressed on me by the "perhaps too partial friends" who always have to bear the blame when a writer rushes into print: and I can truly say that no praise of theirs has ever given me one hundredth part of the pleasure it has been to think of the sick children in hospitals (where it has been a delight to me to send copies) forgetting, for a few bright hours, their pain and weariness--perhaps thinking lovingly of the unknown writer of the tale--perhaps even putting up a childish prayer (and oh, how much it needs!) for one who can but dimly hope to stand, some day, not quite out of sight of those pure young faces, before the great white throne. "I am very sure," writes a lady-visitor at a Home for Sick Children, "that there will be many loving earnest prayers for you on Easter morning from the children.\_"

\_I would like to quote further from her letters, as embodying a suggestion that may perhaps thus come to the notice of some one able and willing to carry it out.\_

"\_I want you to send me one of your Easter Greetings for a very dear child who is dying at our Home. She is just fading away, and

'Alice' has brightened some of the weary hours in her illness, and I know that letter would be such a delight to her--especially if you would put 'Minnie' at the top, and she could know you had sent it for her. \_She \_knows \_you, \_and would so value it.... She suffers so much that I long for what I know would so please her." ... "Thank you very much for sending me the letter, and for writing Minnie's name.... I am quite sure that all these children will say a loving prayer for the 'Alice-man' on Easter Day: and I am sure the letter will help the little ones to the real Easter joy. How I do wish that you, who have won the hearts and confidence of so many children, would do for them what is so very near my heart, and yet what no one will do, viz. write a book for children about \_GOD \_and themselves, which is \_not \_goody, and which begins at the right end, about religion, to make them see what it really is. I get quite miserable very often over the children I come across: hardly any of them have an idea of \_really \_knowing that \_GOD \_loves them, or of loving and confiding in Him. They will love and trust \_me, \_and be sure that I want them to be happy, and will not let them suffer more than is necessary: but as for going to Him in the same way, they would never think of it. They are dreadfully afraid of Him, if they think of Him at all, which they generally only do when they have been naughty, and they look on all connected with Him as very grave and dull: and, when they are full of fun and thoroughly happy, I am sure they unconsciously hope He is not looking. I am sure I don't wonder they think of Him in this way, for people \_never \_talk of Him in connection with what makes their little lives the brightest. If they are naughty, people put on solemn faces, and say He is very angry or shocked, or something which frightens them: and, for the rest, He is talked about only in a way that makes them think of church and having to be quiet. As for being taught that all Joy and all Gladness and Brightness is His Joy--that He is wearying for them to be happy, and is not hard and stern, but always doing things to make their days brighter, and caring for them so tenderly, and wanting them to run to Him with \_all \_their little joys and sorrows, they are not taught that. I do so long to make them trust Him as they trust us, to feel that He will 'take their part' as they do with us in their little woes, and to go to Him in their plays and enjoyments and not only when they say their prayers. I was quite grateful to one little dot, a short time ago, who said to his mother 'when I am in bed, I put out my hand to see if I can feel \_JESUS \_and my angel. I thought perhaps \_in the dark \_they'd touch me, but they never have yet.' I do so want them to \_want \_to go to Him, and to feel how, if He is there, it \_must \_be happy. \_"

\_Let me add--for I feel I have drifted into far too serious a vein for a preface to a fairy-tale--the deliciously naïve remark of a very dear child-friend, whom I asked, after an acquaintance of two or three days, if she had read 'Alice' and the 'Looking-Glass.' "Oh yes," she replied readily, "I've read both of them! And I think" (this more slowly and thoughtfully) "I think 'Through the Looking-Glass' is \_more \_stupid than 'Alice's Adventures.' Don't \_you \_think so?" But this was a question I felt it would be hardly

discreet for me to enter upon.\_

\_LEWIS CARROLL.\_

\_Dec.\_ 1886.

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AN EASTER GREETING

TO

EVERY CHILD WHO LOVES

"Alice."

DEAR CHILD,

\_Please to fancy, if you can, that you are reading a real letter, from a real friend whom you have seen, and whose voice you can seem to yourself to hear wishing you, as I do now with all my heart, a happy Easter.\_

\_Do you know that delicious dreamy feeling when one first wakes on a summer morning, with the twitter of birds in the air, and the fresh breeze coming in at the open window--when, lying lazily with eyes half shut, one sees as in a dream green boughs waving, or waters rippling in a golden light? It is a pleasure very near to sadness, bringing tears to one's eyes like a beautiful picture or poem. And is not that a Mother's gentle hand that undraws your curtains, and a Mother's sweet voice that summons you to rise? To rise and forget, in the bright sunlight, the ugly dreams that frightened you so when all was dark--to rise and enjoy another happy day, first kneeling to thank that unseen Friend, who sends you the beautiful sun\_?

\_Are these strange words from a writer of such tales as "Alice"? And is this a strange letter to find in a book of nonsense? It may be so. Some perhaps may blame me for thus mixing together things grave and gay; others may smile and think it odd that any one should speak of solemn things at all, except in church and on a Sunday: but I think--nay, I am sure--that some children will read this gently and lovingly, and in the spirit in which I have written it.\_

\_For I do not believe God means us thus to divide life into two halves--to wear a grave face on Sunday, and to think it out-of-place to even so much as mention Him on a week-day. Do you think He cares to see only kneeling figures, and to hear only tones of prayer--and that He does not also love to see the lambs