

FACES WE SELDOM SEE

*I—A GLIMPSE OF KATE GREENAWAY

By ETHEL MACKENZIE MCKENNA

DAUGHTER OF SIR MORELL MACKENZIE



IT IS now nearly eleven years since "Under the Window" made its first appearance, and ever since then the name of Kate Greenaway has been "familiar in our mouths as household words;" indeed, has become a descriptive term for the style of children's costume she has made so popular. Not only must the little ones, to whom her drawings have afforded such endless delight, feel gratitude

toward the clever artist, but all lovers of the picturesque must recognize the debt they owe to the pencil that has transformed our babies from over-dressed little frights into the quaint miniature pictures that now charm our eyes; for the shady sun-bonnets, the frilled caps, the old-fashioned fichus, the short-waisted gowns, are all the result of Kate Greenaway's



* MISS GREENAWAY

enthusiasm for costumes which have their foundation in those of the last century, but to which she has given a charm and spirit entirely her own.

It frequently happens that genius, fearing in anything to resemble its spurious brother, who by plentiful advertisement succeeds in persuading a large portion of the public that mediocre talent is really the divine spark, has a morbid dread of publicity, and hides itself with never-tiring pertinacity from the eyes of its admirers. There is a story told of Lord Tennyson, who so resolutely shuns the gaze of the curious, that when he was walking in the village near which his place in the Isle of Wight is situated, and chanced to meet a stranger, his morbid dread of observation was instantly aroused, and drawing forth his handkerchief he covered his face in its voluminous folds, leaving the harmless unknown, who had not before observed the author of the "Idylls," to wonder at the eccentricity of the venerable old gentleman.

Miss Greenaway—she is fortunate in her name, for there is something suggestive of quaintness about the very sound of "Kate Greenaway," which has led to a very general belief that it is only a *nom de plume*—although in her case this trait is not quite as strongly marked as in that of the Poet Laureate, has a righteous horror of seeing the details of her private life in print, and regards the interviewing friend with a feeling nothing short of loathing. She is not, like many of her sister artists, in the giddy whirl of society, and the crowded "at home," and still more thronged "private view," know her not. But, though by no means a lover of society in the general sense of the term, Kate Greenaway is not in the least unsocial. It is "Mrs. Lion Hunter" and her host of followers to whom she is averse, and though at receptions and miscalled "small and earlys" she is out of her element, a quiet tea party is not without its charms as a relaxation from work. So great is her dislike to being lionized, and her fear of a wolf in sheep's clothing, in the person of an unknown newspaper correspondent, that she always re-



being lionized, and her fear of a wolf in sheep's clothing, in the person of an unknown newspaper correspondent, that she always re-

* The first of a series in which will be given sketches and portraits of women noted in song, charity and public works, whose names are as household words, yet who are in reality unfamiliar to us by their faces and lives. This series will appear from time to time in the JOURNAL in conjunction with the other two popular series of "Unknown Wives of Well-known Men" and "Clever Daughters of Clever Men."

fuses to make one of a house party, and when visiting friends in the country specially pleads that she may be the only guest.

No doubt her limited circle of acquaintance has some foundation in a very natural desire to be undisturbed, for Miss Greenaway is a most energetic worker, and gives up nearly all her time to her beloved art. Her big studio, with its countless unfinished sketches, is not her only field for labor, and she spends long days sketching out of doors.

No one who met this dark, somewhat insignificant little woman, so quietly and plainly dressed, would ever imagine it was before her pencil that children and "grown-ups" alike bowed down. On the picturesque but plebeian Heath of Hampstead hers is a well-known figure, for while desiring to escape the "maddening crowd" and turmoil of London streets, Miss Greenaway has wisely elected to live within easy reach of her publisher, and has pitched her tent at Hampstead. Her house, which stands with a few others on a delightfully open piece of ground at the foot of a hill, is the most bewitching of Queen Ann mansions. The lower story is of red brick, while the upper part of the house is entirely covered with red tiles, from among which windows of every size and shape seem to peep in the most unexpected manner. One can see at once where Miss Greenaway received the inspiration for her quaint gabled houses, latticed windows and old-fashioned window seats. Whilst in the garden I caught sight of the identical apple tree which, in a somewhat idealized form, so often figures in Miss Greenaway's sketches. It was in blossom, too, and made a most suitable background for some realization of spring in a "Kate Greenaway Almanac." Inside, the house was not as full of "inspiration," though the long windows with their full curtains, the cozy window seats, backed by pots of flowers, a few old-fashioned chairs and some uncommon bowls and vases for the reception of flowers, had a familiar look to those who have studied the works of the talented artist. The big studio is at the top of the house, and the huge window, with its north light, opens onto a fascinating square balcony, which on a cool summer's evening must tempt even the most untiring of workers. I have an idea that I caught sight of Miss Greenaway's "model" cat, but she evidently possesses her mistress' horror of the would-be interviewer, and fled precipitately on my approach.

Since the hour when Kate Greenaway first decided to devote herself to art, and put her hand to the plough, there has been no looking back. The Art School at South Kensington, the life classes at Heatherley's and the celebrated Slade School were all fields for hard work. When she exhibited her first tiny pictures at the Dudley Gallery the public, who passed them by with a careless glance or a nod of admiration, little dreamed that ere long the artist's name would have obtained world-wide fame. For at this time Miss Greenaway had only reached the lower rungs of the ladder, and was glad to earn money, if not reputation, by designing Christmas cards and illustrating children's books. The idea of baby figures in the quaint frocks she admired so much had taken possession of her mind, but she was not content with studying the pictures of Reynolds and Romney, copying old plates and designing from the sketches in books of costume. With the help of these, she created with her own fingers various dainty little dresses which, while recalling our grandmothers' gowns with their short waists, frilled fichus, huge muslin caps and long mittens, were more suited to the young figures for whom she destined them. Having dressed up her juvenile models and realized the effects, she produced "Under the Window," and the success which greeted its publication left no doubt that it answered a genuine need. We were growing weary of the conventionality of our children's clothing, and Miss Greenaway's sketches instantly brought about a change.

The want that German and French artists had felt, and endeavored unsuccessfully to supply, had been filled by this English girl. The ladder was now quickly mounted, each book produced raising the artist higher in popular favor. Perhaps the greatest boon she had bestowed on the children she so loves was the publication of a new edition of "Mavor's Spelling Book," illustrated by her clever pen. Who has not spent dreary hours pouring over spelling lessons? The long column seemed endless, and our poor little brains ached with trying to master them. But the "Mavor's Spelling" of to-day, with its delightful illustrations, is quite a different book, and youngsters no longer dread it as an instrument of torture.

It is satisfactory to know that it is not only in England and America that Miss Greenaway's designs have produced a revolution in the matter of children's garments. The French nation, always so ready to scoff at English art, and holding themselves to be all powerful on any matter relating to dress, have during the last few years entirely altered the style of frock worn by their girls and boys, and the overdressed little citizens, once so common at all French watering places, are transformed into far happier looking mites in quaintly smocked gowns, picturesque coats and large sun bonnets after the clever little creations from the mind of Kate Greenaway.

