

CHILDLESS MOTHER HAS OWN FAMILY

MRS. IDA R. MARTIN HAS HAD
EIGHT CHILDREN CALL
HER "MOTHER."

BUT SHE MUST GIVE UP

Fears She Will Be Taken Away
Soon, and Does Not Want Help-
less Children Then Left to
Shift for Selves

A "childless mother" who has reared, or is rearing eight children, caring for them and loving them as her own, is Mrs. Ida R. Martin, widow of John C. Martin, who died a week ago.

Asked if it were possible for a childless woman to become attached to an adopted child as closely as if it were her own, Mrs. Martin, now aged 63, smiled a little sadly and answered the question in the most graphic manner possible.

"When I have to part with little Delores May [age 7], who crawled into my bed this morning for fifteen minutes, cuddling before getting ready for school, it will be like taking part of myself. I am afraid the sorrow of parting will break me. I am an old woman; I cannot stand sorrows much longer," she said.

No mother could have been capable of more intense feeling for her own children than that which was reflected in the kindly face and quiet voice of the childless woman who has mothered so many.

First into the life of Mrs. Martin thirty-nine years ago, when she was newly married to her first husband, John Dalton, came Charles Ray,

a 8-year-old [sic]¹ baby who had been left on a doorstep in Pacific Junction, where Mrs. Martin then lived.

She had been told by doctors that she could never have a child of her own so Mrs. Martin applied for legal adoption papers for little Charles Ray, who became Charles Ray Dalton.

Some years later Mrs. Martin's first husband was killed in a railroad accident, Charles Ray Dalton, grown into adolescence, mourned the loss with his adopted mother and felt keenly that he had lost a father. Charles Ray Dalton is now living in Omaha, where he is employed as a foreman in the Goodrich rubber company plant.

"More Than Proud"

Concerning this child whom she reared and brought to a splendid manhood, staunch in his religious beliefs and worshipping her as a mother, Mrs. Martin says simply, "I am more than proud of him."

John C. Martin came into her life a short time after the tragic death of her first husband and she married him.

With her first adopted child rapidly growing into man's estate Mrs. Martin looked around for another little tot to whom she might bring the happiness of a mother's caress.

Little 8-year-old May Smithers, motherless, pitiful, was brought to her attention.

¹ Clearly, "a 8-year-old baby" is wrong. It could be that the baby was actually 8 days or 8 months old, but I think he was, more likely, "a 1-year-old baby." Charles Ray's date of birth is shown as June 1883 in the 1900 census and, more specifically, as 15 June 1883 in an obituary posted on [his Find-a-Grave site](#). That would have been 9 months before Ida married John Dalton, on 20 March 1884. Hence, if Charles had been found when he was 1 year old (about June 1884) that could clearly be described as when Ida was "newly married." That would also mean the typesetter just got a single digit wrong, rather than an entire word, and would explain why the writer used the article "a" rather than "an" before the child's age.

Although May was not legally adopted she stayed with Mrs. Martin and called her mother until she was 22 years old, when she married and went to live in Los Angeles, Calif.

While May and Charles Ray Dalton were still in the family, the former having grown to manhood, however, Mrs. Martin took to rear a little girl named Pauline, whose parents were going through the stage of separation.

The troubles of little Pauline's parents were dragged into the divorce courts. Mrs. Martin's mother instinct caused her to stretch out her hands to the little one and Pauline fled into them, finding there a haven of peace and love that could not be disturbed by parental quarrels and worse.

But Mrs. Martin could not legally adopt Pauline because the judge who granted the divorce ruled that the mother and the father should have the right to care for her part of the time. The mother would claim the child, then the father, until little Pauline did not know which way to look to find the unselfish love and devotion which she craved. She clung to Mrs. Martin, but the courts ruled that the parents had a right to her and she had to go.

"That was real anguish for me. I would so liked to have added that baby to my growing family of adopted children. She was so sweet and good, so ready to obey the simple rules for good behavior," Mrs. Martin said.

Others Taken Away.

Three orphan children were next for Mrs. Martin to take under her motherly care. They were a girl, 11 years old, a boy, 9, and another boy, 5. Only two years was Mrs. Martin allowed to enjoy these little tots. Then their relatives claimed them and with many objections and much shedding of tears they were induced to leave the Martin home. The three children were unable to realize what their loss would mean to the woman who had mothered them for two years. They wept, then childlike speedily overcame their grief in new surroundings, but they left behind them a little

tired woman who felt a great sorrow, who mourned as if the children had been her own.

Now there is Marvin Leroy Martin, 8 years old, and Delores May, 6 years old, living with the widow at her home, 2605 South Eighth street. The children are unable to realize that their "daddy, John C. Martin, has left them forever. They have called Mrs. Martin their mother since they were tiny tots. Her husband was their "daddy," a loving man scarcely 60 years old at the time of his death a week ago, who played with them and romped about the yard until he was stricken suddenly with the stomach ailment which carried him away from them forever.

It is concerning one of these children, little Delores May, who being a girl, possibly naturally crept a bit further into the mother heart than the boy, that Mrs. Martin made her remark concerning the love of women for adopted children.

The little old lady garbed in black as a token of respect to the memory of the husband who has gone, was asked why she should feel that she must part from the two children who are the joy of her life today. Her questioner felt a moment later that the query came from a mind which did not understand the full extent of the love which this woman holds for her children as she said: "I am getting old, my friend. I have had another great sorrow and it has helped to break me. I cannot do justice by these two children for many years more. I must part with them now, although it pulls away part of my heart even to think of it. I must part with them and find them a good home to assure their future. Otherwise I might be taken from them and they would drift to charitable institutions."

Think of it! This woman would add to the great sorrow which she has just suffered, she would tear out of her life the little tots who are such a great comfort to her, whom she loves as any woman would love babies of her own, she would suffer again in her supreme unselfishness so that the children would be assured a

good home when her declining years make it impossible for her to care for them.

Mrs. Martin has reared all her adopted children in the good old-fashioned way. She has taught them the difference between right and wrong. She had brought them up with religion firmly instilled into their minds. She has made them clean, healthy, respectable boys and girls.

She is rewarded by the extreme devotion of the two that have grown to adult estate and have married, but never drifted away from her as completely as children often do from their true mothers.

Her home during the years that she has reared her adopted children has been similar to all other homes of the respectable working persons. The little house on South Eighth street was almost paid for when her husband was taken. She is able to finish paying for it now, but she fears the specter of age which is creeping toward her and making it impossible for her to care for the two children who are with her now.

In the future? She has no definite plans. First she must steel her heart to parting with the babies, then maybe she will join her daughter in California or a sister in Canada.