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KNEE

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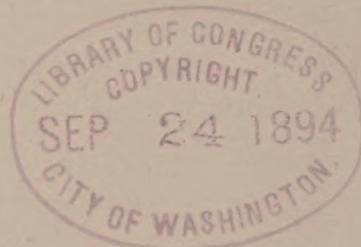
AT MOTHER'S KNEE

The Mother's Holy Ministry with her
Children in the Home

BY

J. M. P. OTTS, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "THE FIFTH GOSPEL: THE LAND WHERE
JESUS LIVED," ETC., ETC.



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BABY-LAND.

How many miles to Baby-Land?
Any one can tell;
Up one flight,
To your right—
Please to ring the bell.

What can you see in Baby-Land?
Little folks in white,
Downy heads,
Cradle-beds,
Faces pure and bright.

What do they do in Baby-Land!
Dream and wake and play,
Laugh and crow,
Shout and grow;
Jolly times have they.

What do they say in Baby-Land?
Why, the oddest things;
Might as well
Try to tell
What a birdie sings.

Who is the queen of Baby-Land?
Mother, kind and sweet ;
And her love,
Born above,
Guides the little feet.

George Cooper.

THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.

THE CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

Now I wake and rise from sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my life to keep ;
In all I do from morn to night,
I pray thee, Lord, to lead me right.

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PREFACE.

THIS is not a child's book, but a book about children and their prayers, written for the benefit of the little ones, and for the pleasure of all who love them. It is especially intended for the help of mothers, in their holy ministry with their children in the home.

In these modern days much is said about woman's ministry, especially about her sphere and work in the church; and, no doubt, she has there a high place to fill, and an important work to do for Christ and for humanity. But, most manifestly, God has ordained motherhood as woman's highest earthly glory; and hence, ordinarily, her work in life must be intimately connected with her crowning position as wife and mother. The home is the center of her life; and from it issue those

streams of holy influence through which she blesses all mankind.

The world of the affections is her world ;
Not that of man's ambition. In that stillness
Which most becomes a woman, calm and holy,
She sitteth by the fireside of the heart,
Feeding its flame.

Whatever else may be her work on earth, most assuredly her holy ministry with her children comes first, and is highest of all. In that she stands between them and their Saviour ; and her home ministry is always prior to, and more potential than, that of the holy man as preacher in the pulpit, or of the devout woman as teacher of the infant-class. She is always the first to tell the story of Jesus and his Cross to the children of each new-born generation as they come into the world through the golden portal of the home. And as she tells that sweet story in her ministry of love in the nursery, the little ones understand and appreciate it, long before they could comprehend the same gospel as taught in the classroom or preached from the pulpit. Most of those now praying on earth, or praising in heaven, were first drawn to the Saviour by

the voice of mother, telling the sweet story of redeeming love, as only woman's voice can tell it, to the tender hearts of the little ones who kneel in prayer "At Mother's Knee."

That is a touching scene in Luke's Gospel where it is recorded: "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." It was then that the Master gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer, which the church will continue to pray through all ages until he comes again. And it comes to pass that as the mother is praying in the home, when she ceases the children say unto her, "Mother, teach us to pray, as Jesus also taught his children." Then she gives them the mother's prayer; and they will continue to pray it through all the coming years, until they go home to heaven to be with their Saviour and their mother forever, in that land of glory where prayer is transformed into ceaseless and endless praise.

There can be no scene on earth more interesting, none on which angels can look down with greater delight, than that of a mother praying with her child, and teaching

it to pray for itself. She weeps with it in all its sorrows, and rejoices with it in all its gladnesses; and the religious life and worship of mother and child blend together, and flow on sweetly in the same channel of prayer and praise.

The sweetest sound heard in our earthly home,
The brightest ray that gleams from heaven's dome,
The loveliest flower that from earth's bosom grows,
The purest flame that, quivering, comes and goes—
Are found alone where kneels a mother mild,
With heart uplifted, praying for her child.

The stream of tears will never cease to flow
As long as men shall live on earth below;
And many angels have been sent from God
To count the tear-drops wept along life's road;
But of all tears that flow, the least defiled
Are those a mother weeps beside her child.

I know that mortals may the legend deem
A thought of foolishness, a childish dream;
But they can never rob me of the thought—
That precious thought with heavenly sweetness
 fraught—
That blessed angels have all ages smiled
To see a mother praying with her child.

THE AUTHOR.

MAGNOLIA HALL, GREENSBORO, ALA.

AT MOTHER'S KNEE.

I.

WANTED—A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

THERE is a very wide-felt want for a child's morning prayer, to mate with the child's evening prayer that is now in universal use :

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.

Many mothers, and sometimes the little ones themselves, have felt the need of such a prayer. There are many morning prayers for children in use in different families, but none that so correspond with the prayer just cited as to command the same general acceptance of the parents and children, and thus come into universal use. This want was, a

few years ago, very tenderly and deeply impressed upon the mind of the writer of these pages, by a pathetic incident that took place in connection with his ministry in Wilmington, Del.

There was in the infant-class of our Sabbath-school a bright and beautiful little girl, between five and six years of age, whose mother had died two years before, in Savannah, Ga., where her father still resided, being engaged in business there for most of the year. He was a cultivated Christian gentleman, and loved his little daughter, his only child, almost to idolatry. In the year 1875 his business required him to go to Paris and to spend several months there. He could not take with him on that journey his darling little daughter, who was as precious to him as the apple of his eye, and it almost broke his heart to leave her for so long a time. He brought her to Wilmington, and left her in charge of a pious and kind-hearted lady, a relative of his, who, being a member of our church, placed her in the infant-class of our Sabbath-school.

The little girl was as beautiful as a spring flower; very precocious in mind, exceedingly

modest and winsome in manners, amiable in disposition, and intelligent and thoughtful far beyond her years. The lonely situation of the little motherless stranger elicited for her the heartfelt sympathy of all who knew her history; and her bright and gentle manners soon made her a general favorite in the school and throughout the entire congregation.

This motherless little girl was very devout, and would never close her eyes in sleep, not even for her afternoon nap, without repeating the little prayer which her mother had taught her when she was so young that she could hardly articulate its simple words. It was only by association with this prayer that she could remember her mother at all. She always spoke of it as "the little prayer my mother taught me to pray at her knee"; and she always spoke of her mother as "my mother who gave me my sweet little prayer."

One Saturday afternoon this little girl, with whom I had become well acquainted in the Sabbath-school and in her temporary home, asked permission of the lady who had her in charge to visit me in my study. She did not tell why she desired to make the visit, nor

did she intimate that she had any special purpose in view. On being brought to my study, she walked softly to my side as I was sitting at my desk, writing; and, almost before I was aware of her presence, without any salutation whatever, said, with a suddenness that almost startled me: "Please, sir, I have come to ask you to give me a nice little prayer to say of mornings, just like the one my mother taught me to pray every night at her knee before going to sleep; only I want it to pray for things for the day."

This sudden request was made in such childlike simplicity, and with so much of earnestness, that it went to my heart; and although I was at the moment very busy with my Saturday afternoon preparations for the Sabbath services, I laid aside everything, and made search in all my books and papers for a morning prayer for little children, such as this child wanted. I repeated to her all that I could find, and all that I could recall to memory; but no one of them seemed to be exactly the thing she desired. I then asked the child to return to my study on the next

Tuesday morning, telling her that I hoped that I would, by that time, be able to find for her just such a prayer as she wanted.

On the Monday morning following I went to Philadelphia, to attend the Ministerial Association of which I was a member; and there I mentioned the matter to several of the brethren, and asked them for all the morning prayers for children which they could recall and repeat; and after the meeting, accompanied by one of the brethren, I made a diligent search in several religious book-stores, for children's morning prayers. In this way I gathered a great number; perhaps almost all of the morning prayers for little ones in verse and rhyme that were then in print. On Tuesday morning, punctual to the appointment, the little motherless girl returned to my study, eager to find the morning prayer her young heart was hungering for. I read my collection over to her very slowly, one after another. No one of them seemed to be what she desired. She would say as I read them to her, "That one is too long;" and again, "That one is too hard." At last we

selected the following as coming nearest to her wish :

Now I wake to see the light,
'Tis God who kept me through the night ;
To him I lift my voice and pray
That he will keep me through the day ;
And if I die before 'tis done,
O Lord, accept me through thy Son.

I took the little child upon my knee and caused her to repeat the words after me until she learned them by heart and was able to repeat them fluently. But she did not seem to be satisfied ; nor did she seem to be quite ready to go. It was manifest that there was still a shadow of trouble on her mind. At length she said : “ That is a very nice little prayer for mornings, but it is not sweet, and easy to say, like ‘ Now I lay me down to sleep. ’ ” After some more talk about prayers, and her mother who had taught her to pray at her knee, she reluctantly bade me good-by, and started to go out ; but on reaching the door she paused, and, suddenly turning back, said to me : “ Please, sir, won't you make me a little prayer to say of mornings, just like

the one I say of nights, only make it pray for things for the day?"

I was quite startled by the earnestness of the manner in which the unexpected request was made of me by so small a child. I could not do less than promise her that I would again try to find such a morning prayer as she desired. She replied: "Please, sir, you make it, and I will come for it next Saturday; but don't make it too long, nor too hard, and let it run along smooth and easy, like 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

Three days after this sweet interview word was sent to me by the good lady who had her in charge that the little orphan girl was very dangerously ill. I went at once to see her. It was Friday evening. As soon as I entered the room where she was lying prostrate under a raging fever—her face as red as a burning coal of fire, and her eyes sparkling with an unearthly brilliancy—she said: "Oh, I am so glad to see you! And I hope that you have brought me my sweet little prayer for the morning. I was coming for it to-morrow, but I am so sick that I am afraid that I will not be able to go."

I would have given a great deal, I don't know how much, to have had just then a prayer such as that dear child wanted; but I was compelled to tell her, in sorrow, that I had not yet found or made it for her. She said, "Oh, sir, please make it for me to-night, and bring it to me in the morning." On the impulse of the moment I replied, without considering how much I was promising: "Yes, I will make it for you to-night; go to sleep now, and when you wake up in the morning you shall have the prayer you so much want." She replied: "Oh, thank you, sir; I'm so glad! When I wake up in the morning and hear my birdie singing, and see the pretty sun shining, I will have my sweet morning prayer to say." And then, folding her little hands across her breast, she said: "Now I want to say the sweet little night prayer which my mother taught me to say at her knee; and then I will go to sleep; but first, you pray for me." Then I knelt in prayer by her bedside, and when I closed my prayer for her, she repeated, in tones so tender and trustful, and in a manner so impressive and touching, that all in the room were moved to tears:

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take ;
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.”

At that moment I was called out of the room by one of the physicians in attendance on the sick child. He told me that he had been in consultation with the family physician during the time that I was in the bed-chamber, and that they had come to the conclusion that the child was suddenly seized with a malignant form of scarlet fever, and that, in their opinion, her case was very critical. I went home very much alarmed about the condition of the little motherless child, and, also, as to the consequences of my visit to myself, and to my own wife and children. I did not enter the room where they were, but took all precautions, as directed by the physicians, to prevent infection ; which, under the blessing of God, were successful.

I could not sleep until a late hour that night. I was in my study praying for the sick child and for her absent father, and trying to com-

pose a morning prayer, hoping to have one that would please her when she awoke on the following day. This is the prayer that I composed that night:

Now I wake and rise from sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my life to keep;
In all I do from morn to night,
I pray thee, Lord, to lead me right.

I took this prayer in my hand and went around to the house where the sick child was, the next morning before breakfast. The good lady met me at the door and said, with streaming eyes: "She is gone to be with her Saviour and her mother! She never spoke after saying her little prayer and bidding you good-night." I could not then, as I cannot now, express the emotions of grief and sorrow that rushed into my heart. I thought of the bereaved father, so far away, whose heart would be crushed by the sad message that would be dispatched to him that day. Then I thought of the mother in heaven—how she was again clasping her child in the bosom of her love. I was overwhelmed with sorrow that the child had died without finding the

morning prayer she wanted so much, but which she needed now no more. Of this child it can be truly said :

Prayer was, indeed, her vital breath ;
It was her native air ;
Her watchword at the gate of death ;
She entered heaven with prayer.

I was told that immediately on saying her prayer she fell asleep ; and that, at first, her sleep seemed to be so gentle and peaceful that all were encouraged to hope that her fever would take a turn for the better ; but in a few hours her sleep became a stupor, and the stupor terminated in death. The dear child next awoke in the glorious morning of the day to which there is never a night ; and instead of seeing the pretty sun shining, and hearing her sweet bird singing in her room, she awoke to see the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and to hear the seraphic songs of the angels around the blazing throne in heaven ; and instead of receiving a morning prayer from the hands of a stranger, to find herself in the arms of her own mother, whom she only remembered by the prayer learned

at her knee, which was on her lips when she went to meet her in glory. While I was trying to compose for her the little morning prayer she so much desired, her beautiful and lovely spirit took its flight to that better world where prayer becomes praise, and the sighs of earth pass into the songs of heaven, and are sighs no more, but joyful notes in the song of salvation.

But there was another sad and mournful duty to be performed for this child. As the physician's certificate stated that she had died of malignant scarlet fever, the city authorities forbade the body to be carried through the streets in the day, and ordered that the burial should take place in the silent hours of the night. It was the saddest funeral that I ever conducted. In the stillness of the midnight hour the little coffin was borne through the deserted streets, and the lifeless form, of which the living were so much afraid, was deposited in its little grave, in a beautiful cemetery on the banks of the picturesque Brandywine, where it will sleep in peace till the trumpet of the resurrection shall awaken it to life again and reunite it to its joyful spirit.

The pathetic circumstances of the death and burial of this little child have left on my mind and heart a profound impression which time does not wear away; and though the bright and joyous child, whose short life on earth was like a morning sunbeam, that shone for a moment and then passed into shade, has been now nearly a score of years in heaven with her Saviour and her mother, I have not ceased my quest for a morning prayer for children to mate with the evening prayer—those four lines written by an unknown hand, which are, in simplicity of language and sublimity of thought, the most perfect and precious gem in our language.

Soon after the event just narrated I published in the *New York Evening Post* a short article under the title, "Wanted—A Child's Morning Prayer." That article was copied into many papers, both religious and secular, in our own country, and in all countries where the English language is spoken; and in response to it I have received a very large number of morning prayers for children, coming from all parts of the world, many of which are original compositions, while many others

are the morning prayers that have been in use in different Christian families for years. In this way I have come into possession, I suppose, of a larger number of morning prayers for children than is in the possession of any other one person now living. So immense was the number sent to the *New York Evening Post*, that the editors were compelled to insert the following notice in their columns: "The correspondence called forth by J. M. P. O.'s letter is so voluminous that, should we print a tithe of it, we would have no room in these columns for anything else." This shows how widespread is the felt need of such a prayer; and it also shows that the story with which the call for such a prayer was associated touched a chord of human sympathy that vibrated the world over.

I will, in the following pages, give a large number of children's morning prayers, selected from those now in my possession, without attempting the impossible task of distinguishing in every case the new from the old. In many cases prayers were sent to me directly through the mail without

names or addresses, or any other indications as to where they came from, except the postmarks on the envelopes. In some cases the prayers were accompanied by long letters, some running up into scores and even hundreds of pages, giving incidents connected with the prayers recommended, and anecdotes about the prayers of children in general. In this way, as the years have gone by, I have found myself overwhelmed with a superabundance of matter, from which, no doubt, sufficient material could be gathered to fill a large octavo; but it would be a Herculean task to arrange all these communications into a form suitable for publication, and to make of them a volume that would be really useful or acceptable to the reading public. While there is great variety in certain specific points, there is such a general sameness in these letters and essays, that, if published, they would make a work so monotonous in matter and tone that it would weary the reader, and dull his interest in the points of real merit and value. We will therefore content ourselves by giving a selec-

tion of morning prayers for children, and let each reader choose the one that seems most suitable for use in his or her own family.

But it is desirable, if possible, that one should be found on which all families could unite, so that it would come into universal use, and stand as a mate to the child's matchless evening prayer. The prayer that shall fill this place must be as much like the prayer with which it is to be associated as the morning twilight is like the twilight of the evening; and yet it must be as different from it as the activity of the day is different from the repose of the night. The little motherless girl, with whom this search began, said: "Make me a little prayer to say of mornings; smooth and easy, just like the one I say of nights; only make it pray for things for the day." It must therefore be short, and in simple words that infant lips can pronounce, and infant minds comprehend; and it must be in rhyme, so that the little ones can easily catch and remember it. It could not be chosen by the majority vote of a convention of mothers, were it possible to call such a convention together for the purpose of select-

ing a morning prayer for universal use. It must possess in itself its own recommendation: a certain indefinable but irresistible something that will commend it, above all others, to mothers and children alike.

II.

MORNING PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN.

ALTHOUGH the number of morning prayers for children sent to us is very large, running up into the hundreds, yet most of them are very similar in thought and language, the effort having apparently been, in most cases, to turn the child's evening prayer into a morning petition. To publish them all would be altogether too tedious; and we will therefore present only a selection, not a tithe of those in our possession, choosing such as seem to us most worthy of notice, and which will best serve as samples of the rest.

Concerning the one with which we head the list, a lady writes: "Among my earliest recollections is the remembrance of learning this prayer at my sainted mother's knee, and I regard it as just what is wanted:

" Now I wake and see the light,
'Tis God who kept me through the night;

To him I lift my voice and pray
That he would keep me through the day;
And if I die before 'tis done,
That he would save me through his Son."

From the very large number who have sent us this prayer as the one which was taught them in infancy, or as that which they are now teaching their own children, it is quite evident that it is the child's morning prayer that is now most generally used. It will be recognized as the one which the little motherless girl selected for herself, but concerning which she said: "That is a nice prayer, but it is not sweet and easy to say, like 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

Any one who will carefully compare the two prayers will see that the child's criticism was just. Neither the thoughts nor the words run together as smoothly and sweetly as those of the evening prayer for which we seek a mate. It is labored and heavy in the thought, and noticeably artificial in arrangement. It impresses one as something that has been accepted as a makeshift until something better can be found; and this becomes more clearly evident in the fact that it exists

in a great variety of versions. We have it in more than twenty different forms, all of which are so many attempts to improve it; thus showing that it does not fully meet the demand.

We give a few samples of its different readings.

Now I wake and see the light,
'Tis God who kept me all the night;
To him I lift my voice and pray
That he will keep me all the day.

Now I wake from sleep to see the light,
I thank the Lord who kept me all the night;
And before I go to work or play,
I pray thee, Lord, to keep me all the day.

Lord, thou hast kept me all the night;
Again I see the morning light;
Accept my thanks, and hear me pray,
And be my keeper through the day.

I thank thee, Lord, for having kept
My soul and body while I slept;
I pray thee, Lord, that through this day,
In all I do, or think, or say,
I may be kept from harm and sin,
And made both good and pure within.

In presenting the following selections of morning prayers we give the names, or initials, of their authors, so far as we know them; and sometimes the remarks and comments which came with them. In many cases we do not know whether or not they are the original productions of those by whom they were furnished.

And now I wake and see the day,
I pray thee, Lord, to guard my way;
In all I do before the night,
I pray thee, Lord, to guide me right.

O.

Now, Lord, I wake to see the light;
Help me this day to do just right;
And if the night I may not see,
Oh, take me, Lord, to rest with thee.

New York.

A. G. E.

O thou who didst me guard in sleep,
Me save through all the day,
From all the ills that make men weep,
Or turn them from thy way.

Scotland.

Scotia.

Thou who hast kept me through the night,
 Oh, keep me through the daily light;
 And if this day my last should be,
 Oh, may I end it, Lord, in thee.

Scituate, Mass.

G. L.

All through the day,
 I humbly pray,
 Lord, be my guard and guide;
 My sins forgive,
 And let me live,
 Dear Jesus, near thy side.

New York.

Auntie.

Now I see the morning light;
 I thank thee, Lord, for care at night;
 Preserve me through the hours of day,
 Nor let my footsteps go astray.

J. C. G.

Lord, thou hast kept me through the night;
 I praise thee for the morning light;
 Keep me from harm and sin to-day,
 And guide me on my heavenly way.

New York.

C. L. P.

I thank thee, Lord, for morning light,
That thou hast kept me through the night;
Oh, wilt thou, while I work or play,
Still keep my soul, dear Lord, to-day.

Mary.

Thank thee for my sleep and waking;
Keep me from all sin to-day;
If I die before the evening,
Take me, Lord, to heaven, I pray.

New York.

Mrs. E. P. M.

Now I wake to see this day,
Near me keep, O Lord, I pray;
Help me to be good and kind,
That I may be a child of thine.

Massachusetts.

H. F. C.

“I have always thought,” says the person who contributes the following prayer, “that it is desirable that a child’s prayer should contain a petition for others besides itself, thus:

“ I thank thee, Lord, for morning light,
 And for thy care by day and night ;
 Bless me, and every little one,
 And by us all thy will be done.”

Providence, R. I.

S. A. J.

When asleep on my bed,
 Angels watched around my head ;
 Jesus heard my evening prayer :
 Love and thanks, Lord, for thy care.
 Now the morning light is here,
 Help me love thee, Saviour dear,
 And guide me right through all the day,
 While I study, while I play.

S. B. F.

Now I've risen from my bed,
 I pray thee, Lord, for daily bread ;
 My sins forgive, my soul renew,
 And guide me, Lord, in all I do ;
 And while to me thy love extends,
 Lord, add thy blessings to my friends.
 For Jesus' sake. Amen.

New Jersey.

Now I see another day,
 I pray thee, Lord, to guide my way ;

And while I live, from every ill
I pray thee, Lord, to keep me still.

Waterford, Conn.

W. Hunt.

Again I wake from death-like sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before the eve,
O Lamb of God, my soul receive.

Dr. W. S. Bowen.

The night is past; the Lord has kept
My soul in safety while I slept;
I thank him for his tender care,
And raise to him my morning prayer;
Oh, wash my soul, forgive my sin,
And make and keep me pure within;
And when at last I come to die,
Take me, through Christ, to dwell on high.

Toronto.

O God, I thank thee that the night
In peace and rest hath passed away,
And that I see this fairer light,
My Father's smile, which makes it day.
Be thou my guide, and let me live
As under thine all-seeing eye;
Supply my wants, my sins forgive,
And make me happy when I die.

Vermont.

A Lady.

Lord, thou hast kept me all the night ;
 Again I see the morning light ;
 Accept my thanks, and hear me pray,
 And be my keeper through the day.

Rev. O. Russell.

Jesus, bless us now, we pray,
 Safely keep us through this day ;
 Kind and gentle may we be,
 Pleasing not ourselves, but thee ;
 Thine shall all the glory be. Amen.

Philadelphia.

Great God, attend my morning prayer,
 Make me the object of thy care ;
 From youthful follies guard my way,
 And be my guide throughout the day.
 If I should sin, do thou forgive,
 And let thy grace within me live ;
 If I should die, Lord, take me home,
 Saved through the merits of thy Son.

Alleghany Theological Seminary. *Rev. Dr. Elliott.*

And now again I wake and see the light,
 I thank thee, Lord, who kept me through the night ;
 I pray thee, Lord, to make me pure within,
 And guard and keep my life from ways of sin ;

And should I die to-day while I'm awake,
I pray thee, gracious Lord, my soul to take.

Alabama.

M. S.

Gladly now I ope my eyes,
And from my little bed arise ;
I thank thee, Lord, I've sweetly slept,
And through the night been safely kept ;
From thoughts and actions wrong, this day,
Oh, keep, dear Lord, thy child, I pray.
And as I older grow,
Teach me thy will to know. Amen.

Surry County, Va.

B. W. J.

Saviour, thou hast kept me through the night,
And I thank thee for the morning light ;
Safely keep me through the day,
That I may not from thee stray.
May all I think, or say, or do,
Be gentle, good, and holy, too.
Cleanse my heart and fill it with love,
That I may dwell with thee above.
Thy little one this prayer would make,
And beg thee hear it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Texas.

M. C. H.

Now I rise again from sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, this day to keep

My thoughts and actions free from sin,
And help me seek thy grace to win.

A. B.

As a matter of curiosity I insert the following, which came to me through the *New York Evening Post*. "Brevity," says the sender, "to my mind, is the soul of devotion, as well as of wit. The best morning or evening prayer I ever heard of was that used for many years by an excellent New England clergyman, who simply said, 'Thank you!'" Why didn't he adopt the more modern style, and be briefer still, simply saying, "Thanks"?

We will conclude this chapter with the following appropriate lines sent us from South Cambridge, N. Y., by an aged mother in Israel, who recommends all Christian mothers to teach them to their children in connection with whatever morning and evening prayers they may choose for use in their families. She says that she taught them to her own children when they were quite young, and adds, in testimony to their happy influence: "I have the great comfort of knowing that no one of my children has ever

forgotten to pray. They are all now grown up, and are in Christ, and love to pray; and I do not think that any one of them, from childhood up, has ever passed a single day without prayer."

NEVER, MY CHILD, FORGET TO PRAY.

Never, my child, forget to pray,
Whatever the business of the day;
If happy dreams have blest thy sleep,
If startling fears have made thee weep,
With holy thoughts begin the day,
And ne'er, my child, forget to pray.

Pray him by whom the birds are fed,
To give to thee thy daily bread;
If wealth her bounty should bestow,
Praise him from whom all blessings flow;
If he who gave should take away,
Still, ne'er, my child, forget to pray.

The time will come when thou wilt miss
Thy father's care and thy mother's kiss;
And then, my child, perchance thou'lt see
Some who in prayer ne'er bent the knee;
From such examples turn away,
And ne'er, my child, forget to pray.

III.

A BABE IN THE HOUSE.

THE case of the little motherless girl who could remember her mother only by the prayer which she had learned at her knee is a fit introduction to some reflections concerning the mother's holy ministry in the home with her children. That ministry begins with the birth of the first babe. Whatever may be the fate of the rest of Tupper's writings, there is one line that will live as long as there are babes in our earthly homes, notwithstanding that it is in part a plagiarism: "A babe in the house is a well-spring of pleasure."

A babe in the house, no matter how far from beautiful in itself, is yet "a thing of beauty" and "a joy forever." The soft warm bundle cuddled in the arms of love; the wide-opened little eyes that sparkle like jewels; the sweet warm mouth giving such

pure kisses; the baby fingers with their waxen touches; the tiny feet with their rosebud toes—all these are sources of never-ending delight to the baby-lover. Never is prima-donna or star actor greeted with such heartfelt applause as is gladly accorded to the baby's sweet little tricks, and, when he begins to talk, to his funny little speeches.

The first tooth is an era; the first word a revelation; the first step a marvel; and the baby's doings are always wonderful. His sayings are quoted and repeated to all comers, as if they were the wittiest words of genius, or the wisest utterances of philosophy.

“Infancy,” says Coleridge, “presents body and spirit in unity: the body is all animation.” Beginning with this as a text, Emerson preaches the following beautiful little sermon. “All day,” says he, “between his three or four sleeps, the baby coos like a pigeon-house, sputters and spurs, and puts on faces of importance; and when he fasts, the little Pharisee never fails to sound his trumpet before him. By lamp-light, he delights in shadows on the wall; and by daylight, in yellow and scarlet. Carry him out-

of-doors, and he is overpowered by the light, and by the extent of natural objects, and is silent. Then presently begins his use of his fingers, and he studies power, the lesson of his race. First it appears in no great harm; in architectural tastes. Out of blocks, threadspools, cards, and checkers he will build his pyramids with the gravity of Pythagoras. With the acoustic apparatus of whistle and rattle he explores the laws of sound. But chiefly, like his senior countryman, the young American studies new and speedier modes of transit and transportation. Mistrusting the cunning of his own small legs, he wishes to ride on the neck and shoulders of all flesh. The small enchanter nothing can withstand—no seniority of age, or gravity of character. Uncles, aunts, grandsires, and granddames fall an easy prey; he conforms to nobody, all conform to him. On the strongest shoulders he rides, and pulls the hair of laureled heads.”

The life of a baby as it develops from day to day is, to those who love children, more entertaining than the most interesting book that was ever written. Every day is a new

chapter, and in every chapter there are new surprises and delights for the reader. The child itself is the picture that illustrates every page; but there is such an unending variety in motion, attitude, and facial expression, that the picture on every page is a new one, though perpetually the same. The house without a babe in it may be neat and quiet, but life in it is apt to be monotonously dull.

Children in the home are no doubt, at times, a great bother. They bring in litter, and keep things in disorder, and it is impossible to keep up with them. But they more than repay for all this by adding to our pleasure, and enlarging our power to love. On my rounds of parish visitation, I can generally tell when I enter a house where no babe is: everything is in its proper place, and there is a hush and stillness that suggest a muffle on the bell, or crape on the door.

No baby in the house, I know—

'Tis far too nice and clean;

No tops by careless fingers thrown

Upon the floor are seen;

No finger-marks upon the panes;

No scratches on the chairs;

No wooden men set up in rows,
Or marshaled off in pairs ;
No little stockings to be darned,
All ragged at the toes ;
No pile of mending to be done,
Made up of baby-clothes ;
No little troubles to be soothed ;
No little hands to hold ;
No grimy fingers to be washed ;
No stories to be told ;
No tender kisses to be given ;
No nicknames, " Love " and " Mouse " ;
No merry frolics after tea,
No baby in the house.

A new home has been opened, and a young wife is its mistress. Everything is new and strange, but bright and beautiful. Friends and kindred come and go, and the halls of the new home ring with music and joyous laughter ; but its happiness is incomplete. A guest must arrive from another world to perfect and crown its felicity. At length the new guest arrives, and its coming is at first welcomed with thoughts solemn and mysterious. New emotions, fearful and yet joyful, are awakened in the heart of the mother ;

and father and mother talk together and draw closer to each other in a new love, with which their first affection is now crowned, and which imposes upon them a new burden of sweet responsibilities. About this new visitor they talk together in the words of Helen Angell Godwin:

A lovely little lady
Has come to be our guest ;
She found a chamber furnished
For her in every breast.

She cannot speak our language,
She cannot walk our ways ;
And with neither purse nor promise
Our constant care repays.

Among the groves of dreamland
She wanders night and day ;
Save when the calls of hunger
Or pain she must obey.

She cares not for the silver
And gold in all the banks ;
She drinks at life's full fountain
Without a word of thanks.

Is there some good work awaiting
These helpless little hands ?
Or will these small feet wander
Afar from God's commands ?

We cannot shape her future
Or save her life from care ;
So we give her to the Giver,
Content to leave her there.

Beyond this world of trial,
Through gates of mortal pain,
A land of utter darkness
And silence yet remains.

And there's the Golden City,
Within whose jasper walls
And pearly gates no sunbeam
Or moonbeam ever falls.

For the Lamb of God shall light it
With the glory in his face,
And peace and love eternal
Shall crown a ransomed race.

No sin or pain shall enter
That City undefiled.
God give us grace to reach it,
And take with us our child.

The baby grows and begins to notice things, and to laugh and coo. With its growth, the father's interest in it deepens, and the mother's joy rises higher. The "well-spring of pleasure" is now overflowing, and its streams of delight run out in many directions. In that home "baby talk" begins; talks with the baby, and talks about the baby. Thus they talk to each other:

The Father.

Funny thing a baby is,
Curious little creature;
Funny is its little phiz,
Comic every feature.

The Mother.

Helpless thing a baby is,
Tiny hands uplifting
O'er the troubled tide of life
Into which 'tis drifting.

The Father.

Mystery a baby is—
Memories of heaven
Still must hover in the soul
Such a short time given.

The Mother.

Solemn thing a baby is,
Since it must inherit
All the loss and gain of life,
All the sin and merit.

The Father to the Child.

Funny, helpless, mystic, sad—
Let me tell you, Freddy,
Half the good and sweet of life
Is the getting ready.

The Mother to the Child.

Yours the sunshine, take it all
While you are weak and tiny ;
By and by the days that come
May not be so shiny.

The baby in the working-man's home, in the arms of his wife, who cares for it while doing the housework, is a joy beyond all price. Just over the way live a rich man and his wife, who have not been blessed with such a gift from heaven. The poor man's wife, happy with her babe in her humble home, sympathizes most truly with the rich

man's wife in the loneliness in her palatial residence.

Oh, I pity my neighbor over the way,
Who has nothing to do but yawn all day:
No little hands to tumble her hair;
No little "nuisance" to vex her with care;
No little "torment" to worry and tease;
Nothing to do but consult her own ease.

Poor rich neighbor! I'm sorry for you—
Sorry because you have "nothing to do";
Sorry because, as the days go by,
You are restless and weary, you know not why;
And once in a while I can see the trace
Of many a tear on your fair, proud face.

You see I'm only a laborer's wife,
Doing my part in the treadmill of life;
Joe, my husband, is off for all day,
Fighting the giants of want away;
Baby and I are busy, too,
But we've plenty of time to be sorry for you.

Baby's a nuisance, a plague, and a joy;
But then, you see, he's my own sweet boy!
I've no time for a groan or a sigh—
No time to be idle as days go by;

My arms are full as the day is long—
Full as my heart with its happy song.

Poor rich neighbor over the way,
Watching my baby and me at play,
What of your wealth if your heart is bare?
'Tis to love and be loved that makes life so fair.
So, neighbor mine! I can tell you true;
Indeed I'd rather be I than you!

One hardly knows how to take the lines that follow. They are not the words of a babeless wife. They are too full of spirit and fun to come from a heart in which there is a longing want that is never to be satisfied. If taken seriously, they can only be the words of some shriveled old maid, who has long lost all hope of wifedom and motherhood. If taken humorously, as certainly they are intended to be, they express the mind of the young maiden visitor, who playfully reverses the picture of her young married friend's happiness.

Do you think, if I'd a baby,
That I'd let him pull my hair?
Do you think I'd put on collars
Just for him to soil and tear?

Do you think I'd call it pretty
When he bites his little toe?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, do just so.

Do you think I'd set him crying
Just to see his cunning frown?
Do you think I'd set him walking
Just to see him tumble down?
Would I call my baby pretty
When he'd neither teeth nor hair?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, think they are.

Would I buy him drums and rattles
Just to hear him make a crash?
Would I watch him most delighted
Break my mirror all to smash?
Would I smother him in flannels
Just because his voice was low?
Dose him up with belladonna?
Silly mothers treat them so.

Would I think his brow Byronic
Just because it was so bare?
And his head Napoleonic
In its shape—though minus hair?

Could I trace the marks of genius
In his eyebrows arched and low?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, think just so.

Would I think my baby destined
To become a man of men,
And to govern and control them
By the might of sword and pen?
I dare say these noisy babies
Play the very deuce—I know.
And I've seen the wisest women,
With their babies, think just so.

The father drinks too, and drinks deeply, of the "well-spring of pleasure" which the baby's presence opens in the house. He loves his home more than ever before. He is henceforth bound to it by a fourfold love: by the love of his wife in herself, and by the love of the wife in the mother; by his love for his babe in itself, and by the love of the babe in the mother. We would know this if we would but hear his proud and boastful talk among his companions and business friends. His pride and joy come out in his

letters to his unmarried brothers and college-mates. His thoughts run in the same channel with these lines by E. Eugene Caldwell:

Haven't you seen our baby, our darling little pet?
Oh! she is the best little darling you ever saw
yet.

Without baby I would scarcely know what to do;
She is so bright and happy, and so cunning too.

Joe, you're a crusty old bachelor; you're in this
world all alone,
And know nothing of the joy of having a baby at
home,
Who each night watches and wishes that "papa
would tum
Early home and tiss me and mamma, and p'ay
wid me some."

She meets me at the gate and almost smothers me
with kisses;
With her arms round my neck she tells how she
set the dishes,
And how she and mamma have made all the
goodies just for me,
And "they'se so nice and pretty 'ou must tum and
see!"

And when supper is done she brings my slippers
and gown,
Climbs up in my lap, with tiny fingers strokes my
beard down,
Teases so sweetly for "papa, one nice 'ittle stowy
tell me."
I tell you, Joe, it makes a man happy as happy
can be.

Then why will you go on leading such a miserable
life,
All alone in the world, without any home, without
a dear wife ;
When you might have both, and a blessed baby,
too.
Joe, don't tell me you can't be happy, I've given
you the cue.

But we come back to the mother with her
child. The following lines were written by
a mother in Georgia, who is too modest to
allow her name to appear in print ; but I am
sure they will be read with pleasure in every
house where there is a babe full of life and
love, of frolic and fun.

Busy little fingers,
 Everywhere they go ;
Busy little fingers,
 The sweetest that I know !
Now into my work-box,
 All the buttons finding,
Tangling up the knitting,
 Every spool unwinding.
Now into the basket
 Where the keys are hidden,
So mischievous-looking,
 Knowing it forbidden.
Then in mother's tresses
 Now her neck infolding,
With such sweet caresses
 Keeping off a scolding.
Darling little fingers,
 Never, never still—
Make them, Heavenly Father,
 One day do thy will.

After the busy little fingers come the pattering little feet; and here are some lines about them that must have come direct from the heart of the writer, because they go straight to the heart of the reader. They awaken most pleasant memories in the hearts

of all in homes where there are, or have been, little baby feet learning to walk.

Little feet so glad and gay,
Making music all the day;
Tripping merrily along,
Filling all my heart with song.
Well I love your music sweet.
Patter, patter, little feet !

Sometimes anxious, I would know
Just what way these feet will go.
Praying oft that all be fair,
No thorns nor roughness anywhere;
That flowers may spring their steps to greet.
Patter, patter, little feet !

But then I think that some have trod
Through thorns and briers up to God;
Though weak in faith, still I would dare
To offer up the earnest prayer
That Christ would choose whate'er is meet.
Patter, patter, little feet !

I press them in my hands to-night,
And kiss them with a new delight,
Believing that where'er they go
My tender Lord will lead them so

They'll walk at last the golden street.
Patter, patter, little feet !

But the baby grows ; and as it grows and
begins to run around, the mother must watch,
guide, and guard its life, in every particular :

Mother, watch the little feet
Climbing o'er the garden wall,
Bounding through the busy street,
Ranging cellar, shed, and hall.
Never count the moments lost,
Never mind the time they cost,
Little feet will go astray ;
Guide them, mother, while you may.

Mother, watch the little hand
Picking berries by the way,
Making houses in the sand,
Tossing on the fragrant hay.
Never dare the question ask,
" Why to me this weary task ? "
These same little hands may prove
Messengers of light and love.

Mother, watch the little tongue
Prattling eloquent and wild,
What is said and what is sung
By the happy, joyous child.

Catch the word while yet unspoken,
Stop the vow before 'tis broken!
This same tongue may yet proclaim
Blessings in a Saviour's name.

Mother, watch the little heart
Beating soft and warm for you,
Wholesome lessons now impart,
Keep, oh, keep that young heart true.
Extricating every weed,
Sowing good and precious seed,
Harvest rich you then may see
Ripening for eternity.

But as the boy grows older he will become rougher, and may even come to be so rude as to be almost unbearable. In such a case let not the mother be discouraged; but, remembering that a boy will be a boy, let her keep his mind pure and his heart true; and then, when he grows up, he will put aside his boyish ways, and develop into a manly man.

Up in the morning and out of bed,
He takes a leap on his frowsy head,
And, seeing him act like a crazy clown,
We know that the day will be upside-down.

He gives the kitten a shower-bath
And works her up to a state of wrath;
He ties a kettle to Rover's tail
And drops his cap in the milking-pail.

He drives the hen from her nice warm nest;
The turkeys and geese have no chance to rest;
And oh, how they waddle, and how they run!
As if they knew it was just for fun.

He teases his sister and pulls her ears,
And pulls her hair till he brings the tears,
And is always so rough with her dolls and toys,
That she says she had rather not play with boys.

Sometimes he carries his fun so far
That he's quite as rude as the street-boys are;
And, called to account for his ways so rough,
Thinks "I didn't mean to!" excuse enough.

He's such a clown that he doesn't know
How deep in mischief a boy may go;
And yet so sorry when wrong is done
We can't help thinking 'twas *just for fun*.

The babe in our own house opens our
hearts of sympathy and love for the babes in
other houses. Here are some tender and

touching lines, an earnest prayer for another's babe, which were found in a pair of little socks sent from Philadelphia in a "missionary box," to the family of one of our noble-hearted and self-sacrificing home-missionaries; the socks being a present to the little baby-boy of the family, then just four years old.

O little feet that out from these
Shall step up life's steep way,
The Lord uphold thy going forth,
And "strength give as thy day."

Lead this young soul up steadily
The strait and narrow road;
Then shall his earthly lot be peace,
His heavenly portion God.

And when the journey ends at length,
Before the great white throne
He shall the Saviour's plaudit hear,
"O child beloved, well done!"

I think of the mother of that little boy, the wife of the home missionary in the Far West. How lonely her lot, how numerous her cares! Her husband, never more than half paid for

his toilsome labors; more than half his time away from home; and unable to hire a maid as company for her, or to assist her in her household cares. Her lot is more worthy of our sympathy than that of the foreign missionary's wife. In foreign lands the missionaries frequently live in clusters, and so are company for each other. The home missionary has a lonely station in a wide field, far removed from the presence and sympathy of his co-laborers. The days with his wife are days of loneliness and care. But Jesus is with her, comforting her with his holy presence, and enabling her, even in her dreariest hours, to say:

I do not think that I could bear
My daily weight of woman's care,
If it were not for this—
That Jesus seemeth always near,
Unseen, but whispering in my ear
Some tender words of love or cheer,
To fill my heart with bliss!

There are so many trivial cares
That no one knows and no one shares,
Too small for me to tell;

Things e'en my husband cannot see,
Nor his dear love uplift from me—
Each hour's unnamed perplexity,
That mothers know so well:

The failure of some household scheme,
The ending of some pleasant dream,
Deep hidden in my breast;
The weariness of childhood's noise,
The yearning for that subtle poise
That turneth duty into joys,
And giveth inner rest.

These secret things, however small,
Are known to Jesus, each and all,
And this thought brings me peace;
I do not need to say one word;
He knows what thought my heart hath stirred,
And, by divine caress, my Lord
Makes all its throbbing cease.

And then, upon his loving breast
My weary head is laid to rest
In speechless ecstasy!
Until it seemeth all in vain
That care, fatigue, or mortal pain,
Should hope to drive me forth again
From such felicity.

What did the missionary mother do when she received the socks for her little boy, and found in them the prayer of another for her child? She clasped her boy to her bosom, loving him more now that she knew that another, unknown, loved and prayed for him too; and, drawing the warm socks on his rosy-red feet, she said:

Little feet that dance and patter
Through the house with silent glee,
Little tender voice that prattles
Baby nothings dear to me.

Starry eyes of deepest violet,
Little curly chestnut head,
Rose-leaf hands and pearly white teeth,
Ripe lips laughing rosy red.

Whither are ye bound, O white feet?
Shall tears dim those laughing eyes?
Shall that tender voice be broken?
Shall those rosy lips breathe sighs?

Shall those hands grow rough and horny
In the daily toil for bread?
Shall those little feet grow weary
In the path they'll have to tread?

Not thy mother's love, sweet baby,
May thy future lot provide,
But the Father's love is boundless,
And his mercy reacheth wide.

It was a summer day, and the little boy was noisy with his rattle and drum, and his wooden men; and the mother was worn and weary, and almost sick; and to the little boy she said: "O darling, mamma is tired, and her head aches; please be still and let mamma rest." The little boy was silent for a moment, and then he crept up to his mother and climbed into her lap, and, smoothing back her hair, he kissed her on the brow again and again, and said: "Poor mamma, does 'oor head ache! Tweet mamma, baby will tiss all de ache away; dere now; it is all gone; be a dood mamma, and don't ky." He had learned that trick of love from herself; her love had taught it. The baby-boy slipped from mother's knee, and going to the farthest corner with his playthings, and looking up sweetly in his mother's loving eyes, he said: "Baby not noisy now, and all my men sall talk in whispers." What could be more

sweet and beautiful? The mother was tired no longer, and her head ached no more; but, springing up and holding out her hands, she cried in the fulness of a mother's joy: "Come here, my boy; my darling, come; come, and tell me:

"What are you good for, my brave little man?
Answer that question for me if you can,
You, with your fingers as white as a nun,
You, with your ringlets as bright as the sun;
All the day long with your busy contriving,
Into all mischief and fun you are driving;
See if your wise little noddle can tell
What you are good for; ponder it well."

Over the carpet the dear little feet
Came with a patter to climb on her seat;
Two merry eyes, full of frolic and fun,
Under their lashes, look bright as the sun;
Two little hands, pressing soft on her face,
Drew her down close in loving embrace;
Two rosy lips gave the answer so true,
"Good to love you, mamma; good to love you!"

It may be a weakness, but it is a truth as deep as human life, that every mother is delighted when her boy shows her that he loves

her above all others; especially when, growing older, he shows this to the world. Ruth Hall sweetly reveals this in a little poem in *Wide Awake*, in which the little boy in the play turns from all the pretty maidens around him, and kneels to his own mother as the prettiest of all, as the one whom he loves above all others:

With shouts of laughter
That followed after,
This forfeit made its stern behest:
"Kneel to the prettiest,
Bow to the wittiest,
And kiss the one you love the best."

"Come, choose her boldly,"
They cry; but coldly
He turns from all the maidens there,
To bow—and lingers
To kiss her fingers,
While kneeling at his mother's chair.

IV.

CHILDREN IN THE HOME.

THIS chapter will be a rambling talk about the children in the home, filled in with scraps of prose and bits of poetry gathered from many sources. Most of the poetry and some of the prose will be found to be not of very high literary merit; but we hope that the fragments, all taken together, will prove to be interesting and helpful both to parents and children.

If we should call together all the children in any given neighborhood, we would not find among them many so perfect in form and feature that they could be chosen as models for painter or sculptor, and some of them might be downright ugly; and yet no scene in the world is more beautiful to behold, or more interesting to study, than a group of children thus gathered at random

in any decent neighborhood. A large body of children, such as may be seen at a Sunday-school picnic or excursion, is, like flowers in a field, a scene in which individual ugliness is lost in the general beauty of the whole view; and their joyful and shouting voices are like the songs of the birds in the grove, in which many discordant notes are heard without destroying the general harmony of the concert. We ask our readers to take what we have to say about the children in the home just as they would receive the children themselves, in the natural order, or rather disorder, of life; grouping the beautiful and the ugly together, so that the beauty of the entire body shall overcome the ugliness of any member of it. In this way let us consider our present theme, and so endeavor to realize the beauty there is in a houseful of children.

Some one said: "People who put children away from them, and out of their hearts, and close the doors upon them, do not know how much comfort they set aside, nor of what pleasures and amusements they deprive themselves. Of course the little creatures meddle

with things, and leave the traces of their fingers on the walls, and cry and bother a little; but when one gets in the way of it, as mothers and loving relatives do, these things come to be of minor importance. Children are such pretty creatures and do such funny things; the touch of their hands is so soft, the sound of their voices so sweet, their faces are so lovely, their movements so graceful and comical—the whole family goes wild over the children—and no wonder.” Another has said: “How cold and selfish would this world of ours be without little children in it! They preach the evangel of beauty and innocence; they break the incrustations of worldliness; they touch chords vibrating solemnly, sweetly, reserved for their tiny hands; they preserve human sympathies from utter ossification; they deeply subsoil our hard natures.”

Of all the visions of beauty ever seen on earth, the smile of infancy is the most charming; and of all the sounds of sweetness that ever fall on the human ear, the prattle of childhood is the most delightful. These two sources of the purest pleasures of human life seem to have escaped almost unharmed from

the wreck that sin has made of all that is beautiful and lovely. The prattle of children in the home is a sweet melody floating down the generations, which, more than all else, compensates for the loss of the terrestrial paradise of the childhood of humanity where man fell, and which his sin has forever banished from the earth; and the smile of infancy is a ray of heavenly light, beaming down upon our darkness, and giving a foretaste of the celestial paradise which the Christ regained for us by becoming a child, that men, through him, might become the children of God, and follow him to heaven.

A home without children in it is like a winter without fires, a spring without flowers, a summer without shades, and an autumn without fruits; and a world without children in it would be like a dry and desert land where no water is—a land of silence and despair.

A dreary place would be this earth,
Were there no little people in it;
The song of life would lose its mirth,
Were there no children to begin it;

No little forms, like buds to grow,
And make the admiring heart surrender ;
No little hands on heart and brow,
To keep the thrilling love-cords tender.

The stern souls would grow more stern,
Unfeeling nature more inhuman,
And man to stoic coldness turn,
And woman would be less than woman ;
Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,
Were there no babies to begin it :
A doleful place this world would be,
Were there no little people in it.

A baby in the house is indeed "a well-spring of pleasure" ; but an only child is to be pitied. Its life is lonely, and it is in danger of becoming selfish. It has no one with whom to share its pleasures, or to divide its sorrows. Two are always better than one. There is truth as well as poetry in the words of Mary Mapes Dodge :

Two little girls are better than one,
Two little boys can double the fun,
Two little birds can build a fine nest,
Two little arms can love mother best,

Two little ponies must go to a span,
Two little pockets has my little man,
Two little eyes to open and close,
Two little ears and one little nose,
Two little elbows, dimpled and sweet,
Two little shoes on two little feet,
Two little lips and one little chin,
Two little cheeks with a rose set in,
Two little shoulders chubby and strong,
Two little legs running all day long,
Two little prayers does my darling say,
Twice does he kneel by my side each day,
Two little folded hands, soft and brown,
Two little eyelids cast meekly down,
And two little angels guard him in bed,
One at the foot and one at the head.

But three children, a little girl, a little boy,
and a little baby, can have more fun than
two; and Carrie M. Thompson tells us how
they can find it.

Madge, wee woman, with earnest look
Is head and ears in a fairy book;
Rob is a rogue with hair of tow;
Last but greatest is Baby Joe.
Fastened down there
In the big arm-chair,

Stiff and angular, strong and square,
He can't get up and he can't slide out;
Nothing to do but to wriggle about,
Suck his thumbs and his rubber ring,
And wonder vaguely about his shoes
(Shiny and small, such as babies use):
How they ever came on his feet?
If they're made to look at, or only to eat?
Thinks quite strongly of making a spring
In the hope of breaking the naughty thing
That holds him a prisoner, snug and tight,
In that tiresome chair from morning till night.

But there comes Rob, with a funny face,
Baby looks up and takes heart of grace;
All his sorrows and griefs are past;
Here is something to do at last.
He gurgles and crows
And wrinkles his nose,
With one little dimple that comes and goes;
He stretches an arm with a doubled-up fist,
Soft and rosy from elbow to wrist.
For Rob has been puffing his red cheeks out
Till they look like big apples he's holding there,
Ripe and shining and smooth and fair.
Baby Joe strikes hard with his fist of pink
At the puckered-up lips, then quicker than
wink

Rob jumps to his feet with a laugh and a shout,
And capers and dances and whirls about ;
But the best of the play is, that when it is done
They can play it all over again,
Such fun!

Where there is a house full of children there should be a home full of fun. Good parents, don't be afraid of fun, and a "heap of it," at home. Don't shut up your house lest the sun should fade your carpets, and your heart lest a hearty laugh shake down some of the musty old cobwebs there. If you want to ruin your sons, let them think that all mirth and social enjoyment must be left on the threshold without, when they come home at night. When once a home is regarded as only a place to eat, drink, and sleep in, the work begins that ends in gambling-houses and reckless dissipation. Young people must have fun and relaxation somewhere. If they do not find it at their own hearthstones, it will be sought at other and perhaps less profitable places. Therefore let the fire burn brightly at night, and make the homestead delightful with all those little arts

that parents so perfectly understand. Don't repress the buoyant spirits of your children; half an hour of merriment around the lamp and firelight of a home blots out the remembrance of many a care and annoyance during the day; and the best safeguard they can take with them into the world is the unseen influence of a bright little domestic fireside.

And let no parents, while making their homes a happy place for their own children, a place of freedom, innocent sports, and even hilarious fun, be over-careful in excluding other people's children therefrom. Let your children have company; speak cheerfully to the little folks who visit them, and make them feel that they are welcome. Teach your children to avoid the company of the vile and the vicious, the profane and the dishonest; but never teach them to scorn the company of the poor. Teach them always to return a polite salutation on the street; and to speak first, and very kindly, to the children of the poor, wherever they may meet them. Right here, some thoughtless mothers make a dreadful mistake at life's very beginning, and put a stumbling-block in the way

of their children's future usefulness and happiness. Sometimes they are brought to see it in a way that rebukes their folly and humiliates them in their own homes. Here is a case in point:

“Little Annie was prettily dressed, and standing in front of the house waiting for her mother to go out to ride.

“A tidy boy, dressed in coarse clothes, was passing, when the little girl said:

“‘Come here, boy, and s'ake hands wi' me. I dot a boy dus' like you, named Bobby.’

“The boy laughed, shook hands with her, and said:

“‘I've got a little girl just like you, only she hasn't any little cloak with pussy fur on it.’

“Here a lady came out of the door, and said:

“‘Annie, you must not talk with bad boys on the street. I hope you haven't taken anything from her? Go right along, and never stop here again, boy!’

“That evening the lady was called down to speak with a boy in the hall. He was

very neatly dressed, and stood with his cap in hand. It was the enemy of the morning.

“‘I came to tell you that I am not a bad boy,’ he said. ‘I go to Sunday-school, and help my mother all I can. I never tell lies, nor quarrel, nor say bad words; and I don’t like a lady to call me names, and ask me if I’ve stolen her little girl’s clothes off of her!’

“‘I’m very glad you’re so good,’ said the lady, laughing at the boy’s earnestness. ‘Here’s a quarter of a dollar for you.’

“‘I don’t want that!’ said Bob, holding his head very high. ‘My father works in a foundry, and has lots of money. You’ve got a boy bigger than I, haven’t you?’

“‘Yes; why?’

“‘Does he know the Commandments?’

“‘I’m afraid not very well.’

“‘Can he say the Sermon on the Mount, and the twenty-third Psalm, and the Golden Rule?’

“‘I’m very much afraid he cannot,’ said the lady, laughing at the boy’s bravery.

“‘Doesn’t he ride on his pony on Sunday, instead of going to church?’

“ ‘I’m afraid he does, but he ought not,’ said the lady, blushing a little.

“ ‘Mother don’t know I came here,’ said the bright little rogue, ‘but I thought I would just come around and see what kind of folks you were, and—and—I guess mother would rather your boy wouldn’t come round our doors, because she don’t like little Mamie to talk to bad boys in the street. Good-by.’ And the little boy was gone.”

Take an interest in your neighbor’s boy, even if he is rough, and rude, and full of mischief. Look out for the good points in him; for you may be sure that he has some, unless he is radically wicked. If he has no downright corrupt principles and wicked habits, invite him around occasionally to spend an hour with your boys. He will do them no harm, and you and they may do him a large amount of good. Read Marianne Farningham’s lines about “My Neighbor’s Boy,” and learn a lesson from them:

He seems to be several boys in one,
So much is he constantly everywhere!
And the mischievous things that boy has done
No one can remember, nor mouth declare.

He fills the whole of his share of space
With his strong, straight form, and his merry face.

He is very cowardly, very brave,
He is kind and cruel, good and bad,
A brute and a hero! Who will save
The best from the worst of my neighbor's lad?
The mean and the noble strive to-day—
Which of the powers will have its way?

The world is needing his strength and skill,
He will make hearts happy or make them ache.
What power is in him for good or ill!
Which of life's paths will his swift feet take?
Will he rise, and draw others up with him,
Or the light that is in him burn low and dim?

But what is my neighbor's boy to me
More than a nuisance? My neighbor's boy,
Though I have some fears for what he may be,
Is the source of solicitude, hope, and joy,
And a constant pleasure. Because I pray
That the best that is in him will rule some day.

He passes me with a smile and nod,
He knows I have hope of him—guesses, too,
That I whisper his name when I ask of God
That men may be righteous, his will to do.
And I think that many would have more joy
If they loved and prayed for a neighbor's boy!

Children are generally just what the home training makes them, both in manners and in morals. Children, when they are brought into public notice, as they are at summer watering-places, are windows through which we look into home life, and see what manner of homes they are being raised in, and what is their parental training.

“In visiting the springs, our sympathies have been much aroused for the children. Everybody abuses the bad children. Whose fault is it they are bad? We see hundreds of bright children who are faithfully taught that it is a sin to steal, or tell stories, and their loving little hearts turn away in disgust from one who would break either of these commandments. These same children are impudent to their mothers, and disobey their commands. Have they ever been taught that this was as great a sin as to steal? No; the children are generally made to feel it is ugly, very much in the same way that having a dirty face is ugly. The parents are most to be blamed here, not the children. If they don't steal because they have been taught that it is a great sin, and their parents would

be doing very great wrong to let them steal, would not the same mode of instruction teach them it was a sin to disobey, and the parents were themselves committing great sin to let them do so? It is the parents' duty to teach the children this, but is it not the minister's duty also to teach the parents? Why not teach the fifth commandment to parents as well as to children, and make them feel it is as much their duty to make children obey as to teach them the other commandments?

“The clergy certainly consider it as great a sin to break this commandment as the others; then for the gospel's sake preach it, for the world does not. The manner in which the fifth commandment is preached and taught is, we believe, one main reason for a large part of the wickedness of the present generation.”

If you would have your children to be kind to one another at home, and to live together in peace and love, teach them to be kind to the children whom they meet in school, to the children they meet at the summer-resorts, to dumb animals, and especially to the birds. How few birds ever die a natural death!

Men and boys kill most of them before they live out half their days.

“ A gentleman was walking past a neat cottage in a rural district. The cottage was not many feet from the highway, but between them was a low tree, and in the branches of this tree the gentleman observed a bird's nest. The cottage door was open; the mother was busily at work, and her children were merry in their youthful gambols; but the birds flew to and fro without alarm. How was this? On inquiry, the gentleman found that the mother took a delight in teaching her children the great importance of kindness to all God's creatures, and instead of even frightening the little birds away, they were ever ready to give, not only their crumbs, but their bread, to the little feathered ones.

“ ‘ You do wisely, my good woman,’ said the gentleman; ‘ if all mothers would thus train up their children, there would be much more happiness in families than there is, for I have generally observed that where children are kind to dumb animals they are affectionate and loving to their brothers and sisters.’ ”

I suppose that the very happiest home that

was ever on earth was the home of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth, in which the child Jesus grew up, perhaps in the midst of a houseful of brothers and sisters, and in which he was subject to his parents. It was the model home of the world, and Jesus was the model child of the race. Let the story of the child Jesus as he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in power with God and man," be often told to the children. Here it is in some beautiful verses, written by Margaret Sangster, with which all mothers would do well to cause their children to become familiar, repeating them so often that they would eventually learn them by heart.

Dear little children, reading
The Scripture's sacred page,
Think! Once the blessed Jesus
Was just a child, your age;
And in the home with Mary,
His mother sweet and fair,
He did her bidding gladly,
And lightened all her care.

I'm sure he never loitered,
But at her softest word

He heeded, and he hastened—
No errand was deferred.
And in the little household
The sunbeams used to shine
So merrily and blithely
Around the child divine.

I fear you sometimes trouble
Your patient mother's heart,
Forgetful that in home life
The children's happy part
Is but like little soldiers
Their duty quick to do,
To mind commands when given—
What easy work for you!

Within good Luke's evangel
This gleams a precious gem,
That Christ when with his parents
Was "subject unto them."
Consider, little children;
Be like him day by day,
So gentle, meek, and loving,
And ready to obey.

If the world without children in it would
be a doleful place, and if the home without
children in it is lonely and desolate, how sad

and lonely must be the life of the orphan child who has no home to shelter it, and no parents to surround it with an atmosphere of love. Let all mothers read to their children the following lines, and teach them to thank God every day for their happy homes, for their loving parents, and their kind-hearted brothers and sisters :

Alone in the dreary, pitiless street,
With my torn old dress and bare cold feet,
All day I have wandered to and fro,
Hungry and shivering, and nowhere to go ;
The night's coming on in darkness and dread,
And the chill sleet beating upon my bare head.
Oh, why does the wind blow on me so wild?
Is it because I am nobody's child?

Just over the way there's a flood of light
And warmth and beauty and all things bright ;
Beautiful children, in robes so fair,
Are caroling songs in their rapture there.
I wonder if they in their blissful glee
Would pity a poor little beggar like me,
Wandering alone in the merciless street,
Naked and shivering and nothing to eat?

Oh! what shall I do when the night comes down,
In its terrible blackness, all over the town?
Shall lay me down 'neath the angry sky,
On the cold, hard pavement, alone to die,
When the beautiful children their prayers have
 said,
And their mammas have tucked them up snugly
 in bed?
For no dear mamma on me ever smiled,—
Why is it, I wonder, I'm nobody's child?

No father, no mother, no sister, not one
In all the world loves me, e'en the little dogs run
When I wander too near; 'tis wondrous to see
How everything shrinks from a beggar like me!
Perhaps 'tis a dream; but sometimes when I lie
Gazing far up in the deep, blue sky,
Watching for hours some large, bright star,
I fancy the beautiful gates are ajar.

And a host of white-robed nameless things
Come fluttering o'er me on gilded wings;
A hand that is strangely soft and fair
Caresses gently my tangled hair;
And a voice like the carol of some wild bird—
The sweetest voice that was ever heard—
Calls me many a dear pet name,
Till my heart and spirit are all aflame.

They tell me of such unbounded love,
And bid me come up to their home above ;
And then with such pitiful, sad surprise,
They look at me with their sweet, tender eyes,
And it seems to me, out of the dreary night,
I am going up to that world of light ;
And away from the hunger and storm so wild,
I am sure I shall then be somebody's child.

V.

THE CHILDREN'S BED-TIME HOUR.

THE most important hour in the lives of children is, perhaps, the hour in which they are put to bed for the night. The last impressions of the closing day sleep with them through the silent hours. And as their eyes are closing in sleep, their hearts are open, more than at any other time, to all good influences. Then it is that kind and loving words fall upon them like the gentle dews that distill at night upon the tender grass. Who will not be pleased to read the following lines of Jane E. Hopkins, in which is pictured a home scene that has been often witnessed by all mothers who are blessed with a household of children?

The clock strikes seven in the hall,
The curfew of the children's day,
That calls each little pattering foot
From dance and song and livelong play ;

Their day that, in our wider light,
Floats like a silver day-moon white,
Nor in our darkness sinks to rest,
But sets within a golden west.

Ah, tender hour that sends a drift
Of children's kisses through the house,
And cuckoo-notes of sweet "Good-night,"
That thoughts of heaven and home arouse ;
And a soft stir of sense and heart,
As when the bee and blossom part ;
And little feet that patter slower,
Like the last droppings of a shower.

And in the children's room aloft
What blossom shapes do gaily slip
Their dainty sheaths, and rosy run
From clasping hand and kissing lip ;
A naked sweetness to the eye—
Blossom, and babe, and butterfly
In witching one, so dear a sight!
An ecstasy of life and light.

And ah, what loving witcheries
Bestrew the floor ! an empty sock,
By vanquished song and dance let loose
As dead birds' throats ; a tiny smock

That, sure, upon some meadow grew,
And drank the heaven-sweet rain ; a shoe
Scarce bigger than an acorn cup ;
Frocks that seemed flowery meads cut up.

Then, lily-dressed in angel white,
To mother's knee they trooping come,
The soft palms fold like kissing shells,
And they and we go singing home—
Their bright heads bowed and worshiping,
As though some glory of the spring,
Some daffodil that mocks the day,
Should fold his golden palms and pray.

The gates of paradise swing wide
A moment's space in soft accord,
And those dread Angels, Life and Death,
A moment veil the flaming sword,
As o'er this weary world forlorn
From Eden's secret heart is borne
That breath of paradise most fair,
Which mothers call "the children's prayer."

Ah, deep, pathetic mystery!
The world's great woe unconscious hung,
A rain-drop on a blossom's lip ;
White innocence that woos our wrong,

And love divine that looks again,
Unconscious of the Cross and pain,
From sweet child-eyes, and in that child
Sad earth and heaven reconciled.

Then kissed, on beds we lay them down,
As fragrant-white as clover'd sod,
Where all the faded flowers grow fresh,
While children sleep, in dews of God.
And as our stars their beams do hide,
The stars of twilight, opening wide,
Take up the heavenly tale at even,
And light us on to God and heaven.

Children should be put to bed early, for plentiful and peaceful sleep is a good medicine for soul and body, both for young and old. The mother, if possible, should be with her children during the last hour before they fall asleep. They will then listen with hushed attention to whatever is told, or read, or sung to them; and the words spoken with the good-night kiss will sleep with them, and be whispered again in their dreams. That is the hour for mothers to impress upon their plastic nature the thoughts which they wish them to remember longest.

Every mother who has formed the habit of reading, talking, and singing to her children after they have been tucked away in their little beds, will bear joyful witness to the value of this form of maternal influence. In that hallowed hour all the little wrong deeds and irritations of the day can be talked over most quietly, and smoothed out most sweetly; and the duties of children to their parents, and to one another, can be presented in their most attractive forms.

But care must be taken that these talks with the children, immediately before sleep, do not take the form of *preaching*. It should be a cheerful, laughing talk, or at least a talk that will cover their little faces with smiles. Let your child always go to sleep with a glad thought in its heart and a smile on its face. The next morning as it springs from its bed the glad thought will burst out in songs, and the smile in shouts of laughter. If a wrong has to be reproved, let the child be assured of forgiveness, and let the mother be assured that forgiveness is accepted, before the eyes shall close. Let the child fall asleep loving all, and assured of the love of all. Then, af-

ter the little prayer has been said, the child, at peace with all on earth, and with the smile of heaven's love on its face, will drop away into peaceful slumber with its soul all unruffled and unsoiled, as white and smooth as a freshly washed and ironed piece of snow-white linen. It is always a solemn thing to fall asleep. We can never know where the waking may find us. Any night, the rosy child or the healthful mother may sleep into the sleep of death. Then always let the good-night kiss be accompanied with a word of peace, a word of love and sweet tranquillity.

It is a piece of downright cruelty—one of the crimes which law cannot reach—for a thoughtless and fretful mother to scold her children away from her presence at night, and to drive them to bed with sharp and angry words. Of all the sad sounds ever heard in this sorrowful world of ours, the saddest is the suppressed sob of a little child, the smothered cry of a wounded heart, coming from beneath the bedclothes, as it weeps itself to sleep because of a mother's unkindness. It is a greater misfortune to be the child of a scolding mother than to be the child

of a drunken father. There ought to be a law, were it possible, to prohibit maternity to such women. We are thankful to believe that such mothers are but few, and that, in most cases, they are diseased in body or in mind.

The mother may be work-worn and heart-weary, and the children may be tired and cross; but let no mother ever so far forget herself as to lead her children to forget that she is their mother. Let her remember that not only her words, but the tones in which they are spoken, will, at that most solemn moment, make the deepest and most lasting impressions on their tender souls; and that they may determine their weal or woe, for time and for eternity.

Send the children to bed with a kiss and a smile;
Sweet childhood will tarry at best but a while;
And soon they will pass from the portals of home,
The wilderness ways of their life-work to roam.

Yes, tuck them in bed with a gentle "Good-night!"

The mantle of shadows is veiling the light;
And maybe—God knows—on this sweet little face,
May fall deeper shadows in life's weary race.

Yes, say it: "God bless my dear children, I pray!"
It may be the last you will say it for aye!
The night may be long ere you see them again;
And motherless children may call you in vain!

Drop sweet benedictions on each little head,
And fold them in prayer as they nestle in bed;
A guard of bright angels around them invite,
The spirit may slip from the mooring to-night.

The children's room is, to the heart of the real mother, the most precious and the most sacred chamber of the house. It is at once a palace, a play-ground, a schoolroom, a treasure-store, and a church. In it the true mother is as a queen in her palace, whose authority none can deny or disobey; but still none stand in awe of her, for she leads all the children in their play, watches over their studies, and, with or without books, teaches them lessons which no other can teach; and when the little ones are covered up in their beds, she guards the room with greater vigilance than an armed soldier at his post, for it is the treasure-chamber in which her crown-jewels are stored away; and, finally, she walks in it as high-priestess before the most sacred

altar of worship, dictating the creed which her children will receive, and fashioning the order of worship which they will follow. She enters that room at all hours of the night, and sees when she is not seen; but it is also true that she is often seen and heard when she thinks that every child's eye and ear are closed in slumber.

How peaceful at night
The sleeping children lie,
Each gentle breath so light
Escaping like a sigh!
How tranquil seems the room, how fair
To one who softly enters there!

Whose hands are those, unseen,
That smooth each little bed?
Whose locks are those that lean
Over each pillowed head?
Whose lips caress the boys and girls?
Whose fingers stroke the golden curls?
Whose are the yearning eyes,
And whose the trembling tear?
Whose heart is this that cries,
Beseeching God to hear?
Whose but the mother's, in whose face
Love shows its sweetest dwelling-place?

Her hopes in beauty bloom,
And heaven sends down its light,
Which lingers in the room
Where mother says, "Good-night."
Soft treading by the sleepers there,
Her very presence seems a prayer!

Who can ever forget the sweet and sacred associations of the children's sleeping-room, and of childhood's bed-time hour? We may seem for a while to forget, but some word at random spoken, or some object unexpectedly seen, will, all of a sudden, bring back childhood's sweet memories. Then we see, as it were, bright clouds all fringed in darkness, resting on the far-off horizon of life; and peering through them, we catch a glimpse of the face of the dear mother, now sainted in heaven, at whose knee we learned to pray; and then there come floating back to us bits of stories and snatches of songs which she told and sung to us on sleep's borderland, and listening to which we oftentimes sank to our repose.

In this connection I cannot refrain from transcribing the pathetic words of the song about "My Trundle-bed," knowing at the

same time that most of my readers already know them by heart.

As I rummaged through the attic,
Listening to the falling rain
As it pattered on the shingles
And against the window-pane,
Peeping over chests and boxes,
Which with dust were thickly spread,
Saw I, in the farthest corner,
What was once my trundle-bed.

As I listened, recollections,
That I thought had been forgot,
Came with all the gush of memory,
Rushing, thronging to the spot ;
And I wandered back to childhood,
To those merry days of yore,
When I knelt beside my mother,
By this bed upon the floor.

So I drew it from the recess,
Where it had remained so long ;
Hearing all the while the music
Of my mother's voice in song ;
As she sung in sweetest accents,
What I since have often read,—
“Hush, my dear, be still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed.”

Years have passed, and that dear mother
 Long has moldered 'neath the sod;
And I trust her sainted spirit
 Revels in the house of God.
But that scene at summer twilight
 Never has from memory fled;
And it comes in all its freshness
 When I see my trundle-bed.

Then it was, with hands so gently
 Placed upon my infant head,
That she taught my lips to utter
 Carefully the words she said.
Never can they be forgotten,
 Deep are they in memory driven,—
“Hallowed be thy name, O, Father!
 Father, thou who art in heaven.”

This she taught me, then she told me
 Of its import great and deep;
After which I learned to utter,
 “Now I lay me down to sleep.”
Then it was, with hands uplifted,
 And in accents soft and mild,
That my mother asked—“Our Father!
 Father, do thou bless my child.”

Yes, we remember the little trundle-bed in
which we used to sleep, and the old arm-chair

in which mother used to sit, and the rocking-chair in which she rocked the baby to sleep; and how, moving that chair into the adjoining room, she there rocked herself in it after we children had all been tucked away in our little beds. That chair had a creak, and other creaking chairs have often and sweetly brought mother and her rocking-chair back to our memory.

Sitting alone in the shadow
Of years as well as of care,
I hear in the room adjoining
The creak of an old rocking-chair.

And my thoughts go back to my childhood,
When the "Good-nights" all were said,
And mother, gentle and patient,
Had put the children to bed.

And then in the room adjoining
She kept up her labor and care,
And as she darned stockings, we heard
The creak of the old rocking-chair.

What a sense of comfort stole o'er me,
Of security and rest,
The safety and peace of the bird
Asleep in the family nest.

O Father, bring back to my heart,
So old, so weary and sore,
Longing to-night for home,
The thoughts of my childhood once more.

In thee let me feel the safety,
The perfect trust that was there,
When I heard, half waking, half sleeping,
The creak of the old rocking-chair.

VI.

THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

THERE are many beautiful evening prayers for children; but there is one which is recognized by all as, par excellence, the child's evening prayer. We do not say the children's evening prayer, because it is a prayer that each child is to say for itself, and by itself. It is a personal and a thoroughly selfish prayer.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.

This prayer is in use in all Christian families where there is a child. It stands by the side of the Lord's Prayer, as its younger brother. It has sometimes, and not inappropriately, been called the mother's prayer, because it is almost always taught by the mother, and learned by the child kneeling at her knee.

Most Christian mothers teach their children to repeat it as soon as their little tongues can put its simple words together.

Indeed, many mothers, long before their babes can utter a single syllable, fold their little hands and teach them to be still while they repeat its beautiful words for them. Many aged men and women cannot remember the time when they did not know it. It seems to have always been with them, as if they had been born with it in their hearts.

The following beautiful lines of Richard Roe picture for us a family scene which is witnessed in thousands of Christian homes where there is a praying mother, and prattling children, and a darling cherub babe upon her knee—a babe that is just beginning to notice, but is yet unable to utter an articulate word.

Our little babe ; our bright-eyed one ;
Our youngest, darling joy ;
We teach, at evening hour, to kneel
Beside our little boy ;

And though she cannot lisp a word,
Nor breathe a simple prayer,

We know that her Maker blesseth her
The while she kneeleth there.

If ever the praises of heaven pause to give full audience to a prayer rising from earth, it is when the baby child, after the shadows have gathered around the hearthstone where family prayer has just been offered, comes, dressed in its snow-white night-clothes, and at mother's knee, in the simple language of the child's evening prayer, commits its soul, for the hours of sleep and silence, in the full trust of childhood's perfect faith, into the keeping of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps. Especially is this so when the mother is found pouring out her own soul in silent prayer for the safe-keeping and final salvation of the child, precious to her heart as her own life; for in that moment, when the prayers of mother and child are blending and rising together to the throne of the Heavenly Father, is realized most truly what we often sing:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

It is not now known, and perhaps never will be known, who wrote the child's evening prayer. It is generally ascribed to the saintly, and now sainted, Dr. Watts; but we are by no means sure that he was the author of it. It is found among the anecdotes which illustrate Dr. Watts's "Divine and Moral Songs for Children," but is introduced there in a way that implies that Dr. Watts was not its author. We have not been able, however, to find, in a diligent search, any trace of its existence prior to his day. For this reason, and because he did compose so many sweet and beautiful things for children, many have attributed it to him, without sufficient evidence; but it certainly does bear a strong resemblance to his writings, in that it is at once so simple and so sublime. The nearest approach to it which we have been able to find in Dr. Watts's compositions is the following stanza in one of his evening hymns:

I lay my body down to sleep;
Let angels guard my head,
And, through the hours of darkness, keep
Their watch around my bed.

It is more than probable that the little prayer, as we now have it, was a stanza in an old evening hymn for children, of which all the other stanzas have been lost, and, with them, the name of the author. The following lines are very appropriate to be quoted just here. The writer says of them: "Years ago, out of the fullness of my heart, I wrote the wish embodied in the lines that follow. As long as I live I shall feel that the pure spirit that penned the immortal lines of the child's prayer finds his or her exceeding bliss in heaven in the midst of the myriads of children who, just before dropping to sleep at night, and finally into the sleep of death, committed themselves wholly and simply to the care of their Maker and Keeper."

Golden head so lowly bending,
Little feet so white and bare;
Dewy eyes half shut, half opened,
Lisping out her evening prayer.

Well she knows, when she is saying,
"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
'Tis to God that she is praying,
Praying him her "soul to keep."

Half asleep and murmuring faintly,
 " If I should die before I wake ; "
Tiny fingers clasped so saintly,
 " I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."

Oh! the rapture sweet, unbroken,
 Of the soul that wrote this prayer!
Children's myriad voices floating
 Up to heaven, record it there.

If, of all that has been written,
 I could choose what might be mine,
It would be that child's petition
 Rising to the throne divine.

Then at last, when bells are tolling,
 " Earth to earth, and dust to dust,"
My freed soul, on faith uplifted,
 Faith, and love, and perfect trust,

Would approach him, humbly praying—
 All the children clustering round—
" Jesus, Saviour, take thy servant,
 Give to her thy children's crown."

The catholicity of the child's evening prayer is one of its most remarkable features. All

creeds and sects of Christians can, and do, adopt it; and its acceptability is even wider than Christianity itself. Many Jewish mothers are now teaching their little children to use it as their night prayer. There is not a thought in it which can be objectionable to Jew, or pagan, or Mohammedan. It is a prayer that can be used by all who recognize the existence of a supreme Lord, who hears the voices of his creatures in prayer, and spreads over them the mantle of his protecting love.

It is more universal than Pope's celebrated Universal Prayer, and yet is free from all of its objectionable characteristics, because its universality is not the patent, but a latent, feature of it. It implies but one simple doctrine, resting wholly on one single article of faith, that enters into the creed of all infants as soon as they are able to speak, namely, that there is a supreme God who hears their voices when they pray, and who watches over them both by day and by night.

There is not the least danger that the latent universality of the child's evening prayer can ever convey to the child's mind the shadow of an erroneous doctrine. It is always and

only the God of the mother that the child worships. Universal and acceptable as the prayer is to Catholic or Protestant, to Unitarian or Trinitarian, to Christian or Jew, to Mohammedan or pagan, it is always to the God of the mother that the child prays; and this prayer contains all the truth about God and prayer that the child is yet able to comprehend—simply, that there is a God who hears and answers. Beginning with this as a foundation, every mother can build upon it the higher doctrines of her own faith, as the child's mind becomes capable of taking in the deeper mysteries of her creed. Most Christian mothers, at a very early period, add the line, "And this I ask for Jesus' sake," thus beginning early to teach their children that all God's blessings come to us through the mediation and merits of Jesus Christ.

In most minds the mother's prayer is associated with the Lord's Prayer; and, in the points of simple language and broad catholicity, they are very similar. There is not a word in the Lord's Prayer that a child cannot utter and understand; and any religionist, Jew, pagan, or Mohammedan, who recognizes

a supreme Lord who is Father of all men, can use it in perfect consistency with his own peculiar creed. Of course, in the mouth of the representative of each creed it has a different meaning—the meaning which the creed of the worshiper infuses into it. To us it is thoroughly a Christian prayer, impregnated in every petition with the latent idea of the Holy Trinity, because we find it imbedded in the very heart of the gospel; but, taken out of its living connection, it becomes a prayer as universal as the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. It can be translated into all human languages, and transfused into all human creeds; and so comprehensive is it, that it covers all human necessities.

The child's evening prayer is like it in its universal adaptability, but unspeakably inferior to it in comprehensibility; but it comprises all that the child can need while it is asleep. If it were more comprehensive, it would not be so suitable as it is for a night prayer for children. The child using it commits itself wholly into the hands of the Lord, for life or death, until the sleep-time shall be over and the morning light shall dawn. What

more could be needed? The whole case is covered.

In a literary point of view the little prayer is as nearly perfect as it is possible for a human production to be. No improvement has ever been suggested, except that there is wanting a syllable in the first line to complete the rhythm; or that the auxiliary "should" ought to be dropped out of the third line, which is sometimes done. If, as already suggested, the prayer was originally a stanza, perhaps the last one, of an old evening hymn, then originally it read, "And now I lay me down to sleep."

It has also been said that the prayer, in its usual form, is selfish, because the child prays only for itself. As a remedy for this, it has been suggested that the word "*all*" be substituted for the word "soul" in the second line. In that case the mother would have to explain that the word *all* means father, mother, brother, sister, friends, and strangers—in short, everybody and everything. But even then it would be "*my all*," and the supposed selfishness would still remain. It would be hard to get a child to understand the pur-

port of the proposed change ; and if it should understand it, the point of its prayer would be lost in its diffusiveness. The source of much weakness in the prayers of grown people is to be found in their diffusiveness. They mean nothing in particular, because they mean everything in general.

And besides, we are not so sure but that the first prayer of the child should be a thoroughly selfish one. The child must first be made to feel its individual relationship to God, and its complete dependence upon him for daily life. No one can ever learn to pray earnestly for others until he has first learned to pray availingly for himself. As the child grows older it is to be taught other prayers, and in these may be embodied petitions broad enough to comprehend all in whom it has come to be interested.

After carefully considering all the criticisms that have come under our notice, we are of the opinion that it would be very unwise to make the least change in form or expression ; and we regard it, as now generally used, as the most precious and perfect gem in our language, and as perfectly fulfilling the two

vital conditions of prayer expressed in the lines:

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

VII.

POEMS ABOUT THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

A GREAT many sweet little poems have been written about the child's evening prayer, and they all show how deeply it has imbedded itself in the religious life and thought of those who love home and children. None of them are remarkable for any high poetic merit, and some of them can hardly be dignified with the name of poetry at all; but we all read and love them, because they express thoughts and emotions that gush out of the heart of home life. Most of them are mere verses in rhyme that were written by those whose hearts were but lightly touched with poetic fire; but they are interesting, and find their way to our hearts, because they breath the spirit of domestic peace. Father and mother and children around the hearthstone, or kneeling at the family altar, with the

mother and the babe most prominent in the picture, are seen and heard in nearly all of them.

How many men whose heads are now gray love to let memory linger on the time when they kneeled "at mother's knee," and, with her hand tenderly resting upon their heads, learned the sweet words of the little prayer! And how many have been made better men through life thereby! How sweet the remembrance of the prayer-hour, and then the good-night kisses! Such hallowed memories have held many a man to God and virtue when all other restraints were ready to give way. This is the thought, sweetly expressed, in the following lines, which were written by the late Dr. Milo Smith—a name unknown to fame—when he was an old man nearing the grave. They will touch a chord of sympathy in all hearts where lingers the sweet memory of the sainted mother and the childhood's home.

"Now I lay me down to sleep," —
At mother's knee I've often prayed;
And memory will the lesson keep,
Though oft in Folly's path I've strayed.

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,”—
How fancy makes my mother's hands
Rest on my head! I see her weep,
While o'er my couch in prayer she stands.

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,”—
Do not the words, with magic art,
Come stealing over memories deep,
Waking sad feelings in the heart?

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,”—
My childhood hours are wafted on
By Memory's wand, and oft I weep
To think those happy days are gone.

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,”—
His heart is cold who has not felt
A thrill of pleasure o'er him creep,
As Memory by dear mother knelt.

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,”—
The scoffer's sneer my faith can't shake,
But mother's precepts I will keep
Until the Lord my soul shall take.

For men to fall asleep at their prayers is one thing; but for tired children to fall asleep with the half-uttered words of the evening

prayer still hanging on their lips is quite another. Men fall asleep in their devotions when the spirit of prayer is dying in their hearts; but children, tired and drowsy, are found praying when overtaken with sleep, and the spirit of prayer follows them even into their slumbers. In the one case it is prayer overcome by sleep; and in the other it is sleep embraced in prayer. I know of nothing more lifelike than the picture painted in the following lines, written by Mrs. E. H. Morse, of Ala.,—a picture which all mothers have seen, a little child going to sleep while saying its evening prayer:

“Now I lay me”—repeat it, darling;
“Lay me,” lisped the tiny lips
Of my daughter kneeling, bending
O'er her folded finger-tips.

“Down to sleep”—“To sleep,” she murmured,
And the curly head bent low;
“I pray thee, Lord,”—I gently added,
“You can say it all, I know.”

“Pray thee, Lord,” the sound came faintly;
Fainter still—“my soul to keep;”

Then the tired head fairly nodded,
And the child was fast asleep.

But the dewy eyes half opened
When I clasped her to my breast,
And the dear voice softly whispered,
"Mamma, God knows all the rest."

Oh, the trusting, sweet confiding
Of the child-heart! Would that I
Thus might trust my Heavenly Father,
He who hears my feeblest cry.

John Quincy Adams is reported to have said that he never closed his eyes in sleep without repeating, as his last utterance for the day, the simple and trustful words of the child's evening prayer; and it is further stated that finally "he fell into that sleep from which the voice of the archangel alone can awaken him, with its sweet words last upon his lips." The prayer is a pillow of trust and comfort on which the head of childhood sleeps from night to night; and at the last it often becomes a pillow of faith and hope on which the aged lay themselves down to sleep in the resignation expressed in the following lines, written by Louise Chandler Moulton:

Now we lay us down to sleep,
And leave to God the rest;
Whether to wake and weep,
Or wake no more, be best.

Why vex our souls with care?
Thy grace is cool and low;
Have we found life so fair
That we should dread to go?

We have kissed love's sweet, red lips,
And left them sweet and red;
The rose the wild bee sips
Blooms on when he is dead.

Some faithful friends we've found;
But those who love us best,
When we are under ground
Will laugh on with the rest.

No tasks have we begun
But other hands can take;
No work beneath the sun
For which we need to wake.

Then hold us fast, sweet death,
If so it seemeth best
To Him who gave us breath,
That we should go to rest.

We lay us down to sleep,
Our weary eyes we close;
Whether to wake and weep,
Or wake no more, He knows.

It is sometimes also the pillow of rest and peace on which the head of childhood lays itself down to sleep away from earth to heaven. Sometimes it enables the departing child to say words of comfort to the weeping mother it leaves behind. There was a dear little girl who said to her mother when dying: "Weep not for me, dear mother; kiss me good-night, and hear my little bed-time prayer; I will say my morning prayer over there, mother, just over there in heaven." Then, saying, "Now I lay me down to sleep," she fell asleep in her mother's arms, and woke to find herself "over there" in the arms of her Saviour. This touching circumstance has been embalmed in the following lines, written by Hattie A. Fox:

"Now I lay me down to sleep"—
And the blue eyes dark and deep
Let their snowy curtains down,
Edged with fringes golden-brown.

“ All day long the angels fair
I've been watching over there ;
Heaven's not far ; 'tis just in sight ;
Now they are calling me ; good-night !
Kiss me, mother ; do not weep ;
' Now I lay me down to sleep.'
Over there, just over there,
I shall say my morning prayer.
Kiss me, mother ; do not weep ;
' Now I lay me down to sleep.' ”

Tangled ringlets, all smooth now,
Looped back from the waxen brow ;
Little hands so dimpled, white,
Clasped together cold to-night.
Where the grassy, daisied sod
Brought sweet messages from God,
Her pale lips with kisses press'd,
There we left her to her rest ;
And the dews of evening weep
Where we laid her down to sleep.
Over there, just over there,
List the angels' morning prayer—
'Tis not prayer, but songs of praise,
There she sings the heavenly lays.

Let no mother ever forget to send her
child from prayer at her knee to its nightly

rest. Her remembrance of that hallowed hour may be her greatest comfort when the Good Shepherd calls her darling lamb from the fold of the home to his fold in heaven. The mother can better give up the child when she knows that she has trained it on earth for heaven, and that it passes with prayer into the happy land where this world's petitions are turned into endless praises; that her child has gone to sing the song in which the angels lead. This is the thought that runs through the following lines, which will commend themselves to every Christian mother's heart:

Safe to the fold the shepherd leads
His little lambs at close of day,
And thus my darlings come to me,
At last grown weary of their play;
And while the twilight shadows fall
O'er hill and meadow from above,
I draw my little lambkins safe
Within the fold of home and love.

All day the restless feet have chased
The wandering sunbeams here and there;
All day the merry breeze has kissed
My darlings' cheeks, and brow and hair;

All day my listening ear has caught
The happy sound of childish glee,
Until, at last, the sunset hour
Has brought the children to my knee.

Oh, drowsy eyes of blue and brown!
Oh, nodding heads! I understand;
'Tis time two little travelers start,
With mother's aid, for "slumber-land."
So fold the dresses snug away,
And free the restless, dainty feet
From shoe and stocking. Thus, at last,
My little lambs, refreshed and sweet,

And robed in white, before me kneel
With folded hands. O Father, thou
Who art the Shepherd of thy flock,
Bow down thine ear and listen now
To each low, childish prayer that these,
My children, offer up to thee.
Hallow the twilight hour, O Lord,
That brings them thus before my knee.

And so through all the silent hours
Which lie between the night and day,
They shall not fear, since from the fold
Thy love will drive all foes away.

Sleep, little ones, oh, sweetly sleep,
Till morning sunbeams gather fast;
And safe from "slumber-land" you come
Back to your mother's knee at last.

Such a mother as that pictured in the foregoing lines can never be forgotten; and the memory of her pious care will be a perpetual safeguard and benediction on the lives of her children. They can never forget the prayer they learned, kneeling at her knee and repeating the words after her. The man whose infancy was blessed with that greatest of earthly blessings, a pious and praying mother, may become so immersed in the pleasures or cares of life that, for a while, he may seem to forget; but, by and by, some scene witnessed or word heard will bring back to his mind the vision of his mother's face, and he will hear again in his heart the tone of her voice in prayer; and the sweet memory will be as a strengthening cordial and a soothing balm to his soul in hours of trouble and sadness. This thought is beautifully and touchingly brought out in the following lines, written by Eugene Field.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

The fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere ;
Like troubled spirits, here and there
The firelight shadows fluttering go.
And as the shadows round me creep,
A childish trouble breaks the gloom,
And softly from a farther room
Comes : " Now I lay me down to sleep."

And, somehow, with that little prayer
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thought goes back to distant years
And lingers with a dear one there ;
And, as I hear the child's amen,
My mother's faith comes back to me,
Couched at her side I seem to be,
And mother holds my hands again.

Oh, for an hour in that dear place!
Oh, for the peace of that dear time!
Oh, for that childish trust sublime!
Oh, for a glimpse of mother's face!
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be alone—
Sweet magic of that treble tone—
And " now I lay me down to sleep."

The verses with which we close this chapter will not fail to touch the heart of every reader. They were found under the head of a dead soldier in a prison hospital, and were, no doubt, composed by him when thinking of his far-off, perhaps sainted mother, and of the little prayer which he had learned in infancy at her knee.

I lay me down to sleep
With little thought or care
Whether my waking find
Me here or there.

My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part ;
I give a patient God
My patient heart.

My trust is not in self ;
I hope in Christ who died,
And give myself to him,
The crucified.

I leave my all to him,
And lay me down to sleep ;
My soldier-heart is strong,
My hand is weak.

If I wake to live,
 I'll live to do my best;
But if I die to-night,
 With him I'll rest.

VIII.

NURSERY PRAYERS AND CRADLE SONGS.

A MOTHER'S prayers for her children are as mountains round about them, walling them in to her faith. The cradle songs she teaches them are as fountains of spiritual life gushing out of the mountains of her prayers, and flowing into their souls. The nursery prayers are the child's first lessons in theology. The God to whom the child prays is the God whom the man will fear and worship. The nursery is the child's first church; and of that church the mother is the visible and acknowledged head. Her children believe in her infallibility more certainly than Romanists believe in the infallibility of the pope. She always comes before the preacher, and opens the door for him, or closes it against him. In all this is involved a tremendous responsibility. How heavily it should weigh

upon her mind and conscience! Whatever the mother soweth in the nursery, that shall the children reap in after life; and they will also scatter the seed of it in society.

On the morning of the resurrection Jesus appeared first to some women; and they were the first to preach the gospel of a risen Saviour to the disciples and to the world. Since then women have always been the first to preach the gospel to each new-born generation. The child's evening prayer is usually the first seed of religion that is planted in the heart. From that seed there springs up and grows a life of practical piety as the child's mind develops. The little prayer grows by taking on new ideas in additional lines; and then other prayers are learned and used in connection with it; thus the child is led on step by step, until it learns to pray in its own language, pouring out the spontaneous desires and aspirations of its own heart in petition and praise.

We commend to mothers the well-known prayer composed by the poet Coleridge, as suitable for children as soon as they can memorize the words and take in their mean-

ing. It embraces the entire family, and all intimate friends. We should begin early to teach our children to pray for others as well as for themselves, and also for divine help in the discharge of all home duties.

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say :
O God, preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year ;
And oh, preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due ;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy ;
And oh, preserve us children all
From sinful ways, both great and small ;
And may we always love each other,
Our friends, our father, and our mother ;
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my last sleep I may
Awake to thy eternal day.

As the child grows older it should be taught not only to pray for the various members of the family, and to know the several duties that grow out of these varied relation-

ships, and pray for grace to discharge them, but also it should be taught something of the deeper mystery of its own relation to God, and to seek in prayer a closer and more conscious communion with him. To help in this direction we give here another evening prayer, which is as well worthy of study by grown people as by the children :

The day is ended. Ere I sink to sleep
My weary spirit seeks repose in thine ;
Father, forgive my trespasses, and keep
This little life of mine.

With loving kindness curtain thou my bed,
And cool in rest my burning pilgrim feet ;
Thy pardon be the pillow for my head ;
So shall my sleep be sweet.

At peace with all the world, dear Lord, and thee ;
No fears my soul's unwavering faith can shake ;
All's well, whichever side the grave for me
The morning light shall break.

Both the fullness and the simplicity of the faith of children will lead them to expect literal and immediate answers to their prayers,

and if they do not receive them just at the time and in the way anticipated, they will begin to be troubled at the mystery of prayer, and, possibly, to doubt its efficacy. There is, just here, a point which requires the most delicate handling, involving a danger against which every cautious mother must carefully guard the tender and sensitive mind of her child. It is just here that the artful tempter sometimes injects the seeds of doubt into the child's mind, which in after years may be developed into a troublesome if not destructive skepticism; just as the moth-fly deposits its egg in the flower, which afterward becomes the worm that destroys the fruit. We must teach our children to pray *in faith*; not *in the faith* that their desires will always be granted just at the time and in the way they wish, but *in the faith* that leaves the answer to God, resting in the assurance that he will always do, in his own good time and way, whatever is for their own truest good and highest salvation. The following verses, true to life, and so simple that a child can understand them, may help mothers in this difficult and delicate task:

“ Mamma, I’ve often heard you say
That God is listening when we pray,
And if I do indeed believe,
That what I ask I shall receive.

“ Why will he not then take away
My naughty, sinful heart to-day,
And make me humble, meek, and mild,
A quiet and obedient child?

“ I ask him every day and night
For a new heart that’s clean and white ;
You know I have not got it yet—
He hears my prayers, can he forget? ”

“ No, darling, God does not forget,
Although he has not answered yet ;
And if you listen I will try
And give you now a reason why.

“ I once pulled up a garden weed,
And in its place I dropped a seed ;
Because they told me God’s great power
Could change that seed into a flower.

“ I was a little child, you know,
And thought the seed would quickly grow ;
But days and weeks passed slowly round,
And still it lay deep in the ground.

“ At length there came some gentle rain ;
And when the sun shone forth again
I hastened to the spot, alone,
Wherein my little seed was sown.

“ And there I saw the softened ground
Raised in a gently-heaving mound,
And in the middle there was seen
Two little leaves of brightest green.

“ And day by day, and hour by hour,
I watched until there came a flower,
And thought how good that God must be
That gave such pretty flowers to me.

“ And now, my dear, your little prayer
Is like the seed I dropped in there ;
God gives it in your hand to sow,
And promises the seed shall grow.

“ And if you wait, and watch and pray,
The seed will spring up day by day ;
And God will bless it, like my flower,
Both with the sunshine and the shower.

“ Until at length, one morning bright,
You'll find a heart both clean and white ;
And evermore your song will be,
' How very good God is to me.' ”

We add to this a translation from the German of what is called a child's prayer, but which, in reality, is not a prayer at all, but a pretty little story about how a herd-boy prayed. It teaches both children and grown people the nature of all real prayer. We are to tell God all we know, pouring out our desires into his ear, and leave him to choose for us, sifting and winnowing our words, what he knows will be for our highest good. This is the story in rhyme:

By Alpine lake, 'neath shady rock,
The herd-boy knelt beside his flock,
And softly said, with pious air,
His alphabet as evening prayer.

Unseen, his pastor lingered near:
"My child, what means the sound I hear?
May I not thy worship share,
And raise to heaven my evening prayer?"

Here where the hills and valleys blend,
The sound of prayer and praise ascend—
"But child, a prayer yours cannot be:
You have only said your A B C."

“ I have no better way to pray ;
All that I know to God I say ;
I tell the letters on my knees,
He makes the words himself to please.”

With the children's prayers there should be mingled the song of praise. The songs of infancy, sung in the nursery and at the family altar, can never be forgotten. They are like the words of one's native language. In after years one may learn a new one, and the native language may be so long unused that the tongue may lose its skill in uttering it, but the sound of it can never cease to be familiar to the ear. It frequently happens that persons who emigrated in infancy from their native land, and have used a foreign language for scores of years, and who suppose that they have forgotten their mother-tongue, begin again in old age to speak the language and words of infancy.

The words that mother first teaches can never be forgotten, nor even the sounds that were taught in childhood's oft-repeated songs. By the recognition of the unforgettable strains, many children who were stolen by Indians

in the early settlement of our country have been identified by their parents after years of absence, and after they had forgotten every word of their mother-tongue; so deep and lasting are the impressions that the songs of infancy make upon the soul. They go with one from the cradle to the grave; and who knows but that they may be resung in the better land beyond?

For this reason mothers cannot be too careful as to what songs they sing, or permit to be sung, in the nursery. Some mothers seem to think that it can make no difference as to the sense or the nonsense of the songs they thus sing. It is true that the babe does not comprehend their meaning; but they are the breezes in the atmosphere in which the young life begins to develop, and the infectious breath of a vile cradle song may taint the child's life in its very budding. The child may remember the tune, and, hearing it in after years, may, through the tune, learn the words which its mother used to sing.

The inward character of the mother comes out in her cradle songs; and that character is never fully developed until she has her

own babe in her arms to sing to. A certain hitherto indefinable sense of incompleteness is only lost in maternity, in which every true woman feels that she receives the God-given crown of her womanhood. What Mrs. J. P. Morgan has beautifully expressed is no doubt the true experience of all true and womanly women:

I gave my maiden love, tender and shy;
And yet I was sad. Why? Oh, why?

I gave my wife-love, pure and true;
And yet—and yet I was longing too!

God gave me mother-love, warm and strong;
And my sadness was lost in my lullaby song.

AN OLD CRADLE SONG.

Sleep, baby, sleep.
Thy father's watching the sheep;
Thy mother is shaking the dreamland tree,
And down fall its golden leaves on thee.
Sleep, baby, sleep.

Sleep, baby, sleep.
The large stars are the sheep,

The little stars are the lambs, I guess ;
The pale moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep.

Sleep, baby, sleep.
The Saviour loves his sheep ;
He is the Lamb of God on high,
Who for our sakes came down to die.
Sleep, baby, sleep.

AN EVENING LULLABY.

The light is fading out,
Baby dear, baby dear ;
My arms are round thee close,
Do not fear, do not fear.

Within our pretty room
Shadows creep, shadows creep ;
Love watches over thee ;
Go to sleep, go to sleep.

When darkness covers us,
Love makes light, love makes light ;
God's arms are round us close
In the night, in the night.

The light will often fade,
Shadows creep, shadows creep ;

Love always watches thee,
Go to sleep, go to sleep.

THE MOTHER'S LULLABY.

Sleep, little babe of mine ;
Night and the darkness are near,
But Jesus looks down
Through the shadows that frown,
And baby has nothing to fear.

Shut, little sleepy eyes ;
Dear little head, be at rest ;
For Jesus, like you,
Was a baby once too,
And slept on his own mother's breast.

Sleep, little babe of mine,
Soft on your pillow so white,
For Jesus is here
To watch over you, dear,
And nothing can harm you to-night.

O sweet darling of mine,
What can you know of the bliss,
The comfort I keep,
When awake or asleep,
Because I am certain of this.

GOD OF THE WEARY.

The little birds now seek their nest ;
The baby sleeps on mother's breast ;
Thou givest all thy children rest,
 God of the weary.

The sailor prayeth on the sea ;
The little ones, at mother's knee ;
Now comes the penitent to thee,
 God of the weary.

The orphan puts away his fears ;
The troubled, hopes for happier years ;
Thou driest all the mourner's tears,
 God of the weary.

Thou sendest rest to tired feet,
To little toilers, slumbers sweet,
To aching hearts, repose complete,
 God of the weary.

In grief, perplexity, or pain,
None ever come to thee in vain ;
Thou makest life a joy again,
 God of the weary.

We sleep that we may wake renewed
To serve thee, as thy children should,
With love and zeal and gratitude,
 God of the weary.

But it may be that your mother never sung any of these beautiful little cradle-songs to you when you were an infant held in her arms, or resting in your cradle, with your wide-opened eyes looking wonderingly into her love-beaming face. It may be that your mother never sang with you the sweet little hymns that almost all mothers, a few years back, taught their little children to sing, such as "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand," and "Little drops of water and little grains of sand," and "There is a happy land." It may be that she sang to you only the old-fashioned hymns that were sung in the church; but, if so, there were two or three of them that were her special favorites, which she sang over and over again, and they made an impression on you which you can never forget, and which, whenever you hear them sung, recall to you the sweet tones of your mother's voice, and cause to rise in your memory the image of dear mother's face—sweet to you, however age-worn and wrinkled it may have appeared to others. The following lines, which recount a scene that was witnessed during the

toils and struggles of the late civil war, tell their own story; and hard is his heart, especially if he was a soldier in that war, whose eyes will not be dimmed with tears while he reads:

Beneath the hot midsummer sun
The men had marched all day;
And now beside a rippling stream
Upon the grass they lay.

Tiring of games and idle jests,
As swept the hours along,
They called to one who mused apart,
“Come, friend, give us a song.”

“I fear I cannot please,” he said;
“The only songs I know
Are those my mother used to sing
For me long years ago.”

“Sing one of those,” a rough voice cried,
“There’s none but true men here;
To every mother’s son of us
A mother’s songs are dear.”

Then sweetly rose the singer’s voice
Amid unwonted calm,
“Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?”

“ And shall I fear to own his cause ”—
The very stream was stilled,
And hearts that never throbb'd with fear
With tender thoughts were filled.

Ended the song, the singer said,
As to his feet he rose,
“ Thanks to you all, my friends ; good-night ;
God grant us sweet repose.”

“ Sing us one more,” the captain begged.
The soldier bent his head ;
Then glancing 'round, with smiling lips,
“ You'll join with me,” he said.

“ We'll sing this old familiar air,
Sweet as the bugle-call,
' All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall.’ ”

Ah! wondrous was the old tune's spell
As on the singer sang ;
Man after man fell into line,
And loud the voices rang.

The songs are done, the camp is still,
Naught but the stream is heard ;
But ah! the depths of every soul
By those old hymns are stirred.

And up from many a bearded lip,
In whispers soft and low,
Rises the prayer the mother taught
The boy long years ago.

IX.

GOOD-MORNING! GOOD-MORNING TO ALL!

SOME things there are which do not grow old with the flight of time, nor lose their power to fascinate by being often seen; and hence, as poor Keats has said, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." The rising sun is a beauty that never fades, and a joy that never cloys. Every new day is as truly a fresh creation of light out of darkness as when God said in the beginning, "Let there be light, and light was." As on that first morning the angels and the stars sang together for joy, so we should greet every morning with songs of praise to God, and expressions of good-will toward men. Therefore let every one, in the thought and spirit of Rev. Horatius Bonar's sweet hymn:

Begin the day with God!
He is thy sun and day;
He is the radiance of thy dawn,
To him address thy lay.

Sing thy first song to God,
Not to thy fellow-man;
Not to the creatures of his hand,
But to the Glorious One.

Take thy first meal with God!
He is thy heavenly food!
Feed with him, on him! He with thee
Will feast, in brotherhood.

Take thy first walk with God!
Let him go forth with thee;
By stream, or sea, or mountain path,
Seek still his company.

Thy first transaction be
With God himself above;
So shall thy business prosper well,
And all thy days be love.

We best show our thankfulness to God for the morning light, and our joy in it, by saluting with a hearty good-morning all whom we meet in the early hour of the day. Let us never forget to say good-morning, and let us

always say it cheerfully and with a smile. It will do us good; will make our own hearts, and all around us, brighter. There is an inspiration in every hearty good-morning, cheerily and smilingly spoken, that seems to make a bright morning brighter, and a dark morning less gloomy. There seems to be a magic in the words that really makes the morning good, and promises a good day to follow. Parents should never fail to say good-morning to their children, nor allow them to forget to say good-morning to them, to one another, to all visitors, teachers, acquaintances, and friends. If mothers would cause their children to memorize and often repeat the following lines, written by Mrs. M. M. Butts, they would lodge a beautiful thought in their minds—a thought which would help to render them amiable in manner, and would largely contribute to the cheerfulness and happiness of their later years.

What happens in the morning
When light comes to the skies?
All the little children
Open wide their eyes.

When their eyes are open
What do the children see?
Trees and birds and blossoms,
Bright as bright can be.

Is there not for the children
Something more than this?
Mamma stands beside them
With a morning kiss.

Her smile is more than sunshine,
And her loving words
Better than the singing
Of ten thousand birds.

In their prettiest garments,
All ready for the day,
Kneeling, with sweet voices,
All the children pray,

That God, who made the blossoms
And the birds and skies,
And gave to them dear mother,
With her smiling eyes,

Would send a loving angel
To help them through the day,
That they may be good children
In all their work and play.

Not only all people, but even the world itself, with its teeming, joyful life, seems to be waiting and expecting our hearty good-morning salutation, and, when heartily given, seems to respond to it with a song and a smile. What a beautiful picture, natural and life-like, is seen in the following lines :

“ Good-morning, world ! ” On the window-seat
She balanced her two little timid feet ;
She clung with her dimpled hands, and stood
Framed in, like a picture of babyhood.
The clambering vines hung low and green
Round the sunniest curls that e'er were seen,
As she stood with beauty and light impearled,
And bade “ good-morning ” to all the world.

“ Good-morning, world ! ” and the great world
heard ;
Each rustling tree, and each singing bird ;
The dancing flowers and the fields of grass
Nodded and waved at the little lass,
And the far-off hills and the sky o'erhead
Listened and beamed as the word was said ;
And the old sun lifted his head and smiled :
“ Good-morning, world ! ” “ Good-morning, child ! ”

But it is not enough for the child to say its hearty good-morning to all in and about

the house, to the smiling friends, the waving trees, the blooming flowers and singing birds, and the glorious sun. Beyond the visible sun there is another—the Sun of Righteousness. It is his hand that unbars the golden gate of the eastern sky and lets in the natural sun to fill the heavens and flood the earth with its joyous beams; and him we should salute, kneeling in the morning light, with our soulful good-morning of prayer and praise. And as grown people should begin the day with God, so the child should be taught never to forget God in the good-mornings of its hearty salutations at the opening of day. And here come in most appropriately the charming lines of Mrs. Hamlin, written at Constantinople; and although almost everybody knows them by heart, yet everybody will be glad to have them repeated in this connection; and if a mother is reading these pages to her little child, that child will clap its hands in delight as it hears them.

“Oh, I am so happy!” the little girl said,
As she sprang like a lark from the low trundle-bed.

“’Tis morning, bright morning! Good-morning,
papa!

Oh, give me one kiss for good-morning, mamma!
Only just look at my pretty canary,
Chirping his sweet good-morning to Mary!
The sunshine is peeping straight into my eyes,—
Good-morning to you, Mr. Sun, for you rise
Early to wake up my birdie and me,
And make us as happy as happy can be.”

“Happy you may be, my dear little girl,”
And the mother stroked softly a clustering curl,
“Happy as happy can be—but think of the One
Who awakened, this morn, both you and the sun.”
The little one turned her bright eyes with a nod—
“Mamma, may I say good-morning to God?”
“Yes, little darling one, surely you may—
As you kneel by your bed every morning to pray.”

Mary knelt solemnly down, with her eyes
Looking up earnestly into the skies,
And two little hands that were folded together
Softly she laid on the lap of her mother.
“Good-morning, dear Father in heaven,” she said;
“I thank thee for watching my snug little bed,
For taking good care of me all the dark night,
And waking me up with the beautiful light.
Oh, keep me from naughtiness all the long day,
Blest Jesus, who taught little children to pray.”

How beautiful the picture of the little girl "as she sprang like a lark from the low trundle-bed"! You have, perhaps, seen the lark in old England's green meadows, uprising from the dewy grass, shaking the glittering drops from its fluttering wings, saluting the earth with its first matin notes, and then soaring away toward heaven, singing as it rises through the azure fields, higher and higher until lost to human sight; and then you have heard its song floating down from beyond the sky, and seeming to be the voice of an angel chanting its morning praises before the invisible throne. So it was with the little girl, springing in the early morn from the little bed, shaking sleep from her sparkling eyes, saluting father and mother and all the household with her first good-morning, bowing to the world, then saluting the sun, and then rising still higher and pouring out her soul in her hearty "good-morning" of praise to the great God who gave the day with all its beauties, and the home with all its blessings.

The value of morning prayer cannot be overestimated, and yet many do not appear

to realize its importance. Many who never fail in evening worship neglect or run hastily through their morning devotions. Many mothers, because it is not pleasant to rise early to meet the early rising of their children, let their nurses dress them and bring them in prayerless to breakfast. And oftentimes breakfast is late, and the children are made to eat in haste, and to hurry off to school, without opportunity to join with their parents in the morning worship.

The child that is taught to pray only at night will most likely come to feel that it needs the help of God only for the hours of sleep, when it cannot help itself. A little Sunday-school boy, being asked why he did not pray mornings, answered, "If God will take care of me of nights, I can take care of myself through the day." But the day is really the time of danger. It is full of temptations and trials. The night *at home* is the time of safety. But for the larger children, the night *away from home* is the time of peril. How sad the thought that so many boys are out at night and going to ruin! A prayerless morning generally grows

into a godless day, and a day without God may end in a night of drunken carousals in company with those whose feet go swiftly down to death.

It is unscriptural to neglect morning prayer. David, the busiest man in Jerusalem, said, "Early will I seek thee." Jesus rose up before day, and went out into a solitary place to pray. Mary and the other women "came to the sepulcher while it was yet dark." The psalmist said, "When I awake, I am still with thee." Some one has said prayer should be the lock to close the night, and the key to open the morning.

Ere the morning's busy ray
Call you to your work away,
Ere the silent evening close
Your wearied eye in sweet repose,
To lift your heart and voice in prayer
Be your first and latest care.

If we would train our children thoroughly, we must begin with them early—early in the morning of life, and early in the morning of every day of life. A more character-forming habit than that of early morning prayer

at the bedside, and at the family altar, cannot be acquired. It will go with the child through the day, and with the man through life, holding over them a great and ever-increasing influence for good.

Here are some lines by the Rev. J. R. Macduff, D.D., which mothers would do well to teach their children to repeat every morning:

O God, to thy keeping
This day I commend me;
Both waking and sleeping
In mercy defend me.

May mine be the Christ-life,
Meek, gentle, and lowly;
Evading the world's strife,
And following him wholly.

This little book is, as we have said, intended to assist Christian mothers in the religious training of their children, and in forming in their lives the habit of daily worship; and it is hoped that it may be of special service to those mothers whose husbands have not erected the family altar in the house. Alas! there are thousands of Chris-

tian mothers whose husbands are not pious. And there are thousands of husbands that are members of the church who neglect to lead their families in prayer and praise. In all such cases the mother should have an altar of worship for herself and little ones in the bed-chamber, or in the nursery. In this way she may even win her husband; but, be that as it may, her maternal ministry cannot fail to bring a blessing to her entire household. Next to the Saviour, a pious mother is God's greatest and best gift; and blessed are the children who have such mothers to teach them to begin and end the day in prayer and praise to him.

THE CHILDREN'S MORNING HYMN.

O Lord, another night is flown,
And we, a humble band,
Lift up our voices to thy throne
To bless thy fostering hand.

And wilt thou lend a list'ning ear
To praises such as ours?
Thou wilt, for thou dost love to hear
The song that childhood pours.

Through thy dear Son we now address
Our prayer to thee above ;
For he did little children bless
With words and looks of love.

O Father, guide our wandering feet
And bless us on our way,
Until at length with joy we greet
The dawn of endless day.

X.

OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN.

WHAT has been said about the babe and the children in the house will awaken sad thoughts in many hearts. There are so many empty cradles by which sad mothers kneel and weep, and so many desolate homes from which the children have gone out never to return!

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells for the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted.

What can be more sad than for a mother to go into the deserted nursery which was

her boy's home within the home, and see all his peculiar belongings, and know that he can never return to use them again! Through her raining tears she says:

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball;
But where art thou?
A corner holds thy empty chair--
Thy playthings scattered round,
All speak to me of my despair.

There are homes without children that are not sad. They are the old homesteads in which the children grew up, and from which they have gone out into homes of their own. These homes are not lonely, because they are being a second time filled up with children. The grandchildren are coming in on daily or longer visits; and they make the old hallways ring again with the shouts and laughter of gleeful and hilarious childhood. Children's children are a crown to old men, and gray-headed grandfathers sport with them, and become children again in their old age. Grandchildren rejuvenate grandmothers, and

under the warm sunshine of their smiles
grandmothers bloom again into maternal
caresses, like apple-trees in autumn blossoms.

It is the homes from which the children
have gone out through the door that opens
for departure, but never for return, that are
made sad and left desolate. Those are the
homes in which life is darkened by the
shadow of death. The anguish of a young
mother in her new home, calling vainly for
her dead babe, her first-born, to come back
to her empty arms, is a sight to make the
angels weep.

Little lost darling, come back to me!

Lie in my arms as you used to do!

Here is the place where your head should be:

Here on the bosom waiting for you!

Let me but feel again on my breast

The velvet touch of your tiny hand;

Your rose-leaf lips on my own close prest,

My cheek by your balmy breathings fanned.

See here; I shut tight my weary eyes,

As thousands of times I've done in play;

When I uncloseth them in soft surprise,

Ring out a laugh in your own sweet way.

Come to me, come to me, precious one!
I am so heart-sick, and sad and lorn:
Naked as nature without the sun,
Now that the light of my life is gone.

You sleep in the churchyard all alone,
No one to watch by your narrow bed;
The wind o'er your tender body blown,
And night-dews dripped on your baby head.

No! In the luminous fields above
Angels another new star have set:
They may surround you with ceaseless love,
Shield you from sorrow and sinning—yet

Heaven cannot need you so much as I!
Legions of cherubs it had before.
Baby, my baby, why did you die?
Come to your mother, my own, once more.

Little lost darling, come back to me!
Lie in my arms as you used to do!
Here is the place where your head should be:
Here on the bosom waiting for you!

Christian resignation is a lesson that even the best Christians learn only through blinding tears, through sad days and lonely nights. It is a condition into which the heart grows

slowly, as the grass and the flowers, watered by the tear-like dews of weeping nights, begin to grow upon the little graves of those whom we loved better than we love ourselves.

It is estimated that more than one half of the human race die under ten, more than one third under five, and more than one quarter under two years of age; and, according to the present population of the earth, more than seventeen hundred infants die every hour, more than forty thousand every day, and more than five millions every year. It is allowed, on the lowest computation, that there have been one hundred and forty generations since the creation; and counting only one fifth of our present population as an average for each of the past generations, at least twenty thousand millions of infants have died since the world began—"a multitude which no man can number."

Where are all these countless millions? Jesus died for them, and, through his blood, they are all in heaven with him. Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

We will not here discuss the question of infant salvation. We take it for granted. As sure as God is our Father in heaven, and as sure as justice is the pillar that supports his throne, so sure is it that all dying in infancy are gathered in the Father's house above. If children, incapable of faith or unbelief, are excluded from heaven, it cannot be a Father's house. Not Stephen, but little children were the first martyrs for the cause of Jesus. The babes of Bethlehem, slain by cruel Herod, died for Jesus' sake. Is it possible to believe that they were not saved by Jesus, who afterward died for them? It is equally impossible to believe that any infant of the race can be lost. If Jesus died for one, he died for all; and if one is saved, then all must be saved. The capacity of exercising conscious faith marks the line where infancy ceases and personal responsibility begins.

"Comfort yourself with the hope that your child is in heaven," said one to a heart-broken mother weeping over the little white coffin which contained the marble form of her darling babe. "*With the hope!*" said she, in a

tone in which were mingled surprise, indignation, and overwhelming grief. "It is not *a hope*, it is *an assurance*. I know that my child is with its Saviour in my Father's house in heaven. Hope? Why do you say *hope*? There is torture in the word. It is a slander on God, as the God of justice; to say nothing of his love and mercy. If I should not find my child in heaven, I could not stay there. God is not a Father, and heaven is not a Father's house, if its pearly gates shut out our infants." The words were not spoken in a spirit of rebellion, nor was there a touch or tinge of irreverence in them; they were forced out of her grief-smitten heart by her holy indignation toward the man who could speak of infant salvation as *a hope* instead of an *assured certainty*. In her mind there was no room to doubt that all children of Adam's race, dying in infancy, are saved through the atonement of Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of all men, except those who reject him. Infants cannot reject him, and he will not refuse them.

"Are there children in heaven?" was once asked by a mother, as her hot tears fell upon

the cold face of her dead infant lying in her arms. "Yes, myriads of them!" was the answer. "I have no doubt about the salvation of all infants; but shall I find *my* child in heaven, and find it as *mine*, and find it still *a child*? And will it know me as its mother?" Yes, weeping mother! Heaven is the grand meeting-place where all kindred and friends that know and love one another on earth shall meet and know and love again, and that for all eternity.

There the child shall find its mother,
And the mother find the child;
There the families regather
That were scattered on the wild.

"We shall go to them," and when we meet, both we and they shall be just what we were here on earth, save only that all touch and stain of sin shall have been forever taken away. There can be no meeting of persons without mutual recognition. Bodies may touch without recognition, but souls cannot so meet.

"But," says the mother, "shall I find my child *as a child*, or as a grown man?" The

child in heaven is not the developed man, but the glorified child. The language of Scripture on this point is explicit: "I saw the dead *small* and *great*"—*infants* and *adults*—"stand before God." Concerning children Jesus said, "*Of such* is the kingdom of heaven." What would heaven be without infants in it? Infancy *there*, will not be a state of feebleness, but perfected infancy—glorified childhood. This is the glorious truth that helps to reconcile us to the early death of our little ones. We shall find them perfected as children in glory—*our* children in heaven. As the boy grows up, how often does the mother say, "Oh, I wish I could keep you a child forever!" She shall find her lost child *a child* in heaven; and it shall be a *child*, and *her* child, forever.

Under the title of "Early Death" Herder gives this beautiful parable:

"Early in the morning a damsel went into the garden to gather for herself a wreath of beautiful roses. She saw before her only buds, closed and half-opened, suffused with dew, fresh and fragrant.

"'Not yet will I pluck you,' said the dam-

sel. 'I will wait till the genial sun opens your bosoms, then will ye smile in lovelier tints, and breathe a sweeter odor.'

"She came again at noon, and behold! the worm had reveled in the open roses, the sun had faded them, and they looked languid, lifeless, and pale. The maiden wept! The next morning she gathered her flowers early.

"Those children whom God loves best he gathers early out of this life, before sin smites them—before its blight touches their hearts. The paradise of children is a high stage in the heavenly blessedness. The most righteous adult cannot attain unto it, because his spirit has received deeper stains of sin."

I know that Longfellow's beautiful lines in his sweet "Hymn of Resignation" will be quoted against the view we advance. He was comforted in the assurance that he and his wife would find again their daughter who died in infancy, but says:

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when, with rapture wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,

But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace ;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion,
Shall we behold her face.

This is not our conception of the state of our children in heaven, nor does it seem to have been Longfellow's permanent conception of what little children are in paradise ; for in his song of "The Reaper and the Flowers" he says :

"My Lord hath need of the flowerets gay,"
The reaper said, and smiled ;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care ;
And saints upon their garments white
These sacred blossoms wear."

In his "Hymn of Resignation" he was thinking of his own child, picturing to himself what she would have been if she had been spared to grow up in his own home on earth—what a thing of beauty she would

have been, and how her loveliness would have graced his home—and he imagines her as such in the Father's home in heaven. The image is beautiful; but it shows that the poet, while singing so sweetly of resignation, was not himself perfectly resigned. In his poetic flight he carried the image of his earth-home into his conception of the heaven-home, and spoke rather of what his home on earth had lost—a fair maiden that would have graced it—than of what heaven had gained—a lovely infant glorified in the beauty of eternal childhood.

The Rev. Edward H. Bickersteth beautifully expresses the almost universal hope of bereaved parents, and the reasons which sustain that hope, when he says:

A babe in glory is a babe forever.
Perfect as spirits, and able to pour forth
Their glad hearts in the tongues which angels use,
These nurselings, gathered in God's nursery,
Forever grow in loveliness and love,
Yet cannot pass the limit which defines
Their being. They have never fought the fight,
Nor borne the heat and burden of the day,
Nor stagger'd underneath the weary cross;

Conceived in sin, they sinn'd not; though they
died,

They never shudder'd with the fear of death;
These things they know not, and can never know.

Yet, fallen children of a fallen race,

And early to transgression, like the rest,

Sure victims; they were bought with Jesus' blood,

And cleansed by Jesus' Spirit, and redeemed

By his Omnipotent arm from death and hell;

A link betwixt mankind and angelhood:

As born of woman, sharers with all saints

In that great ransom paid upon the cross;

In purity and inexperience

Of guilt, akin to angels. Infancy

Is one thing, manhood one. And babes, though
stones

Of the true archetypal house of God

Built on the heavenly Zion, are not now,

Nor will be ever, massive rocks rough-hewn,

Or ponderous cornerstones, or fluted shafts

Of columns, or far-shadowing pinnacles;

But rather as delicate lily-work

By Hiram wrought for Solomon of old,

Enwreathed upon the brazen chapiters,

Or flowers of lilies round the molten sea.

Innumerable flowers that bloom and blush

In heaven. Nor reckon God's design in them

Frustrate, or shorn of full accomplishment.

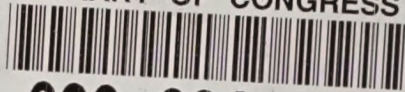
The lily is as perfect as the oak ;
The myrtle is as fragrant as the palm ;
And Sharon's roses are as beautiful
As Lebanon's majestic cedar-crown.

These lines are true and beautiful, but, by reason of the abundant comparisons with which they close, they leave a sense of chill upon the heart. Are our children in heaven nothing more than the beautiful lily-work ornaments that adorn the temple? This is not what the poet meant. They live, and contribute to, and share in, all the pleasures of the immortal life of the skies. They are in heaven as children, our children, and finding them shall be a part of our heavenly joy—a joy which they shall share. Heaven is their home, and shall be ours, and in that home parents and children shall meet and rejoice together in endless and cloudless delight.

This the same author beautifully teaches in the story of heavenly things which the guardian angel tells to a child that it is bearing from its mother's bosom to its Saviour's arms :

There joy without measure,
 There day without night ;
And rivers of pleasure
 Shall break on thy sight ;
There are gold paths transparent,
 And gateways of pearl ;
There the babe and the parent,
 The boy and the girl,
With angels are walking
 And plucking the fruit,
And singing or talking
 To sound of the lute.
No shadow can darken
 Their blessed employ ;
Hush, baby, and hearken
 To sound of their joy.
See, the Lord of the garden
 Our coming awaits.

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