

## FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

## A HARVEST HYMN.

"While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest . . . shall not cease."—Exodus viii. 22.

O, God, Thy wondrous bounty  
Shall be our song to-day;  
Met here within Thy temple,  
Where we Thy gifts display.  
We own Thee as their Giver,  
Ne'er can Thy promise fail,  
Fulfil'd again this Harvest:  
Thy Name we gladly hail.

From seedtime until Harvest  
We watch'd Thy ord'ring hand;  
The blade, the ear, the full corn,  
In due rotation plann'd.  
As sure as to the winter  
Succeeds the summer sun,  
So harvest after seed time,  
For so Thy Word doth run.

And to that other Harvest  
Our thoughts this day direct:  
When fruits of Holy living  
Thou'lt seek in Thine elect;  
For then the angel reapers  
Shall reap wherever sown  
And death, the sea, and Hades,  
Shall yield the dead they own.

Be prais'd then, Heav'nly Father,  
For Thy providing care;  
And teach us all at seed time  
To trust Thy promise clear.  
O, grant we may not weary  
In sowing seeds of love;  
So shall we reap in due time  
A home of rest above.

Sept. 19, 1889.

ANDREW P. MITCHELL.

## Daddy's Boy.

(By L. T. MEADE.)

## CHAPTER XXVII. (Continued.)

In the meantime Major Frere was beginning to repent of his promise; the day was turning out rather damp and his rheumatic pains, certain thermometers with him, began to assert themselves. At a quarter to twelve he looked up anxiously at the clock. Yes, it would be nothing short of madness for him to stand in that damp copse for an hour or two. On such a day he ought not to venture out at all. Yes, yes, there was no help for it; he must disappoint the little chap, and tell him that there could be no shooting to-day. He hobbled across the room and rang the bell sharply.

"Send Sir Ronald to me at once," he said to the servant when he appeared. The man withdrew, but came back in the course of a few moments to say that Sir Ronald was not to be seen anywhere in the house.

"Just like the impatient little chap, he has gone," grumbled the Major. "Now for it. I'll catch my death of cold to a certainty," and he began to fasten on his warm military cloak.

"Now, Ben, what are you doing?" said his wife, who at this instant came hastily into the room. "Why, my dear Ben, you are surely not thinking of going out?"

"Well—well—I thought I might venture on a little stroll," grumbled the Major. "The sun will be out presently, my dear."

"The sun? Fiddlesticks!" responded the good lady. "Why, there's a mist coming across the hills at this moment. Take off your cloak at once, Ben, and sit down quietly by the fire. I have just ordered your beef tea to be sent in."

The Major walked over to the window and looked out. Yes, certainly the day was grey and cheerless, and Eleanor was right, a mist was coming on. Oh, it would be madness for

him to venture into that copse; and then, how cosy the fire looked, and his arm chair, and there was a long letter from the war correspondent in the *Times*; and last, but not least, that bowl of beef tea would be quite to his taste. Yes, it would be a great disappointment to Ronnie, but no harm could happen to him as his gun was not loaded. The Major had taken care to leave no ammunition in his way, and it never entered into his wildest dreams that Ronald had provided himself with a little private store of ordinary powder and shot.—Yes, the boy would wait for him for about an hour, and then come home a good deal dispirited, he feared, but the Major would soon cheer him up with some war stories. He was a dear little chap certainly, and the Major did not like to vex or disappoint him, but it was no joke standing out in the damp copse with rheumatic pains flying about you. So the good old gentleman, who meant no harm, only he was a little selfish, and did not think quite as much of a promise as Ronald had done, returned to the fire and easy chair and drank up the soup with great enjoyment.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ronald leaned against a tree, laid his small fowling piece tenderly by his side, and waited with considerable patience until he heard the distant stable clock strike twelve.—The moment he heard this sound he looked down the path by which Uncle Ben would appear. Not seeing him approaching in this or any other direction, he began to busy his active brain at once with all kinds of conjectures.

"He hasn't used his rifle for some years, and he found it a little rusty, and he had to polish it up," he said to himself. "Uncle Ben was a crack shot in his day, of course he was, soldiers always are. He has not used his gun for several years. Poor fellow, he couldn't, his wounds would not let him. I daresay he's a good deal excited this morning at the prospect. The sight of firearms, or the mere touch of powder and shot must be like the scent of the battle to a war horse. Oh, he is a long time coming; but I shouldn't be surprised if memory was too much for him.—Or, perhaps, oh, perhaps, he is putting on his regimentals too—oh, how lovely that will be. I shall be the drummer boy and he the general, and we can invent a sham battle on the spot. Oh, dear! oh, dear! why does he not come?"

The first quarter struck from the clock in the distance, and Ronald grew more and more fidgety. He ceased to speculate now about Uncle Ben and turned his attention to himself.

"How splendid I feel in my uniform! there's no color like red; and how lovely this trumpet looks! and don't I just long to blow a pealing blast! I mustn't, for Uncle Ben said that our shooting was to be quite a private affair. This is a dear little drum too; but I wonder if it is quite the right sort; I suppose it is. Now suppose that this was a real little drum that had been in Waterloo and could speak, what stories it could tell me. But after all I don't want the drum to speak, for my own head is quite full of Waterloo. I've only to shut my eyes and I can see the whole of the grand fight. On they come. Well done, Frenchmen, though you are our enemies, you are brave and I respect you. Here we are in the thick of the conflict. Isn't the booming of the cannons cheering? Hurrah! hurrah!—we are going to conquer you, you brave Frenchmen!—Inch by inch you've got to give in to us—isn't it fine—isn't it splendid! Yes, we have won the greatest victory in the world."

Here Ronald opened his eyes, and found himself standing alone in the cold grey damp of the winter's day; all alone with only his little toy drum and his play trumpet, and the new fowling piece which he'd never used, to keep him company. All alone, with no cries of victory in his ears, and only the sad, distant

rustle of a falling leaf or a crackling bough to break the silence. Uncle Ben was nowhere in sight, and it was now half-past twelve.

He became very impatient, and paced up and down and chatted inwardly. No amount of thinking about Uncle Ben's past deeds of prowess, no amount of imagining himself in the din and glory of Waterloo could keep up his spirits now. He began to feel cold and hungry, and sorely, sorely puzzled.

"I do hope no accident has happened to Uncle Ben," he murmured anxiously, "such a thing now as one of his wounds breaking out and bleeding afresh. Such things have happened, for Uncle Ben told me so, and I daresay he was greatly excited and tired himself very much putting on his uniform. Of course he has put on his uniform, and it has taken some time, for he has greatly lost the use of his limbs, owing to his many wounds. Oh, dear! I wish I wasn't so impatient, for, of course, Uncle Ben will come; no soldier ever broke his word; but he does put me out waiting so long, for I'm just longing to fire my gun. What a dear little gun it is, and what pains father took to choose this sweet little fowling piece! He had it made on purpose so that it shouldn't be too large for me, and it came from London, not from Conton. It came just a week before father died, and I never fired one shot out of it, never. I told the gunsmith at Conton about my dear little gun, I mean the man who is half a gunsmith and half a maker of fireworks, and he was very sorry for me, for he knew what the passion for shooting means. He was a very sympathizing man, and I liked him immensely. He told me how to load this sort of gun, for I described it to him perfectly, and he said it was a muzzle-loader. He said he liked muzzle-loaders himself, and that rather probably had this kind of gun made for me because I could fire it off at first with only powder, and then it could do no harm. I don't believe a bit of that; I am quite perfectly sure that father meant me to do the thing properly or not at all. The poor gunsmith knew very little indeed about father, when he thought he would keep me back from a thing because there was a spice of danger in it. Father's motto was never to do things by halves. The poor gunsmith! He did not mean any harm, but it was really silly of him to suppose that father had a gun made on purpose for me which was only to be loaded with powder. Oh, how impatient I feel! I do wish Uncle Ben would come. I say, though, I know what I'll do, I'll load my gun while I am waiting. What a splendid idea, I'll put in the powder and shot and fit on the little cap, and have it all ready. I know exactly what to do, for the gunsmith was very good natured, and showed me how to load from the muzzle properly, and not just with stupid powder. Now this will keep me nice and busy while I am waiting for Uncle Ben, and then we'll be all ready to begin our many sport when he does come."

Ronald accordingly, all fire and life and movement, again commenced operations. He threw off his drummer's cap in his eagerness, and tumbled out of his pocket his two packets, the one containing powder, the other shot. He had also provided himself with a little cotton wool and some caps, and he began carefully and very neatly to follow out the directions he had received a couple of weeks ago from the gunsmith at Conton. The little gun was certainly never meant for so heavy a charge, but that did not matter at all to poor little Ronald. He poured in the powder and rammed it tightly down, and then he laid a piece of cotton wool over it, and finally put in plenty of shot. The small gun was dangerously overloaded, but Ronald, of course, knew nothing of this. He succeeded in fitting on the cap, and now lay down on the grass with the destructive weapon by his side. He had been strangely excited and his little fingers had trembled while he was