

THE "GOODEST" MOTHER

EVENING was falling cold and dark,  
 And people hurried along the way  
 As if they were longing soon to mark  
 Their own home-candle's cheering ray.  
 Before me toiled in the whirling wind  
 A woman with bundles great and small,  
 And after her tugged, a step behind,  
 The bundle she loved the best of all.  
 A dear little roly-poly boy,  
 With rosy cheeks and jacket blue,  
 Laughing and chattering, full of joy,  
 And here's what he said—I tell you true:  
 "You're the goodest mother that ever was;  
 A voice as clear as a forest-bird's;  
 And I'm sure the glad young heart had cause  
 To utter the sweet and loving words.

Perhaps the woman had worked all day  
 Washing or scrubbing; perhaps she sowed;  
 I knew by her weary footfall's way  
 That life for her was an uphill road.

But here was a comfort, children dear;  
 Think what a comfort you might give  
 To the very best friend you can have here,  
 The mother dear in whose house you live,

If once in a while you'd stop and say,  
 In task or play, for a moment's pause,  
 And tell her, in a sweet and winning way,  
 "You're the goodest mother that ever  
 was."

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

THE BOY WHO MEANT WHAT HIS PRAYER SAID.

"MAMMA, can't Fred stop talking and go to sleep? I've said my prayer six times now, and I don't want to talk any more, and have to say it again."

"Can't you talk without having to say your prayer over again?" replied Eddie's mamma.

"No, mamma; don't the prayer say, 'Now I lay me down to sleep?' If we lie down to sleep we don't talk, do we?"

"No, Eddie, you are right, and quite a philosopher for a six-year-old boy. Now, Fred, you must let Eddie go to sleep, and you may do the same."

Such was the conversation between Eddie Morgan and his mother, one night after Fred and Eddie had been some time in bed. This was but one instance of Eddie's strict conscientiousness. Some would have called him over-scrupulous, but I marked the character of the boy, and said to myself, "If that boy lives to grow up, he will make a trustworthy man."

If grown-up Christians, as well as little

children, meant just what they said every time, there would be more men of whom the Lord could say, as he said of King David—"He is a man after mine own heart."

Little children, let your words speak just what you mean in your heart. Alas! too many people pray without meaning just what they say, but God says, "I desire truth in the inward parts," and by this he means truth in the heart. He looks right into our hearts, and sees whether truth lives there or not.

"I WAS GOING TO."

CHILDREN are very fond of saying, "I was going to." The boy lets the rats catch his chickens. He was going to fill up the hole with glass, and to set traps for the rats; but he did not do it in time, and the chickens were eaten. He consoles himself for the loss and excuses his carelessness by saying, "I was going to attend to that." The owner was going to fix that weak point, and so excuses himself. A boy wets his feet and sits without changing his shoes, catches a severe cold, and is obliged to have the doctor for a week. His mother told him to change his wet shoes when he came in, and he was going to do it, but did not. A girl tears her dress so badly that all her mending cannot make it look well again. There was a little rent before, and she was going to mend it, but forgot it. And so we might go on giving instance after instance, such as happen in every home with every man and woman, boy and girl. "Procrastination is" not only "the thief of time," but the worker of vast mischiefs. If a Mister "I-was-going-to" lives in your house, just give him warning to leave. He is a loungeur and a nuisance. He has wrought unnumbered mischiefs. The boy or girl who begins to live with him will have a very unhappy time of it, and life will not be successful. Put Mister "I-was-going-to" out of your house, and keep him out. Always do things which you were going to do, provided they are right.

WHICH IS THE WORSE?

A LITTLE girl came in her night clothes very early one morning to her mother, saying:

"Which is the worse, mamma, to tell a lie, or to steal?"

The mother, taken by surprise, replied that both were so bad that she couldn't tell which was the worse.

"Well," said the little one, "I've been thinking a good deal about it, and I think that it's worse to lie than to steal. If you steal a thing, you can take it back, unless you've eaten it; and if you have eaten it

you can pay for it. But"—and there was a look of awe in the little face—"a lie is forever."

THE PET OF THE FAMILY.

(See next page.)

AN interesting ceremony is taking place outside a happy country home. The pet lamb of the family is holding a reception, no less, and right proud it is of the honour and love bestowed upon it. But how can a poor dumb animal be sensible of the high place it holds in the hearts of Mrs. Holland's children? Very easily, for, while written in heaven, the law of kindness in this world is understood and appreciated more by deeds than by words. Hence, in their own way, God's inferior creatures can feel, and love, and be grateful, though they cannot talk, and deceive, and make gingerbread promises, like certain pretending Christians, who have minds and souls and the Divine Book to guide them.

And just as at royal and fashionable receptions great folks appear decorated with stars and ribbons, so does our pet lamb come into the yard with a wreath of flowers around its neck, to show that it is a pet. Then mother stoops to let Bobbie put his little fat hand on his nose, and sister Ann looks on with as much attention as if her brother was being presented at Court. It is a pleasant scene, and even now, though she might not know it, Mrs. Holland is fulfilling a good mother's work. She is teaching her darling little ones how to be gentle and kind to one another, and is educating their hearts more than their heads. Boys, and girls too, often behave very cruelly to dumb animals; but if mothers made use of all their opportunities for nipping such feelings in the bud, there would probably be less inhumanity exhibited by grown up people. In truth, there is more real learning and wisdom in these early lessons of love than may appear at the time they are being taught, and that is why we entertain such a tender regard for the pet lamb.

SMALL AND GREAT.

KATY WELLER thought she would like to do some grand thing, like her story people did. To be sure, little girls hadn't much chance to be great, but after a while it would be easy. How glad she would be when there was some great, good thing for her to do. Just then mamma came out and asked her to do an errand for her. Oh, such an ugly frown came out, because a little girl had to leave her story. You would hardly have thought it was Katy that looked so cross. If she is not willing to do little things, how do you suppose she can do the great things when they come?