

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

## FREDDIE'S QUESTION.

"PLEASE, father, tell me what *exquisite* means?" said Freddie to Mr. Trueman one morning as he was busily engaged in brushing his overcoat.

"I am busy now, my son, but will tell you this evening," replied Mr. Trueman.

"Can't you please tell me now, sir?" inquired the child.

"I have already staid longer than I should have done playing with you and Katy; besides, I have often told you never to interrupt me when I was busy. I can't do two things at once."

Off Freddie ran to obtain the desired information from his mother.

"Mother, can *you* tell me what *exquisite* is? but I see you are just as busy as father, and cannot do two things at once either."

"O yes I can; I am never too much engaged to answer my little boy's questions. Exquisite is something very superior, very fine and excellent; but where did you hear that word, my dear?"

"I heard Mrs. Drew say that you were a woman of exquisite taste and refinement, and I did not know whether it meant good or bad. And she said something about father too, but it did not mean either superior, fine, or excellent, and I am quite sure it was not true, because I know that father is neither selfish nor cold-hearted; he is a real generous man. The other day he brought home some venison and grouse, and said both were for you as you were so fond of them; and when you asked how long before salmon would be in season, he replied he would look out for that, as you should have some of the first that came into market. My balls, rocking-horse, and parlour-skates all go to prove that father isn't cold-hearted or selfish. Is he, mother?"

"Not quite so fast, Freddie! I have tried to stop you more than once, but you have been so intent on trying to convince me that your father is not selfish you have paid no attention to me when I told you to speak more slowly. I think you have misunderstood Mrs. Drew. She and your father have always been good friends. They were schoolmates, and acquainted long before I knew either of them."

"That's just so, mother, for she said father was stingy and close when at school, that he always made a hard bargain and got the best of others, and that last week he got the upper hand of Mr. Drew in a lot of goods he sold him, as they were not what father represented them, they were nearly all damaged, and that he was a downright cheat, and only father was in such a hurry to go to the store this morning I should have told him every word of it."

"I am very glad you had not the opportunity to do so, Freddie. You should never repeat anything that is likely to make mischief; but there is still some great mistake in all this. Your father is remarkable for his plain and candid dealings. Tell me, Fred, how you came to hear all this?"

"I was sitting in the recess in the dining-room with Morgan, reading one of his new books, when his mother, aunt, and cousin came in and sat near the register. They spoke very loud, very fast, and all at the same time. They stayed only a little while, and then they left the room and went out together. The large side-board hid us so that they could not see us, and Morgan motioned to me to keep very still, and whispered, 'It will be fun to hear what big folks talk about.'"

"O, Freddie, dear child, how very wrong you acted. You have been guilty of the mean and contemptible act of listening, and by so doing have heard what was never intended you should know, and you kept yourself concealed for the purpose of stealing your information. I am grieved more than I can find words to express. What did Morgan say about it?"

"He made me promise not to tell any one we were in the recess, as his mother would be very an-



gry if she knew he had his handsome books out of the book-case."

Mrs. Trueman was perplexed as to what course she should take. She went to her room, and in less than an hour called Freddie to her and forbade his repeating what he had told her. Accustomed to render unqualified obedience to his parents' commands, he was never allowed to question why he was to do this or abstain from that. It was enough for him to know father desires it, or mother wishes or says so.

Scarcely had the clock struck six when Mr. Trueman's step was heard in the hall. Freddie, who was generally privileged to be in the room during dinner-time, ran to his father, and, pointing to a small parcel, said, "Father, is there anything in this for Katy or me?"

"No, my boy; that belongs to mother. She will after dinner dispose of its contents, and now that I have time to talk to you, let me answer your question of this morning. Exquisite means elegant, superfine, superior, or A No. 1."

"Thank you, father; but as I was in a hurry and did not care to wait till evening, I asked mother and she told me."

Freddie's thoughts were still on the parcel, and so soon as the cloth was removed he placed it in his mother's hands, saying, "Open it, mother, if you please."

Mrs. Trueman relieved Fred's curiosity and brought to light a box of under-sleeves with collars to match. Mr. Trueman replied to her inquiring look by saying, "I had a case of fine work forwarded to me from Paris, and supposing them to be perfect, sold a package to our friend Drew. On opening and examining the goods, he found they were damaged. I, of course, took them back. It is probable the house from which I got them may make it right; but, be that as it may, I cannot allow him to suffer loss in the purchase of damaged goods from me. Some of the articles are perfect, some again are slightly damaged, while a few are not saleable."

Nothing more was said on the subject just then, but Freddie's bed-hour having arrived, he kissed his father good-night with more than usual warmth. When alone with his mother he said:

"Dear darling mother, I wish I had as much sense as you have. I am so glad I did not tell father about Mrs. Drew! He is a noble man, and is neither mean nor stingy. I hope I may be just like him."

"I hope so, my son; and you will, if you live, be an honest, upright man, fulfilling in your intercourse with the world your Saviour's injunction: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.'"

R.

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.

## A FUNNY JACKDAW.

It is somewhat remarkable that a bird should be an object of general interest in a town. Yet such is the fact with a jackdaw belonging to Mr. William Thompson. As you walk along the streets you may often see "Jack" dart suddenly from the eaves of a house and alight on the head of a boy, and there, perched at ease, call out "Jack," as if to proclaim the familiar terms existing between him and his acquaintance. Sometimes he will retain his prominent position while the boy walks a mile or more on his errands; "Jack" will then take his flight homeward, to renew his acquaintance with some other familiar friend! He is, however, exceedingly mischievous, as he often pays visits to his master's offices, and there plays all sorts of pranks with the clerks. One of them will call out "Jack" as soon as he hears the bird enter, and "Jack" returns the salutation with an utterance equally clear, and proceeds from one desk to another exchanging the same compliment with the entire staff! Then he will take his stand where he can survey the whole operations, and when tired he will terminate his call by flying off with a penholder or anything else that he can easily seize! "Jack" is very fond of money, and will carry away gold or silver coins if they are left in his way. He is very fond of little children, but sometimes manifests his affection for them in a way they do not relish, for he will peck away at their ankles and feet most perseveringly, especially if their boots and shoes are very bright! One Monday in May last a troop of the Scotch Grays were prepared to leave the town for the south. "Jack" was seen perched on a boy's arm in the crowd, most curiously watching the movements of the men and horses! When the advance guard started "Jack" flew before them, as much as to say, "Follow your leader!"

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## A CHILD'S IDEA.

As we were returning home one evening not long since, after making a pastoral visit, our little Ollie, who was sitting in the front of the carriage looking very earnestly at the large dipper in the North, remarked:

"Pa, I 'spose our Father up in heaven drinks out of that big dipper every night before he goes to bed, don't he?"

[Ollie will be wiser when he is older. Then he will learn that "our Father up in heaven" never sleeps, eats, or drinks. God is a spirit.—ED.]

I WILL keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

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