

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE EASTER PROMISE

"Because I live ye shall live also."—*Motto on Easter card.*

O BLESSED Word of Promise sweet,
Which comes the drooping heart to greet,
This hallow'd Easter morn;
"Because I live ye too shall live,—
For life is Mine, and life I give
To all of Adam born:

"To all of Adam born, who strive
The love of God to keep alive
Within the human breast;
Who turn away from sin and shame,
And magnify God's Holy Name,
And seek His promised rest."

O Jesu! to Whose sepulchre
Love brought her spices and her myrrh,
But found an empty cave; *
Grant that when I my offering bring,
I may behold my risen King,
Triumphant o'er the grave. †

This cold sepulchral heart of mine
Unseal, and fill with life Divine,
The promised life, O give! I
Since Thou hast risen, bid me rise,
And, in the mansions of the skies,
With Thee for ever live.

J. FARMER.

Easter Day 1889

* Luke xxiv. 1 3. † John xx 16 18.

DADDY'S BOY.

(By L. T. MEADE.)

CHAPTER I.

Pussy was seriously unwell. He knew this fact perfectly, for Daddy had so often told him him that when pussies and doggies were in health the tips of their noses were cold, and this poor pussy's nose was very hot indeed. He knew that this was so, for he touched it many times with his soft little fingers. Pussy also at intervals coughed violently, and when she coughed it seemed to Ronald that she must die, so terrible and appalling were the exertions she made; her eyes, too, instead of looking very round and very bright, were dull and half closed.

There was no doubt at all that pussy was ill; so he resolved to sit by her and nurse her. He could have had a glorious game of play in the garden if he had preferred it, for Guy and Walter were both there, and Mary would come into the garden presently, which would be a great inducement, as he looked up so much to Mary, and thought her so beautiful.

He had some new colored marbles in his pocket, too, and Violet would have enjoyed a game with these marbles, and he could have taught her a new way of playing with them which she really ought to know; and he might further have induced spirited little Violet to consider the fact, that girls must be taught to know their own places, and not be too masterful and encroaching. He could have had his game of play with Violet, and then afterwards have the dear delight and honor of handing a cricket bat with Guy, who liked him and called him a plucky little chap; but somehow he preferred to sit in the cool barn by pussy's side, and stroke her head right down to the tip of her tail, and then from her tail to the point of her nose. He liked to sit here in the dark, and he hoped sincerely no one would find him, for the poor, sick pussy reminded him of Daddy.

The darkened barn, through which the summer light only came in little chinks and sharp

lines of brightness, brought back vividly to Ronald's memory a scene in Daddy's life. It was a short scene, but impressive and not easily to be forgotten.

Daddy who had never known a day's illness, who could handle a gun and land a salmon better than any other gentleman in the country, whom Ronald had always known as the brightest and most cheery and delightful of human beings, who had taken him to ride on his shoulder, who had taught him to climb trees, and to manage his Shetland pony, and who had even begun to give him his first delightful lessons in cricket, had suddenly, like poor pussy, become ill. Ronald did not know how it happened, there was something said about a gun and about an accident, and there was a great tumult and excitement in the house, and more than one doctor came in his carriage and stayed for an hour and went away.

Ronald curled himself up one day with his face pressed against the landing window, and counted three doctors' carriages. He could not make out what it all meant, nor why his joyous and bright young father should suddenly have become ill.

"It was not a bit Daddy's way," Ronald said to himself. Daddy never had colds like Mrs. Benson, the housekeeper, nor pains in his joints, nor any of those tiresome, disagreeable things which Ronald considered the reverse of manly. He certainly could not understand it, and he wished very much to go to Daddy's room and ask him what it was all about.

It was just after the third doctor's carriage had driven away, that Ronald made up his mind to follow this impulse.

He jumped down off the window ledge, where he had been kneeling for so long, and ran along the passage and down the wide stairs of the large house, until he reached father's room. The sun from a western window shone directly on the little fellow, as, with his golden curls all crumpled up, and his velveteen suit in a very dusty and dishevelled condition, he tried to turn the handle of the door which led to father's room.

The room inside was darkened, with just little rays of light darting in here and there. One of these rays of sunlight lay across the portrait of a girl in a white dress which hung just over the mantelpiece.

Ronald never passed this picture without glancing at it; and saying softly under his breath, "Mother."—He was quite glad now, when he came into this dark room, to see that the sun was kissing the sweet pictured face of his young dead mother, who had gone away to God so long ago.

Ronald gave a quick little answering smile to the smiling eyes which looked down at him. He had always a great many thoughts about mother, and he considered it his duty to smile at her picture, and to assure her by many little nods and intelligent glances that he and Daddy never forgot her. He nodded and smiled to her now, and then went rapidly round to the side of the great bed where Daddy was lying.

The trained nurse was not in the room at this moment, and Ronald raised himself on tip toe and gazed anxiously at the face he knew and loved. Daddy certainly was greatly changed—the bronze on his cheeks had given place to pallor, and there was another look which made the little anxious child's face pucker up with a queer wonder and dread.

"Dad," whispered Ronald, in a low, half-whisper, "don't stir if you are asleep, and if you are resting; but if you are not asleep, just open your eyes for a minute."

The blue eyes which Ronald knew so well, and which were still blue and unchanged, instantly opened wide and fixed themselves with a hungry intensity on the boy.

"Ah, Ronnie," said the old voice, a little weakened, certainly, but that did not matter at all, Ronald thought. "Ah, Ronnie, so you have found me out."

"Yes, father. I'm rather messy and dirty, I know, but I couldn't wait after that third doctor's carriage bowled away. I want to know what it all means, so may I climb up on your bed and will you tell me?"

"Just the same pickle as ever," said Daddy, with a smile in his eyes. "You may sit on my bed if you like, little man, I want to see you; and you may ask me anything you please."

Ronald instantly availed himself of this permission, and seated himself on the bed with a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"Now, Dad," he began, "how many more doctors are coming?—You've had three already to-day. I don't mind, really, how many come, if they will only make you well as quickly as possible. How long do you really expect to be ill, Dad?"

"Not long at all, my boy; it is my own belief that I shall be quite well by the time the stars come out to-night."

"These are moonlight nights," said Ronald, "and there will be heaps of stars, only the worst of it is, I'm generally sleepy when the stars come out. Still, that isn't long to be ill, is it, father? I'm glad the doctors have done you so much good; Mrs. Benson never gets rid of her colds so quickly. She is generally in bed for a week at least, and you will only have been in bed for two days and a half, Daddy. If you get up to-night, when the stars come out, you will have been in bed just two days and a half."

The white face on the pillow smiled, and the blue eyes looked full at Ronald.

"You see, Ron," said the voice, which would still keep so weak, "I never was like Mrs. Benson; I never would go in for colds; I didn't approve of them."

"I'm glad it wasn't a cold," said Ronald, nodding his head. "I don't think it's manly to be ill with colds; 'twas a gun, wasn't it, father?"

"Yes, boy, poor, silly, unfortunate gun, which mistook me for a partridge."

"How tiresome!" said Ronald, packing his brow. "Well, you weren't so much hurt as partridge, because the partridge gets killed."

"Sometimes wounded first," said his father, in a weaker voice than ever.

There was a little silence, and the shining rays of sunlight crept across the room.

The sick man closed his eyes, but not for long; each moment they opened wide and fixed themselves on the boy, who gazed at him placidly.

"Tell me what you did to-day Ronald," said Daddy, presently.

Ronald became wide awake and excited.

"What I did all day long?" he inquired.

"Yes, everything."

"Bath first," began the boy, counting on his fingers; "two plunges and my hair well wet. I didn't mind when Dorothy scrubbed it. Then breakfast, two plates of porridge, two slices and a half of bread and butter; I was hungry; then a quarter of a slice of bread and jam, and a spoonful of marmalade from Dorothy, because you weren't there to have breakfast with me. Then I went out and dug in my garden; there were two fat worms, and the seeds are coming up where we planted them, and I pulled away some weeds; then a canter on Bob, then I came in, and I couldn't find Dorothy, and I went to the laundry and watched Susan.—Susan gave me one of your pocket handkerchiefs to iron, and I ironed it well, only I blistered my finger, but that doesn't matter. Dad, will you buy a little iron for me to have for my very own to-morrow, when you are quiet well again? How far have I got? oh, to my fourth finger. My fourth finger means dinner, soup and fish and pudding. The pudding was dumplings. Then my fifth finger, that's the doctors; three doctors in three carriages. I was so tired watching them."

At this moment the hired nurse and Mrs. Benson both came into the room.