

# HAPPY DAYS

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## THE SECRET.

What a quaint, pretty room our picture shows us; everything in it speaks of comfort and happiness, especially old Puss and her kitten, who seem to be enjoying themselves very much, each after its own fashion. But both grandmother and Minnie have forgotten either cat or kitten, and grandmother's ball of yarn makes a nice plaything for the little kit in the meantime, for Minnie has a secret which she is whispering into grandmother's ear, and neither are thinking of anything else just now. What do you suppose Minnie's secret is? Nothing wrong about that secret, I know, or it would never be confided to good old grandmother, nor would the old lady's face wear the pleasant smile it does now. I shouldn't wonder if some one in that family were to be pleasantly surprised before long but no one will know anything about it in the meantime but Minnie and grandmother.

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## TOM'S OFFERING.

There was a loud knock heard upon the door; and it was the very door, too, upon which a piece of black crape fluttered.

The ladies within the house were a little startled, for it was an unusual occurrence for any one to knock upon the front door. There was a bell in plain sight, and it was customary for people to ring it very softly when the sign of death was placed so very near it. Indeed it seemed almost irreverent for any one to knock in that way upon the door, while little Annie, the household



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idol, was lying still and cold in the room close to the door.

"Some tramp, I guess," one of the ladies said. "I will tell him to go to the back door," she added, going toward the place where the knock was heard. To her surprise she found a little ragged boy standing there, with a few wild flowers in his hand.

"Are you Annie's mother?" he asked, in an eager voice.

"No," the lady answered, and then she asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Tom Brady, and I want to see her," he answered quickly.

The lady hesitated, and was about to say to him that Annie's mother was in deep affliction and could not see him, when the lady in question came to the door herself.

"What do you want little boy?" she asked, kindly.

"Are you her?" asked the little fellow, with tears in his eyes. "I mean, be you Annie's mother?" he explained.

"Yes," was the low answer.

"Well, I heard that she died, and I brought these flowers to put upon her coffin," he said, while the tears came larger and brighter into his eyes.

"What made you bring them, little boy?" the mother asked, while the tears came into her own eyes.

"Cause she always said 'Good mornin'' to me when she passed our house upon her way to school and she never called me Ragged Tom, like other girls. She gave me this cap and coat, and they were good and whole when she gave them to me; and then,

when our little Joan died, she brought us a bunch of flowers to put on his coffin, and some to hold in his hands. It was winter then, and I don't know where she got the flowers. They looked very pretty in Jean's hand, and he did not look dead after that. He was dead, though, and we buried him down among the apple-trees. I could not get such pretty flowers as she brought to us; but I went all over the big mountain yonder, and only found these few. You