

BEDTIME.

In the fold and in the nest
Birds and lambs are gone to rest,
Labour's weary task is o'er;
Cheerily shut the cottage door.

Saviour ere in sweet repose
We our weary eyelids close;
While our mother through the gloom
Singeth from the outer room;

While across the curtain white,
With a dim, uncertain light,
On the floor the faint stars shine,—
Let our latest thoughts be thine.

If our slumbers broken be,
Waking let us think of thee;
Darkness cannot make us fear,
If we feel that thou art near.

Happy now we turn to sleep:
Thou wilt watch around us keep.
Him no danger o'er can harm,
Who lies cradled on thine arm.

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HOW BERTIE HELPED MAMMA.

It was the day before Thanksgiving, and mamma was very busy. Worse than all, baby was cross. Somehow, when mammas are especially busy and hurried, babies and little folk have a way of getting unusually cross and troublesome.

"Oh, dear!" sighed mamma, "I don't see how I can get anything ready for to-morrow with Florrie so fretful. I can't have her under my feet all the time, and I can't sit down and rock her."

"Give Florrie to me, mamma. Maybe I can amuse her a little while," said Bertie.

"Come, baby, see what brother Bertie is going to do," he said to Florrie, leading

her into the next room and shutting the door.

Florrie was just going to cry when she saw the door close after her mamma, but Bertie snatched up the white sheepskin rug and threw it into the big rocking-chair.

"See, baby!" he exclaimed. "We're going sleigh-riding in this big chair. This is the robe, and I'll tuck you in so warm that Jack Frost, bad old fellow, can't catch your little toes. I'll be the horse, and we'll have such fun."

Bertie danced about so, and acted so quickly, that baby found herself in the chair, and laughing too, before she knew it.

Bertie found some new amusement as soon as Florrie showed signs of getting tired of the old one. At last the sun came out brightly, and Bertie put on the baby's wraps and took her out for an hour's ride in her sleigh, and brought her in rosy and merry, with her fretfulness quite gone for the day.

When all the cousins and aunts and uncles sat at the table the next day, and praised mamma's good dinner, she said: "You must praise Bertie, too, for he helped me cook it." Bertie looked surprised, and mamma added, laughing, "Yes, you did, my boy. I couldn't have done it if you hadn't kept little sister happy for three hours. One of the things I am thankful for to-day is my dear, kind, helpful little boy."

WRITING TO PAPA.

"I'm goin' to write to papa my own self," said little Robbie Ray.

Mamma was writing a letter to papa, and had asked her little boy if should tell papa anything for him, and this was his answer.

Mamma laughed, and gave Robbie a piece of paper and a pencil. "What are you going to say to papa?"

"Just secrets," answered the little fellow.

"And can't poor mamma know?"

Robbie looked at her a while, and then said, "Well, I'll tell you, but you mustn't tell. I'm going to say, 'My papa, I send you a kiss. My horsie is all broked, and I want some more horsie that has got a tail that isn't off. And it must go. I want an engine too. I guess that's 'nuff for now. Come home. I love you.'"

Mamma wrote something in her letter, while Robbie worked away at his. By-and-bye he brought it to her, and said:

"Now put it in the envelope, please."

"May I read it, Robbie?"

"Yes, if you want to, very bad."

Mamma gravely opened it, and—well, could you read crooked circles, criss-crosses, and all sorts of queer marks, and not even a big A for a letter?

Mamma didn't laugh, at least not while Robbie was looking, but folded the letter with hers, sealed it and mailed it.

Papa came home in a few days; and Robbie ran up to him eagerly, and asked:

"Did you get my letter, papa? I wrote it all myself."

"Yes, indeed, I did. And here is your horse: and here is your engine."

How do you suppose papa ever knew what those funny marks meant? I think mamma could tell you.

CHILDHOOD.

BY H. S.

DREAM were the world without a child,
Where happy infant never smiled,

Nor stirred a mother's love!
We sooner could the flowerets spare,
The tender bud and blossom fair,
Or breath of springtime in the air,
Or light of dawn above.

O little king, O little queen,
You rule not with the golden sheen
And pomp of larger courts;
But sovereign is your gentle sway,
Strong hearts a willing homage pay.
Love scatters garlands on the way
When your young life disports.

Now tearful as an April day,
Now radiant as the blooming May,
Or blithe as birds in June
That thrill us with their "woodnotes wild,
The world were drear if never child
The busy thoughts of man beguiled,
Or set his heart in tune.

O Jesus, who our sins did bear,
Once deigning childhood's robes to wear,
Who bad'st the children come,
We pray thee in thy tender grace,
To guide them through this little space
And fit them for a perfect place,
In yon eternal home!

THE FOURTH BIRTHDAY.

I'm four years old to-day, Baby. I'm big, and you're little. I'm 'most a lady. I don't cry when I get my face washed; that's 'cause I'm big. I've got a party, and it's good. It's peaches, and grapes, and 'nanas, and cake, and ice cream. Think of that, Baby! And there's little girls coming. You can't come, 'cause you're little. You're only two years old. O Baby dear, don't cry! You shall come; and sister'll feed you some ice cream her own self, 'cause I'm big enough, now. I'm four years old to-day.

INNOCENT SUFFERERS.

No one ever bears all the burden of real or imputed wrong-doing. A father suffers scarcely less than his profligate son, and certainly feels more in many cases; a whole family withers under the blight of the lost character of one of its members, as the whole body is fevered by a local injury. When the tares are pulled up the wheat comes with them. What tears, what prayers, what sacrifices, what humiliation, does the shadow of shame wring from a household! Around dishonour there is only desolation.