

A STORY FOR MOTHERS.

"Mother," said a girl of ten summers, "I have done all the work you gave me—now may Willie and I go to Mr. Gray's?"

"I do wish you would keep out of the way, and stop teasing," replied the mother, as she gave her daughter a push, which sent her against a chair.

"Why, mama," said Willie—a bright, sturdy little fellow of five years, who had been busily engaged for the last hour trying to make a wooden knife for sister—"Why, mama, you promised we might go to-day, and now if you won't let me, it will be telling a wrong story."

"Well, *do go along*—stay an hour, and I hope I shall have some peace while you are gone!"

"Hurrah," said Willie, jumping up. "Where's my cap? Mama I can't reach it."

"I'll warrant it—always *something* to hinder me; here, take your cap and go;" and with the same impatient step and frowning brow, which had been seen all that day, she turned again to her work.

But let us follow the children as they leave the house. Sarah walks along with a sad and tearful face—her's is a peculiarly sensitive nature, and the harsh reproof so often given is sure to cast a shadow on her heart—and as Willie glances up into her face, rebellious thoughts arise, and his eyes flash indignantly as he says, in a comforting tone, "I wouldn't feel bad if mama does scold. I shall be a big man pretty soon, and then I'll talk right back to her just as she does to us, and when I get rich enough I'm going to buy a horse and carriage, and you and pa may ride with me, but mama shant, 'cause she aint good. Maybe she'll grow old sometime and come to live with me, just Grandma does to our house, and then if she talks so to us, I'll just shut her up in the dark, wouldn't you?"

Little does that mother think she is sowing seed in the young hearts which shall spring up and yield a "hundred fold" of *bitterness and sorrow*.

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Ten years have flown—let us again visit that dwelling. Where is now the gentle Sarah whom every one thought so sweet tempered? She is there, but how changed! In former years the angry reproof would only cause a flood of tears, but as day after day, and year after year, the harsh words fell upon her ear, angry feelings began to surge up, until her very nature became changed, and she has learned at last to throw back the bitter retort. Sadly

darkened must be the soul of that mother who thus wounds and crushes the heart of the sensitive, until hatred takes the place of love, and the Evil Genius presides where once Heavenly Angels loved to linger.

But we miss the brave little Willie. Where can our pet have flown? In "days of yore" his laughing eyes and sunny smile, were always the first to greet us; now we list in vain for his coming footstep. He is a wanderer—exiled by his mother's frowns and irritableness from an otherwise pleasant home.

Oh, mother! how great an influence thy words, thy tones of voice possess! Are they harsh and vituperative? Are these tender blossoms entrusted to your care made to feel they are only a trouble and a burden? Then murmur not, if—when the frost of age have whitened your locks—when your steps are slow and feeble, and all the helplessness of a second childhood is upon you—you are treated in like manner. Unloved—unhonored it may be—you will go down in sorrow to the grave.

But let us turn, kind reader, to a pleasanter scene. Go with me to the house of Mr. C—. The mother, a pleasant-looking lady, is busily engaged with her morning duties. Hardly have we entered ere the sound of little feet is heard, and Charlie rushes in. "Mama," said he, his face glowing with animation as he spoke, "George Lane has just the prettiest new sled that I ever saw—it is painted all over, and has his name in large letters on the side, and he wants I should go home with him and ride on it—may I go?"

"Yes, my son," is the pleasant reply, "if you will be back in half an hour—I shall want you then to do an errand for me. Here, let me tie your scarf around your neck—he is a good boy, and play pleasantly with Georgie," and imprinting a kiss upon his rosy lips, she turns again to her work.

But where is little Allie—the pet of the household? The mother remembers that she has not seen her for some time. "The little rogue is in some mischief, I presume, else she would not be so quiet; I must find her." After looking in various places, she softly opens the parlor door, and there sits her "little one," with pussy by her side, and in her hand a beautiful steel engraving which she had torn from one of the books that adorned the centre table. We watch with interest to note

the effect upon the mother. Shall we see her face flush with anger? Will she pass along with hasty steps—seize the engraving—box the ears of the child, (unconscious of wrong, though she be,) saying she never *did* see such a "young one," always doing *something* she ought not to?

Very many mothers would have pursued such a course. But not so with Mrs. C—. She stops at the door to listen while Allie talks on, all unconscious of the presence of another. "Kitty, aint you glad that we came in the parlor this morning, 'cause Allie's found such a nice picture for you to look at? Now, if you will keep still, I'll tell you all 'bout it.—There's a little girl just like me, only she aint quite so big, and her name is Allie, too. So there's two Allies here. You don't know, kitty, what that little girl's holding, but I do, 'cause papa told me; it's a rabbit; but I'd rasher have a kitty than a rabbit, shouldn't you, kitty?"

"Why, Allie," said her mother, advancing and speaking in a kind tone, "didn't you know it was very naughty to tear papa's book? How sorry he will feel to hear what his little girl has been doing." "Allie won't do so no more—not a bit," replied the child with a quivering lip. "Well, we will go out and see if we cannot find something better for Allie to do, than tear papa's book. Can you bring some wood for mama?" "Yes," is the quick reply, and away she bounds, her eyes sparkling at the thought of really doing something to help mama.

How it cheers the heart to enter a household where *love* reigns, and *kind words only* are spoken. Children living under such influences will grow up good and noble, for the heart will expand and its nobler qualities develop under the genial influence of *kind actions and kind words*. Mother, the echoes of your voice may linger long years in the hearts of your children. Shall they be soft, sweet echoes, seeming like angel music, winning them to the love of God and Heaven? If so, then will you be rewarded with a golden harvest. And should the kind Father—when "many years" have wrought their changes, and the eyes grow dim with watching the advent of a glorious hereafter—allow you to gaze upon a household of your matured children, they will surely call you "blessed."

Why is the last act of Hamlet peculiarly Irish? Because it begins with a funeral and ends with a fight.