

MIDGET'S LENTEN WORK.

LITTLE Midget Bayley was playing with her dolls as usual. "There, my beautiful Alice," she said, "sit up in the chair and keep your pretty dress clean, 'cause you're my Christmas dolly."

"And you are nice, too, Bella!" she added, hugging an old doll in her arms; "just as nice as Alice, my dear!"

"Hoh!" said wise Brother Ned, "I shouldn't think you would play with that old thing, now you've such a nice new doll."

"Why, Neddle Bayley! I must love my Bella, too; mustn't I, mamma?"

"Why, surely!" said mamma. "We did not throw Ned away when you came to be our baby, did we?"

"There, Neddle!" said Midget, in a satisfied tone.

Ned laughed softly. "Guess I'm worth more than that old dolly, though!" he whispered; and his mother smiled as if she thought so, too.

Midget did not hear this; she was busy with her family. But she did hear Ned's next words:

"Mamma, please tell me what Lent means. Our teacher said we must try to find out about it before to-morrow."

"Tell me, too, mamma," cried Midget, springing up. "'Lent unto the Lord'! I'll go get my book."

"O Midge, it isn't about little Samuel," cried Ned, laughing; but the little one had run off to find her Bible Picture Book. "Isn't she funny, mamma? It isn't that kind of Lent."

"No, dear. Lent, the name of the season which begins next Wednesday, means Spring, because we keep it at that time of the year."

"But what is it for, mamma? Barry Lee says we can't have any good times then."

"We do try then, dear boy, to give up some things which we like and to fast, which means to deny ourselves some good thing, because our dear Lord fasted, for our sakes, forty days and forty nights. The Church calls us at this time to stop and think, and be sorry for the sins we have done, and to pray God to forgive us, and help us to do better."

"And why do we have our mite boxes, mamma?"

"Because, dear, if we do without some things we have been used to, we have more to give to others; and when we try to draw near to God, it makes us want to do good, to show our love to Him."

Midget had come back with her book, and had listened quietly while her mamma was speaking. Now she laid the book on her lap, saying:

"Please tell me, too, mamma. Please find Samuel. Was he sorry when he was 'lent'?"

Ned tried hard not to laugh, but mamma turned to the pretty picture which her little girl wanted. It was of Hannah, the mother, bringing her little Samuel to Eli, the good priest.

"Here he is, darling. Yes, I daresay Samuel was sorry that his mother was to go away and leave him. It was hard for good Hannah, too, to leave her dear little boy and go home without him, wasn't it?"

"Yes; but she 'lent him unto the Lord,'" repeated Midget.

"So she did. She was willing to give up her boy to serve God in His holy house; and Samuel was willing to stay with Eli so he might be the Lord's child and serve Him."

"And you and papa lent Neddle and me to the Lord; didn't you, mamma?"

"Yes, we did when you were baptized; and we want you to give up all wrong things that displease our Lord, and be ready to do even hard things when He asks you to, like His faithful little servants. And when Lent comes, I hope Ned and Midget will not ask to buy sweeties, but will put their pennies into their mite boxes, to help do the work of the Lord."

"Yes, they will be 'lent unto the Lord,'" said Midget, nodding her head. "I'll get my bright new penny now!"

"She doesn't understand, does she, mamma?" whispered Ned.

"Perhaps she understands more than we think," his mother answered softly, as the little girl climbed on a chair to drop her penny into her box.

The first day of Lent came, and little Midget went to church with the rest, and sat very still, trying to understand.

What words sank into the little heart her mamma did not know, but the next day Midget came to her with a dolly clasped in each arm.

"Mamma," she said, "if I lend one of my dollies to Susy Brown will it be 'lent unto the Lord'?"

Mamma caught the little girl in her arms, dolls and all. "Do you want to lend her a dolly, Midget?" she asked.

"Well, mamma, poor Susy is so sick and tired—may I, mamma?"

"Yes, dear. Which one will you lend her?"

Midget looked from one to the other of her treasures, and her lip quivered. "I'll let Susy choose," she said. "May I take them with my sled, please?"

So mamma put on her warm little coat and cap, and watched her as she set forth on her errand, down the hill.

Susy Brown was a poor lame child who had but just come to live in the neighborhood. Midget had seen her at the window, and had