

indeed ! Pretty playthings to give a child ! Everything goes to wreck and ruin ! There !”

And as the last words were uttered, Tommy was thrust into his mother's room with a force that nearly threw him prostrate.

“ Now take off your clothes, sir.”

“ What for, mother ? I haven't done anything ! I didn't hurt the clothes-pins. Margaret said I might play with them.”

“ D'ye hear ? Take off your clothes, I say !”

“ I didn't do anything, mother.”

“ A word more, and I'll box your ears until they ring for a month. Take off them clothes, I say ! I'll teach you to come when I send for you ! I'll let you know whether I am to be minded or not !”

Tommy slowly disrobed himself, while his mother, fretted to the point of resolution, eyed him with unrelenting aspect. The jacket and trousers were removed, and his night-clothes put on in their stead, Tommy all the while protesting tearfully that he had done nothing.

“ Will you hush ?” was all the satisfaction he received for his protestations.

“ Now, Jane, take him up stairs to bed ; he's got to lie there all the afternoon.”

It was then four, and the sun did not set until near eight o'clock. Up stairs the poor child had to go, and then his mother found some quiet. Her babe slept soundly in the cradle, undisturbed by Tommy's racket, and she enjoyed a new novel to the extent of almost entirely forgetting her lonely boy shut up in the chamber above.

“ Where's Tommy ?” asked a friend, who dropped in about six o'clock.

“ In bed,” said the mother, with a sigh.

“ What's the matter ? Is he sick ?”

“ O no. I almost wish he were.”

“ What a strange wish ! Why do you wish so ?”

“ O, because he is like a little angel when he is sick—as good as he can be. I had to send him to bed as a punishment for disobedience. He is a hard child to manage. I think I never saw one just like him ; but, you know, obedience is everything. It is our duty to require a strict regard to this in our children.”