

interested in him, should not be told, even while celebrating the day of His birth, of the blessed Jesus, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me?"

Somewhat discouraged by these thoughts, I bent my steps to the house of a dear friend, who has two interesting children of four and six years of age. I found them dancing around their Christmas tree, with two visitors of their own age, whose dress of humble black showed that they were poor and orphans.

"Happy Christmas, auntie!" shouted Ralph as soon as he caught sight of me, and his little sister echoed his words, as, in fact, she always does.

"Why should Christmas be happy, Ralph?" I asked after kissing all the little ones. He opened his large dark eyes in wonder. "You know, auntie! Because the blessed Jesus was born to-day." "Yes," lisped little Grace, "and He likes all the little children to be happy, and sends them lots of nice things." But Santa Claus brings them," said Clara, the older of the little visitors. "I don't know who brings them," said Grace, thoughtfully, "'cause I was asleep when they came, and so was Ralph, but no one could bring them if God didn't give them."

"No," said Ralph, very decidedly, "because mamma says everything comes from God and belongs to Him."

"And we belong to Him, too," whispered Clara, as she slid her little hand gently in mine. "We've no mamma nor papa now, but God sends our Christmas gifts here with Ralph's and Gracie's, and I think Santa Claus must be one of His angels, and that's why he brings them."

"Wonder how Santa Claus knew where to send ours this year?" said Amy, her younger sister, who, too, had sidled up to my side.

"God knew," said Ralph. "He knows everything."

And the happy children resumed their play around the tree, singing a sweet carol.

I turned to their mother, who had been silent while the little ones talked to their old "auntie;" for so they liked to call their mothers friend. "You have done a good work, Grace," I said approvingly. "To the end of their lives these children will look upon God as the author of all good, and will teach their children to do the same; and long after you have left this world the seed you have sown will flourish, and your descendants will have cause 'to rise up and call you blessed.' It seems a small thing to do, but the results are mighty."

"Can any mother do less?" she asked, gravely. "If there is anything that mothers should do 'with all their might,' it seems to me it is to give their children clear views of God while very young. The time when they are ours alone is so short. Before we realize it they are old enough to go to school, and other influences are brought to bear upon them, and if we lose the season of infancy we shall have cause to regret it all our lives, and so will they."

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PUTTING THE BABY TO BED.

Last spring I spent a night with a friend. There were two children in the family, the youngest a bright, restless boy four years old, who might stand for the typical American child aptly defined as "a bundle of nerves." A lady and gentleman with their two children were visitors at the house, and after supper Mrs. Brown, a neighbor, left her little boy and girl in my friend's care while she went to make a call in the village.

The evening wore on. The children played hard, and little Frank's eyes opened wider and wider with the intoxication of the unusual excitement. After his bedtime was long past, his mother came into the room where her husband and I sat and asked anxiously, "What shall I do? I told Frank he could sit up until Mrs. Brown comes after her children, supposing she would be gone only a few minutes. Now, shall I break my promise to him, or risk his being cross and ill by all this excitement?"

Her husband raised his voice a little and said, "Where is Frank? I want to see him."

The child immediately left his play in the dining room and ran to his father, who lifted him in his arms and held him for a moment, then clasping him lovingly, asked, in that jovial tone of comradeship no child could resist: "Whose boy are you?"

Of course the answer came proudly, "Papa's boy."

"My boy!"—a little surprised—"are you sure?"

The child, laughingly, re-asserted his ownership.

"Well," continued his father, "my boy always does just what his mother thinks best—goes to bed just when she thinks it's time."

A pause. "Are you sure you're my boy?" Oh, yes, he was papa's boy. "Then, mamma," said this wise father, "you can undress this little fellow just as fast as you like."

The child was put into his bed in an adjoining room, whence he could hear the merry chatter of the other children and the talk of the older people, and see the bright lights.—There was no lamp in his room, but somebody lay down on the bed with him for a few minutes, when all at once he turned his face to the wall and his closing eyelids almost caught the happy laugh on his lips, as he dropped off into dreamland. I said to myself, "I will put an account of this incident where the fathers and mothers of those babies who associate

bedtime with a cyclone of sobs, tears and spankings, or a barter of candy and sugar for obedience, may read and profit by it, if they will."

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