

"I didn't take—but one single penny!" sobbed Mary. "The 'spressman came,—and mamma was gone. He was a waiting—and there wasn't but just—twenty-four cents—in the drawer."

"True's you live and breathe?" asked Guy solemnly.

"True as—true!" said Mary.

"You had no business to take even *one*; but *somebody's* taken every bit—thirty-one cents, for I kept count. Could it be a burglar?" And Guy turned his mite-box upside down as if he expected to see some sign of a big man with a dark lantern.

Mary twisted her little handkerchief, but did not answer.

"I'll bet Bridget took it," Guy whispered.

Mary shook her head. "Mamma says she'd trust Bridget with 'untold gold,' and I guess that's the best gold there is."

"Well, who *did* take it then? I guess nobody in this house is mean enough to take the 'Lord's money'."

Still Mary twisted her handkerchief in silence. Guy looked at her closely. "I'll bet you know. Now, if you don't tell me this minute I'll open the bird-cage and call the cat. One, two, three—"

Mary was alarmed, although she almost knew that Guy would hold the cat. She said hesitatingly. "I heard papa say he wanted some change for postage-stamps, and I think—I most know—he took it."

Guy dropped upon the sofa. He was so surprised he did not know what to say or do. His papa take the Lord's money? He lay down with his face hidden in both hands, and Mary went sadly back to her doll.

"Papa, did you take the money out of my mite-box?" Guy asked as soon as his father entered the hall that night, "did you, papa?"

"Mite-box? What, that little red box on the shelf? Why yes, you see I just borrowed your money to buy some stamps. How much was it?" asked Mr. Allen.

"It wasn't *my* money, papa,—it was 'Lord's money,' for missions, you know. We Juniors all have boxes, and when we put it in there it isn't ours any more."

"O yes, I remember now. Well, my boy—I'll give you fifty cents. Here, two bright quarters. Will that make it all right?" Guy held out his hand hesitatingly for the money. "I s'pose it'll be all right if you say so, papa, but it won't be the same. I never thought you'd take it. I wish a burglar had, 'stead of you."

Guy's honest black eyes were lifted to his father's face an instant, and then he went

to paste a new paper over his "broken bank" and drop into it the silver quarters.

After the children were in bed, Mr. Allen said to his wife, "I've learned my lesson, I hope. Poor little fellow! No wonder he was astonished. I'll go to the bank and draw some money to buy a postage-stamp before I'll ever take 'Lord's money' again."

—In *Children's Missionary Friend*.

## "TWO MANY OF WE."

"Mamma, is there too many of we?"

The little girl asked with a sigh,

"Perhaps you wouldn't be tired, you see, If a few of your child's would die."

She was only three years old—the one

Who spoke in that strange, sad way,

As she saw her mother's impatient frown

At the children's boisterous play.

There were half a dozen who around her  
stood,

And the mother was sick and poor,

Worn out with the cares of the noisy  
brood,

And the fight, with the wolf at the door.

For a smile or a kiss, no time, no place,

For the little one, least of all;

And the shadow that darkened the  
mother's face

O'er the young life seemed to fall.

More thoughtful than any, she felt more  
care,

And pondered in childhood's way

How to lighten the burden she could not  
share,

Growing heavier day by day.

Only a week, and the little Claire

In her tiny white trundle-bed

Lay with blue eyes closed, and the sunny  
hair

Cut close from the golden head.

"Don't cry," she said—and the words were  
low.

Feeling tears that she could not see—

"You won't have to work and be tired so  
When there ain't so many of we."

But the dear little daughter who went  
away

From the home that for once was  
stilled,

Showed the mother's heart, from that  
dreary day,

What a place she had always filled.