

# LITTLE MAIDIE'S PRAYER,

## AND OTHER SKETCHES.



"O Dad, send jadder to me twick!"

JOHN REED felt a sort of pitying contempt for his wife's religious belief. He loved her too dearly to ever allow her to suspect this feeling; he looked upon it as a failing belonging particularly to women, and so one to be borne with. He was honest to the last penny; he never wronged a man in thought

or deed; he bought only what he could pay for, and to his debtors was lenient often to his own disadvantage. He thought religion too often a cloak for rascality, and prayer a sheer waste of time.

In a country of small possessions John Reed was fairly well off. His farm was small, but it was all paid for, and he was once more freed from debt. Three years before he had accumulated money enough to buy a lot adjoining his farm, when misfortune had overtaken him. His wife had brought him a little girl. She came to make his days one round of joy; but the mother, his Mary, was slow to get up. For a whole year she had lain in her bed, and doctor's bills and hired help had consumed all his ready money and run him into debt. He did not mind it, for Mary at last was as robust as ever, his debts all paid once more, and the little Mary, the darling Mai'ie, grown to be a big girl, three years old, the light and joy of the house.