

**"THE SWEETEST MOTHER."**

Little Carl was helping mother  
 Carry home the lady's basket;  
 Chubby hands, of course were lifting  
 One great handle—can you ask it?  
 As he tugged away beside her,  
 Feeling, oh, so brave and strong!  
 Little Carl was softly singing  
 To himself a little song.

"Some time I'll be tall as father,  
 Though I think it's very funny;  
 And I'll work and build big houses,  
 And give mother all the money.  
 For," and little Carl stopped singing,  
 Feeling, oh, so strong and grand!  
 "I have got the sweetest mother  
 You can find in all the land."

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TORONTO, FEBRUARY 6, 1904.

**FOLLOWING JESUS IN THE DARK**

"Mamma," said little Bessie, "I should be afraid to die, 'cause I should lose my way in the dark."

Her mother did not say a word, but just went out and turned off the gas in the hall. Then she opened the door a little way, and said: "Come, dear; it is your bedtime. Take hold of my hand, and I will lead you upstairs."

So Bessie put her little fat hand in her mother's and trotted bravely upstairs in the dark. After she had said, "Our Father," and, "Now I lay me," and had laid her curly head upon the pillow, her mother said: "You were not afraid coming up, were you, my darling?"

"O no, mamma," she answered; "I couldn't be, 'cause I had hold of your hand."

"Well, then," said her mother, "you need not be afraid of death; for Jesus is holding out his hand to you, and you have only to put your own in his and he will lead you safely through the dark."

"But how can I take hold of his hand, mamma?"

"By trying to be good every day, and praying to him to help you. He loves little children so well that they need not be afraid to follow him anywhere."

"I guess he'll take me upstairs to heaven some day," said Bessie. "I won't be afraid any more; would you, mamma?"

**THE DYING MOTHER'S BEST GIFT.**

A little boy about five years of age entered the room where his mother lay on her death-bed. For awhile he stood silent and sad. At length the mother said feebly:

"My child, will you not ask me how I do?"

Said the boy: "I know how you do, mother; you are very sick."

She called him to her side, and he stood leaning upon the bed, looking into his mother's face, as she said: "Do I look as I used to when I was well, Charley?"

"No, mother, your eyes are sunken, and your face is pale and thin."

"Well, Charley, sometimes people who are very sick, as I am, do not get well. I may not get well."

"I know it, mother; my little brother, Frankie, who was sick last year, did not get well—he died. Do you wish to die, mother?"

"I should like to get well to take care of you, if it is the Lord's will; but if not I am willing to die. Do you wish me to get well, Charley?"

"Yes, mother, I want you to get well, but if the Saviour wants you to go and live with him, I am willing you should go, mother."

Then for awhile they looked at each other; he earnestly, thoughtfully; she with all a mother's fondness beaming from her eyes, feeling that she saw him for the last time on earth. She then took from her pillow a little Bible, soiled with much use, and told her boy how she prized it, and how precious were its promises, and bade him read and love it for her sake, for it told him of the Saviour and the way of life.

"And did the disciples write in this book all they knew of the Saviour?"

"Yes," said she, "all that God would have them write; it is all his Word."

The boy took the book, promising to read it and love it, but after a pause:

"Mother," said he, "this reminds me of the poetry I read the other day," and he repeated:

"My mother's hand this Bible clasped,  
 She, dying, gave it me."

The mother kissed her child, looked mournfully on him for a few moments and thus they parted to meet no more on earth.

These lines, by the mother's request were written in the Bible she gave her child, and in coming years, should his life be spared, he will read them, and will doubt the beneficial influence of the parting hour?

"This book is all that's left me now;  
 Tears will unbidden start;  
 With faltering lips and throbbing brow  
 I press it to my heart.

"For many generations past  
 Here is our family tree;  
 My mother's hand this Bible clasped,  
 She, dying, gave it me."

**"I DON'T CARE."**

"I am sorry to see my son give way to anger," said a patient mother.

"I don't care," replied the passionate child.

"You will become an ignorant man unless you study better," said his faithful teacher a little later.

"I don't care," he muttered under his breath.

"Those boys are not the right sort of companions for you," said his pastor.

"I don't care," he answered, turning on his heel.

"It is dangerous to taste wine," said his friend warningly.

"I don't care," was still his reply.

A few years after he was a worthless drunkard, plunging into every sort of excess, and finally ending a miserable life of crime, without hope. "I don't care" was his ruin, as it is the ruin of thousands. Look out for it, boys and girls. Keep away from it. Don't let it find a place in your heart, or pass your lips. Always care. Care to do right and care when you have done wrong.

Pray earnestly that you may never let your soul from a reckless spirit of "don't care."

**WHAT HARRY WROTE.**

"What shall I write on my slate?" said Harry to himself. He could not write well, but he sat down and wrote: "A good boy." Then he took it and showed it to his mother.

"That is a good thing to write," said she. "I hope you will write it on your life as well as on your slate."

"How can I write it on my life, mother?" said Harry.

"By being a good boy every day of your life. Then you will write on your face, too, for the face of a good boy always tells its own sweet story. It looks bright and happy."—*Olive Plank*