

GOD ALWAYS NEAR.

God is always near me,
Hearing what I say,
Knowing all my thoughts and deeds,
All my work and play.

God is always near me ;
In the darkest night
He can see me just the same
As by mid-day light.

God is always near me,
Though so young and small ;
Not a look or word or thought,
But God knows it all.

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Happy Days.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 1, 1902.

A BLIND LAMB.

One cold winter day a little boy found a poor, half-starved, blind lamb wandering on a bleak mountain. For some days it had been wandering there, lost from the other sheep. Very gently he took it in his arms, wrapped his warm coat about it, and carried it home. He gave it warm sweet milk to drink and a bed of straw to sleep on. Soon its pitiful cries were hushed, and it slept. Every day the boy nursed and fed it carefully, and it grew fat and frolicsome.

One day he went as usual to feed it, but the lamb was gone. Dark clouds were rolling overhead; a storm was coming; great drops of rain and snow were already falling. Quickly the boy ran over the mountain calling his lost lamb. At last the sound of feeble bleating reached his ears. Nearer and nearer the sound came, until at last he saw the poor creature in the bottom of a pit between two rocks. It recognized his voice as he reached down

and took it up in his loving arms. Closely it nestled its little head against his shoulder, and he stroked the wet fleece as he carried it home.

Years afterwards, when this bright and beautiful boy had grown to be a man, a great storm was coming. No; he was not a good man. For years he had been wandering in darkness, and now his sins were threatening him as a great storm. All around him they hung like black clouds, and he could not find his way out. At last a voice that he recognized called to him; and great, loving arms reached down and lifted him up out of the darkness into light.

Just as the little boy had saved his lamb years before, so now God had saved him.

"I KNOW A THING OR TWO."

"My dear boy," said a father to his only son, "you are in bad company. The lads with whom you associate indulge in bad habits. They drink, swear, play cards, and visit theatres. They are not safe company for you. I beg you to quit their society."

"You needn't be afraid of me, father," replied the boy, laughing. "I guess I know a thing or two. I know how far to go, and when to stop."

The lad left his father's house, twirling his cane in his fingers and laughing at the old man's notions.

A few years later, and that lad, grown to manhood, stood at the bar of a court, before a jury who had just brought in a verdict for a crime in which he had been concerned. Before he was sentenced he addressed the court, and said among other things: "My downward course began in disobedience to my parents. I thought I knew as much of the world as my father did, and I spurned his advice; but as soon as I turned my back on my home temptations came upon me like a drove of hyenas, and hurried me to ruin."

Mark that confession, you boys who are beginning to be wiser than your parents! Mark it, and learn that disobedience is the first step on the road to ruin!

MARGERY'S TRAMP.

BY ELIZABETH B. WALKER.

"Margery!" called Nurse Robin.

But Margery's face was down in the clover, so she didn't hear.

Nurse came up breathless; she had caught a glimpse of white from an upper window.

"Here I am, nurse," said Margery, sweetly.

"Naughty child! Tramps might steal you."

"What tramps?" asked Margery.

"Ragged men that walk the roads—bad men."

"I's just talkin' to one," said Margery, calmly. "He didn't steal me."

"With a tramp?"

"Yes; he'd a ragged coat, an' hat, an' holes in his shoes."

"Is that truth, Margery Lee?" for Margery sometimes thought things true that only came into her busy brain.

"Yes, Nurse Robin," she said. "I's watchin' the clovers noldin' to each other, an' I heard some one say, 'Hullo, little girl!'"

"He had a way-down voice 'at scared me; but he said 'I won't hurt you, missy. What you doin'?"

"I told him I's thinkin' how good God was."

"Ven he said, 'How's he good?'"

"An' I told, to give me mamma, and papa, an' baby with cunnin' dimples, an' nurse, an' Trot, an' Shag."

"Ven he said, 'S'pose you lived in a little room, 'thout any grass, and your brother died 'cause it was hot, would you think God was good? That's my little girl!'"

"I's awful sorry, an' I said my papa'd make it right. He gave me this to show where his little girl lives," and Margery waved a dirty paper.

"The child'll get cholera," cried nurse.

But Margery didn't, and her papa did find the poor child. Still better, he helped make her papa a good man, and his home sweeter.

HOW MOLLIE HELPED.

There was once a bright, spirited little girl, whose hard-working father was taken suddenly away from his little family, leaving the whole burden of the support on the mother. A kind lady questioned this child, but six years old, as to how they got along.

"Oh," said little Mollie, "mother and I do all the work now, and we do it first-rate."

"But what can you do to help, with such little hands as those?" asked the lady.

Mollie held up her plump little hands, and, turnin'g them over and over again, said: "O, I can do lots and lots! I set the table, and wash the dishes, and shake up the cradle pillow, and blow the whistle for the baby. Sometimes mamma gets tired washing, and she cries. Then I go and lift baby out of the cradle (he's awful heavy), and hold him right up before mamma. Then she always laughs and takes him, and that rests her, you see."—*Little Christian*.

The mother knows that her little child loves her, yet she delights in hearing from the sweet lips every day, and almost hourly through the day, repeated confessions of that love. "Do you love me?" and the little prattler answers, "I do." So it is very pleasing to our blessed Master to hear us say: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."