

MRS. MAYBURN'S TWINS.

THE STORY OF ONE DAY.

BY JOHN HABBERTON.

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I. MORNING.

BR—R—R—R—whizz—Z—Z—Z ting-a-ling a-ling
a-ling a-ling a-ling—

Such was the remark, prolonged to the extent of five minutes, that the alarm-clock made to Mr. and Mrs. Mayburn, at seven o'clock one morning. It was not the first remark that Mrs. Mayburn had heard since she retired, eight hours before, for there were other voices of the night besides that of the little clock ticking, and other hands besides those that went around on the dial. Baby Mayburn, otherwise called "The Jefful," which was a corruption of the appellation "The Dreadful," that had been satirically bestowed upon her, had spoken two or three times, and though she did not talk good English, her mamma understood that each time she spoke she wanted some bread and milk. The Jefful's last request had been made just as dawn was breaking, and, as The Jefful was a good little girl, and consequently loved light better than darkness, she determined to stay awake. There was nothing wrong about this; the hours at which people should stay awake are affairs for personal taste to determine. But The Jefful was not satisfied with mere wakefulness; she wanted to get up and be doing, and, as she was only ten months old, she could not get up and move about without assistance. Justice to The Jefful compels us to say that she did her best; she wiggled, she pushed the covering off as far as her short arms would let her, and kicked it the rest of the way. Then she addressed herself to her father's hat, which hung on a chair two or three feet from her crib. She might have known, before speaking, that there was no head in the hat, and so conversation was an utter impossibility; but babies cannot be expected to know everything, so she continued her remarks for some time, and then she scolded the hat soundly for its silence. The hat did not say anything in return; hats are as quiet when scolded as really well-bred people are, but their silence does not make the scolder any more amiable; so The Jefful finally ended with an angry yell which would have raised that hat way up if it were not, as we have said before, that there was no head inside for it to be raised from. There was a head on mamma's pillow, though, and the baby's yell found its way into that, and raised it very quickly; and when The Jefful saw it, she said, "Mom—ma!" in such an aggrieved way that mamma felt called upon to express a little sympathy. This done, she drew the crib blankets over The Jefful again, and rocked the crib gently, which pleased The Jefful so that she lay perfectly quiet, while mamma's eyes slowly closed and went back to dreamland in search of the remainder of a dream they had left there five minutes before. Then mamma's hand dropped silently from the crib, and found its way back under the coverlid, and neither mamma nor baby knew anything about it until baby's suspicions were aroused by the crib swinging less and less to each side. Now The Jefful, like all other pure-minded persons, had an utter horror of deceit, and when she found that she was not being rocked any longer she felt that she had been cruelly deceived; so she expressed her suspicion, disappointment, sense of injured dignity and general disapproval in the single word,

"Ow!"

This word does not appear in either Webster's Dictionary or Worcester's, so we do not know what it means. Perhaps mamma knew, but may-be she did not hear it correctly, for she ceased at once to look for her lost dream: she raised herself on her elbow, and told The Jefful that she was a bad little girl, and deserved a spanking. Baby did not know what a spanking was, but the tone in which mamma threatened it, showed her that it must be something perfectly awful, so her feelings suffered still worse, and she said "Ow!" again, repeating it a great many times, as if she wanted mamma to make no mistake about her meaning. Then mamma seemed to understand The Jefful, for she changed her tone, and said, in the tenderest tone in the world,

"Zare—no—s'e s'ant be 'panked, zat s'e s'ant. Did mamma 'buse her own ittie 'peck of a Jefful?—Mamma's an' old Jefful her-seff, so s'e is, an' see was awfoo naughty to her own beebee dile. Now, Jefful doe s'leep aden, so as not to wake poo', tired papa? Zere, zere," and mamma covered The Jefful again, and leaned over her face and kissed her, and the Jefful saw, by mamma's looks, that her suspicions were undoubtedly unfounded and the deceit unintentional, so confidence was restored, and mamma swung the crib again, and The Jefful put her thumb into her mouth as she always did when at peace with the world, while mamma, seeing by the little clock that it still lacked nearly three-quarters of an hour of seven, attempted to drop asleep again;—she was not particular about finding the broken dream.

The Jefful dropped asleep herself, though nothing had been farther from her intention when she allowed a wink to loiter half finished on her eyes. How long she might have slept no one knows, for at sleeping she was a most industrious little girl. But this morning a hungry fly had gone out in search of a breakfast, and had alighted right on The Jefful's lips, thus showing himself to be a fly of excellent taste, for The Jefful's lips were the sweetest things in all the world, and their sweetness was of that peculiar kind that makes the enjoyer want more and more, the more he tastes it. The Jefful would not have objected to this excusable robbery, for her supply of sweetness was inexhaustible, but when the fly turned around, with more carelessness than becomes a thief, his wing brushed across The Jefful's lip and tickled her so that she awoke, to find the crib quiet, and mamma quiet, and even herself quiet; so she said a great many things in quite a petulant tone for one so young. Mamma pretended not to hear it, but when papa sleepily grunted "Goodness!" and within two or three feet of her ear too, she roused herself so suddenly that papa muttered something about the uselessness of knocking down the house. This time The Jefful determined to be alert. She defined her position in her own way; then she turned over, and watched mamma closely. Mamma kept the crib swinging for some moments; but the instant she withdrew her hand, The Jefful rebuked her soundly. Then mamma, though working away, closed her eyes, and The Jefful protested against that liberty, so mamma opened them again, and was greeted with a jubilant crow, so very loud that she wondered whether compliance may not be worse than slumber, so far as papa's peace was concerned. Then The Jefful sang a little matin song,—a song without words, although the music was not Mendelssohn's—and mamma discouraged her with a low "Sh—h—h," and then The Jefful began to cry, at which mamma patted her cheek and The Jefful put one of mamma's fingers in her mouth and bit it with her lovely little sharp teeth, while mamma ground her own, closing her lips over them very tightly. Then mamma took her hand away, and such a howl as that Jefful gave!—and such a growl as escaped papa! Poor aggrieved little Jefful thrust her tiny hands between the