

SOMEBODY'S MOTHER.

THE woman was old, and ragged and gray,
And bent with the chill of the winter's day.
The street was wet with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.
She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng
Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.
Down the street with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of school let out,
Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.
Past the woman so old and gray
Hastened the children on their way,
Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir,
Least the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.
At last came one of the merry troop,
The gayest laddie of all the group.
He paused beside her, and whispered low;
"I'll help you across if you wish to go."
Her aged hand on his strong, young arm
She placed, and so without hurt or harm
He guided her trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong,
Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.
"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's old and poor and slow;
"And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand,
"If ever she's poor, and old, and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."
And somebody's mother bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said
Was: "God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son and pride and joy."

THE DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN.
(Translated from the French of Alphonse Daudet.)



HE little Dauphin is sick, the little Dauphin is about to die. In all the churches of the kingdom the holy sacrament is exposed night and day, and great wax candles are being burned for the recovery of the royal child. The streets of the old residents are silent and sad; the bells do not ring; passing carriages move slowly—the coachmen keep their horses at a walk; outside the palace curious citizens watch from behind the railings the great Swiss guards with gold laced paunches in the court-yards, talking together with a most serious mien.
The chateau is all emotion—chamberlains and major-domos ascend and descend the marble stairways at a run. The galleries are thronged with pages and courtiers in silken attire—who go by turns from one whispering group to another, asking for news in an undertone. Upon the broad steps the forlorn ladies of honour make low curtsies, wiping their eyes with pretty embroidered handkerchiefs.
In the orangery there is a large meeting of robed physicians. Through the windows they can be seen extending, moving their long black sleeves,

and doctorally nodding their perruques-a-marteaux. Before the door the little Dauphin's tutor and riding-master walk slowly to and fro, waiting for the decision of the Faculty. Scullions pass by without saluting them. Monsieur, the ringmaster, swears like a pagan; Monsieur, the tutor, quotes verses from Horace. And from the direction of the stables, far off, comes a long melancholy neigh. It is the Dauphin's chestnut pony, forgotten by the grooms, calling plaintively from before his empty manger.

And the king? Where is Monseigneur the king? The king has shut himself up alone in his rooms at the other end of the chateau. Their majesties do not like to be seen weeping. As for the queen it is quite another matter. Seated beside the pillow of the little Dauphin, she weeps so that her beautiful face is bathed in tears, and she sobs aloud before everybody—like a common draper's wife!

In his couch of lace the little Dauphin, whiter than the cushions upon which he lies, reposes with closed eyes. They think that he slumbers, but no! the little Dauphin does not slumber. He turns toward his mother, and, seeing that she weeps, he says to her:

"Madame the Queen, why do you cry? Do you really believe like the rest, that I am going to die?"
The Queen would answer, but her sobs prevent her from speaking.
"Now do not weep, Madame the Queen; you forgot that I am a Dauphin, and that a Dauphin does not die thus."

But the Queen sobs more passionately than ever; and the little Dauphin becomes really afraid for the first time.

"Ho! there!" he cries, "I will not permit Death to take me away; and I know well how to prevent his coming hither. Order forty very strong lansquenets to come here at once, to mount guard about my bed. Let a hundred heavy cannon be rolled into the court under our windows; and let the gunners stand by them, night and day, with matches lighted! And woe to Death, if he dare to come near us!"

Then, in order to please the royal child, the Queen makes a sign. And in a moment is heard the rumbling of the heavy cannon rolling into the vast court; and forty tall lansquenets, armed with partisans, range themselves all about the room. They are veteran troopers, with grey moustaches. The little Dauphin clasps his hands when he sees them! He recognizes one, and calls him:

"Lorraine! Lorraine!"
The veteran makes one stride toward the bed.
"I love you very much, my dear Lorraine. Show me your great big sword. If Death tries to take me he must be killed, must he not?"
Lorraine answers:
"Yes, monseigneur!"

But two large tears trickle down his bronzed cheeks.

Suddenly the chaplain approaches the little Dauphin's bedside, and commences to talk to him in a very, very low voice, and shows him a crucifix. The little Dauphin listens to him awhile with a very astonished look, then, suddenly interrupting him, exclaims:

"I understand very well all that you tell me, Monsieur l'Abbe—but

pray inform me could not my little friend Beppo be induced to die in my place, supposing they gave him plenty of money?"

The chaplain continues to speak in a very low voice; and the little Dauphin looks more astonished than before.

When the chaplain has finished, the little Dauphin responds with a deep sigh:

"All this that you have told me is very sad, indeed, Monsieur l'Abbe; but one thing consoles me. I know that on high, in the Paradise of the stars, I shall still be the Dauphin. I know that the good God is my cousin, and that He cannot fail to treat me according to my rank."

Then, turning to his mother, he says:

"Order them to bring me my finest clothes—my doublet of ermine, and my velvet shoes—I wish to appear bravely dressed before the angels, and enter Paradise in the costume of the Dauphin."

Yet a third time the chaplain bends forward, and leaning over the little Dauphin, whispers to him for a long time. In the midst of his discourse the royal child interrupts him with a cry of anger:

"Why, then, to be a Dauphin, is nothing at all!"

And refusing to listen any more, the little Dauphin turns his face to the wall, and weeps bitterly.

A STUDIOUS BOY.

ABOUT the year 1596 a poor lad of seventeen was seen traveling on foot in the south of England. He carried over his shoulder, at the end of a stick, all the clothing he had in the world; and he had in his pocket an old purse, with a few pieces of money given him by his mother when, with a throbbing, prayerful heart, she took leave of him on the road a short distance from their own cottage.

And who was John? for that was his name. He was the son of poor but pious people, and had six brothers and five sisters, all of whom had to labour hard for a living. He was a goodly lad, and at fourteen was disappointed in getting a place as parish clerk, and with his parents' consent set out to get employment.

At the City of Exeter, where he first went, he met with no success; but as he looked on the beautiful cathedral, and in the booksellers' windows, a strong desire sprung up in his mind to become a scholar, and at once he set out for the University of Oxford, some two hundred miles off, walking the whole way. At night he sometimes slept in barns, or on the sheltered side of a haystack, and often met with strange companions. He lived chiefly on bread and water, with occasionally a draught of milk as a luxury.

Arrived at the splendid City of Oxford, his clothing nearly worn out and very dusty, his feet sore, and his spirits depressed, he knew not what to do.

He had heard of Exeter College in Oxford, and there he went, and, to his great delight, was engaged to carry fuel into the kitchen, to clean pans and kettles, and to do such kinds of work. Here, while scouring his pans, he might often be seen reading a book. His studious habits soon attracted

the attention of the authorities, who admitted him into the college as a poor scholar, providing for all his wants. He studied hard, and was soon at the head of his class. He rose to great eminence as a scholar, and was very successful as a minister of Christ; and many years before his death, which took place when he was seventy-two, he visited his father and mother, who were delighted to see their son not only a great scholar but a pious bishop.

Such was the history of Dr. John Prideaux, who used to say, "If I had been a parish clerk of Ugborough I should never have been Bishop of Worcester." He left many works as fruits of his industry and learning.

TAKE THIS LETTER TO MY MOTHER.

TAKE this letter to my mother,
Far across the deep blue sea,
It will fill her heart with pleasure,
She'll be glad to hear from me.
How she wept when last we parted,
How her heart was filled with pain,
When she said, "Good-bye, God bless you—
We may never meet again."

Take this letter to my mother,
It will fill her heart with joy,
Tell her that her prayers are answered,
God protects her darling boy;
Tell her to be glad and cheerful,
Pray for me where'er I roam,
And ere long I'll turn my footsteps
Back towards my dear old home.

Take this letter to my mother,
It is filled with words of love;
If on earth I'll never meet her,
Tell her that we'll meet above.
Where there is no hour of parting,
All the peace and love and joy;
God will bless my dear old mother,
And protect her darling boy.

HOW THE SNAKE WAS CAUGHT.

A BLACK snake, about a foot long, lay sunning itself on a garden-bed one summer's day. A spider had hung out his web on the branches of a bush near where the snake lay. He saw the huge monster lying there—for huge indeed he was compared with the spider—and determined to take him prisoner. But, you ask, is not a snake a thousand times stronger than a spider? Then how can he take him prisoner? Well, let us see how he does it. The spider spun out a fine, slender thread. He slipped down and touched the snake with it. It stuck. He took another and touched him with that, that stuck too. He went on industriously; the snake lay quiet. Another and another thread was fastened to him, till there were hundreds and thousands of them. And by and by those feeble threads, not one of which was strong enough to hold the smallest fly, by being greatly multiplied, made the snake a prisoner. The spider webbed him round and round, till at last, when the snake tried to move he found it impossible. By putting one strand here, and another there, and drawing first on one and then on another, the spider had the snake bound fast from head to tail, to be a supply of food for himself and his family for a long while.

And so, if we give way even to little sins, before we are aware of it, we may be bound hand and foot, and unable to help ourselves.

FAMILY prayer serves as the edge and border of the day, to preserve the web of life from unraveling.