

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

GOLDEN head so lowly bending
Little feet so white and bare;
Dewy eyes, half shut, half opened—
Lisping out her evening prayer.

Well she knows when she is saying,
"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
'Tis to God that she is praying,
Praying him her soul to keep.

Half asleep, and murmuring faintly,
"If I should die before I wake"—
Tiny fingers clasped so saintly—
"I pray the Lord my soul to take."

O the rapture, sweet, unbroken,
Of the soul who wrote that prayer!
Children's myriad voices floating
Up to heaven, record it there.

If of all that has been written,
I could choose what might be mine,
It should be that child's petition,
Rising to the throne divine.

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GIVE THE LITTLE ONE A LIGHT.

If a child wants a light to go to sleep by, give it one. The sort of Spartan firmness which walks off and takes away the candle and shuts all the doors between the household cheer and the warmth and pleasant stir of evening mirth, and leaves a little son or daughter to hide its head under the bed-clothes and get to sleep as best it can, is not at all admirable. Not that the dear mother means to be cruel when she tries this or that hardening process, and treats human nature as if it were clay, to be molded into any shape she may please. Very likely she has no idea whatever of the injury and suffering she causes, or

perhaps her heart aches, but she perseveres, thinking she is doing right.

Children are very often obliged to endure a great deal of unnecessary hardship by being subjected to absurd methods of discipline which every good mother ought to avoid. Many a delicate, nervous child has suffered through life from the effects of such treatment. Try to dispel their fear of the darkness by reasoning with them, but do not compel them to remain in the dark against their will.

LITTLE ALICE'S PRAYER.

"I DON'T want to say my prayer," said little Alice. "I'm tired of saying my prayer, mamma."

And a dear little girl, in a white night-dress, with soft, golden curls, and such a bright, chubby face, stood up by her mother's side, instead of kneeling down, and looked very mischievous as she watched the loving eyes that were bent upon her.

Mrs. Macy sighed, and scarcely knew what was best to do with her little daughter, whom she had given to God as soon as she was born, and had prayed Him daily to make her His own child. And now she was tired of saying her prayers! But she was only four years old, and the mother asked gently:

"And does my little Alice feel willing to go to bed without thanking her heavenly Father for taking care of her all day?"

Alice laughed and kissed her mother on both cheeks and then on her mouth. This she called "a French kiss." Then she went to her auntie who was lying sick on the sofa; and auntie whispered:

"Who will take care of little Alice to-night, when it is all dark in the house?"

Alice dearly loved to be whispered to, and she answered in the same tone:

"Mamma will take care of me."

"No," said auntie, "Mamma will be asleep."

"Papa, then," persevered the little one.

"Papa will be asleep, too."

"Then auntie will," said Alice, triumphantly.

"But auntie will be upstairs, and perhaps asleep, too," was the reply, for the invalid could not feel at all sure that sleep would come to her. "God never sleeps, though. His kind, watchful eye is over us all the time, and He takes especial care of little children."

"Will He take care of me?" asked Alice, in an awe-stricken tone.

"You have not asked Him to," replied auntie; "and He has told us to ask Him for what we want."

Alice's bright eyes looked steadily at her aunt for a moment; and then she kissed her and danced off to bed. She was asleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillow.

But in an hour or two there was a dismal wail for "Mamma!" and Mrs. Macy hastened into the little room opening from her own, where Alice's crib stood.

"Mamma, mamma!" sobbed the little one, "I want to be taken care of."

Then auntie had to explain what this meant; and Alice knelt in the crib, and repeated the childish prayer taught her as soon as she could speak. Then she went to sleep again, with a smile on her lips; and the invalid thought of the beautiful promise:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

And she felt in the wakeful watches of the night that she was "taken care of" too.

A BROTHER'S CHARGE.

ONCE day a little boy asked his mother to let him lead his little sister out on the green grass. She had just begun to run alone, and could not step over anything that lay in the way. His mother told him that he might lead out the little girl, but charged him not to let her fall. I found them at play, very happy in the field.

I said, "You seem very happy, George. Is this your sister?"

"Yes, sir," answered the little fellow.

"Can she walk alone?"

"Yes, sir, on smooth ground."

"And how did she get over these stones which lie between us and the house?"

"Mother charged me to be careful that she did not fall; and so I put my hands under her arms and lifted her when she came to a stone, so that she need not hit her little foot against it."

"That is right, George; and I want to tell you one thing. You see now how to understand the beautiful text, 'For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' God charges his angels to lead and lift his people over difficulties, just as you have lifted little Annie over these stones. Do you understand it now?"

"Oh, yes, sir; and I shall not forget it while I live."

Can one child thus take care of another, and can not God take care of those who trust Him? Surely he can. There is not a child who may read this story over whom he is not ready to give his holy angels charge.