

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.

A RECITATION FOR FOUR CHILDREN.

First child.

I know just the sweetest story
That any one ever heard,
How Jesus, our own dear Saviour,
Said such a beautiful word;
And this is how it all happened—
I can say every word by heart—
They brought unto Him young children:
The twelve said they must depart;
But Jesus, who sees and hears all things,
Was displeased at these, His twelve
friends,
And said—I beg you to listen,
For my hope on these words depends—
“Suffer the little children to come unto
Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the
kingdom of heaven.”

Second child.

I know one almost as pretty,
And I will tell it to you:
One day the twelve were disputing—
As e'en they sometimes will do—
About who should be greatest,
And would not be reconciled;
Then Jesus, their Lord and Master,
Taking a dear little child,
Set him amidst the disciples,
With manners so gentle and sweet;
Then, lifting him into His arms,
Said the words which now I repeat:
“Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be
converted and become as little children, ye
shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Third child.

It surely should make us happy
That such things as these should be—
That the Lord, the King of glory,
Loved little ones such as we;
But you've not told all the story
Of the days when the little child
Taught the disciples this lesson—
They must be humble and mild.
I am so glad I can tell you
The very words that He said,
Lest some one else should dispise us
When we want to Him to be led:

“And whoso received one such little
child in My name, receiveth Me.”

Fourth child.

No matter when little children
Unto the dear Saviour came,
He always gave them a blessing,
And now it is just the same.
But I want you all to listen
While I my story repeat,
Of when they cut off green branches
And cast them down at His feet,
Singing the while glad hosannas
To Christ, their dear Lord and King;
Then still again in the temple
Loudly their praises did ring;
Some people cried in their anger,
“Hearst thou what these children say?”
This is the beautiful answer
Jesus made to them that day:
“Yea; have ye never read, Out of the
mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast
perfected praise?”

Our Story.

NEDAWI.

(An Indian Story from Real Life.)

By “BRIGHT EYES.”

“Nedawi!” called her mother, “take your little brother while I go with your sister for some wood.” Nedawi ran into the tent, bringing back her little red blanket, but the brown-faced, roly-poly baby, who had been having a comfortable nap in spite of being all the while tied straight to his board, woke with a merry crow just as the mother was about to attach him board and all to Nedawi's neck. So he was taken from the board instead, and, after he had kicked in happy freedom for a moment, Nedawi stood in front of her mother, who placed Habazhu on the little girl's back, and drew the blanket over him, leaving his arms free. She next put into his hand a little hollow gourd, filled with seeds, which served as a rattle; Nedawi held both ends of the blanket tightly in front of her, and was then ready to walk around with the little man.

Where should she go? Yonder was a group of young girls playing a game of *konei*, or dice. The dice were five plum-seeds, scorched black, and had little stars and quarter moons instead of numbers. She went over and stood by the group, gently rocking herself from side to side, pretty much as white children do when reciting the multiplication table. The girls would toss up the wooden bowl, letting it drop with a gentle thud on the pillow beneath, the falling dice making a pleasant clatter which the baby liked to hear. The stakes were a little heap of beads, rings, and bracelets. The laughter and exclamations of the girls, as some successful toss brought down the dice three stars and two quarter-moons (the highest throw), made Nedawi wish that she, too, were a young girl, and could win and wear all these pretty things. How gay she would look! Just then, the little glittering heap caught baby's eye. He tried to wriggle out of the blanket to get to it, but Nedawi held tight. Then he set up a yell. Nedawi walked away very reluctantly, because she wanted to stay and see who would win. She went to her mother's tent, but found it deserted. Her father and brother had gone to the chase. A herd of buffalo had been seen that morning, and all the men in the tribe had gone, and would not be back till night. Her mother, her sister, and the women of the household had gone to the river for wood and water. The tent looked enticingly cool, with the sides turned up to let the breeze sweep through, and the straw mats and soft robes seemed to invite her to lie down on them and dream the afternoon away, as she was too apt to do. She did not yield to the temptation, however, for she knew Mother would not like it, but walked over to her cousin Metai's tent. She found her cousin “keeping house” with a number of little girls, and stood to watch them while they put up little tents, just large enough to hold one or two girls.

“Nedawi, come and play,” said Metai. “You can make the fire and cook. I'll ask Mother for something to cook.”

“But what shall I do with Habazhu?” said Nedawi.

“I'll tell you. Put him in my tent, and make believe he's our little old, old grandfather.”

Forthwith he was transferred from Nedawi's back to the little tent. But Habazhu had a decided objection to staying in the dark little place, where he could not see anything, and crept out of the door on his hands and knees. Nedawi collected a little heap of sticks, all ready for the fire, and went off to get a fire-brand to light it with. While she was gone, Habazhu crawled up to a bowl of water which stood by the intended fire-place, and began dabbling in it with his chubby little hands, splashing the water all over the sticks prepared for the fire. Then he thought he would like to drink. He tried to lift the bowl in both hands, but only succeeded in spilling the water over himself and fire-place.

When Nedawi returned, she stood aghast; then, throwing down the brand, she took her little brother by the shoulders and, I am sorry to say, shook him violently, jerked him up, and dumped him down by the door of the little tent from which he had crawled. “It's too bad that I have to take care of you when I want to play.”

You see, she was no more perfect than any little white girl who gets into a temper now and then. The baby's lips quivered, and he began to cry. Metai said to Nedawi: “I think it's real mean for you to shake him, when he doesn't know any better.” Metai picked up baby and tried to comfort him. She kissed him over and over, and talked to him in baby language. Nedawi's conscience, if the little savage could be said to have any, was troubling her. She loved her baby brother dearly, even though she did

get out of patience with him now and then.

“I'll put a clean little shirt on him and pack him again,” said she, suddenly. Then she took off his little wet shirt, wrung it out, and spread it on the tall grass to dry in the sun. Then she went home, and going to a pretty painted skin in which her mother kept his clothes, she selected the red shirt, which she thought was the prettiest. She was in such a hurry, however, that she forgot to close and tie up the skin again, and she carelessly left his clean shirts lying around as she had laid them out. When Baby was on her back again, she walked around with him, giving directions and overseeing the other girls at their play, determined to do that rather than nothing.

The other children were good-natured, and took her ordering as gracefully as they could. Metai made the fire in a new place, and then went to ask her mother to give her something to cook. Her mother gave her a piece of dried buffalo meat, as hard as a chip and as brittle as glass. Metai broke it up into small pieces, and put the pieces into a little tin pail of water, which she hung over the fire. “Now,” she said, “when the meat is cooked and the soup is made, I will call you all to a feast, and Habazhu shall be the chief.”

They all laughed. But alas for human calculations! During the last few minutes, a shy little girl, with soft, wistful black eyes, had been watching them from a little distance. She had on a faded, shabby blanket and a ragged dress.

“Metai,” said Nedawi, “let's ask that girl to play with us; she looks so lonesome.”

“Well,” said Metai, doubtfully, “I don't care.” But my mother said she didn't want me to play with ragged little girls.”

“My father says we must be kind to poor little girls, and help them all we can; so I'm going to play with her if you don't,” said Nedawi, loftily.

Although Metai was the hostess, Nedawi was the leading spirit, and had her own way, as usual. She walked up to the little creature and said, “Come and play with us if you want to.” The little girl's eyes brightened, and she laughed. Then she suddenly drew from her blanket a pretty bark basket, filled with the most delicious red and yellow plums. “My brother picked them in the woods, and I give them to you,” was all she said. Nedawi managed to free one hand, and took the offering with an exclamation of delight, which drew the other girls quickly around. Instead of saying “Oh! Oh!” as you would have said, they cried “Him! Him!” which expressed their feelings quite as well, perhaps.

“Let us have them for our feast,” said Metai, taking them.

Little Indian children are taught to share everything with one another, so it did not seem strange to Nedawi to have her gift looked upon as common property. But, when the attention of the little group had been concentrated on the matter in hand, a party of mischievous boys, passing by, caught sight of the little tents and the tin pail hanging over the fire. Simultaneously they set up a war-whoop, and, dashing by into the deserted camp, they sent the tent poles scattering right and left, and snatching up whatever they could lay hands on, including the tin pail and its contents, they retreated. The little girls, startled by the sudden raid on their property, looked up. Rage possessed their little souls. Giving shrieks of anger, they started in pursuit. What did Nedawi do? She forgot plums, baby and everything. The ends of the blanket slipped from her grasp, and she darted forward like an arrow after her companions.

Finding the chase hopeless, the little girls came to a stand-still, and some of

them began to cry. The boys had stopped too, and seeing the tears flow, and being good hearted boys in spite of their mischief, they surrendered at discretion. They threw back the articles they had taken, not daring to come near. They did not consider it manly for big boys like themselves to strike little girls, even though they delighted in teasing them, and they knew from experience that they would beat the mercy of the offended party if they went near enough to be touched. The boy who had the dinner brought the little pail which had contained it as near as he dared, and setting it down ran away.

“You have spilt all our soup. There is hardly any of it left. You bad boys!” said one of the girls.

They crowded around with lamentations over their lost dinner. The boys began to feel remorseful.

“Let's go into the woods and get them some plums to make up for it.”

“Say, girls, hand us your pail, and we'll fill it up with plums for you.”

So the affair was settled.

But, meanwhile, what became of the baby left so unceremoniously in the tall grass? First he opened his black eyes wide at this style of treatment. He was not used to it. Before he had time, however, to make up his mind whether to laugh or cry, his mother came to the rescue. She had just come home and thrown the wood off her back, when she caught sight of Nedawi dropping him. She ran to pick him up and finding him unhurt, kissed him over and over. Some of the neighbors had run up to see what was the matter. She said to them:

“I never did see such a thoughtless, heedless child as my Nedawi. She really has ‘no ears.’ I don't know what in the world will become of her. When something new interests her she forgets everything else. It was just like her to act in this way.”

Then they all laughed and one of them said:

“Never mind—she will grow wiser as she grows older,” after which consoling remark they went away to their tents.

It was no use to call Nedawi back, she was too far off.

Habazhu was given over to the care of the nurse, who had just returned from her visit. An hour or two after, Nedawi came home.

“Mother!” she exclaimed, as she saw her mother frying bread for supper, “I am so hungry. Can I have some of that bread?”

“Where is your little brother? was the unexpected reply.

Nedawi started. Where had she left him? She tried to think.

“Why, mother, the last thing I remember I was packing him, and—and oh, Mother! you know where he is. Please tell me.”

“When you find him and bring him back to me, perhaps I shall forgive you,” was the cold reply.

This was dreadful. Her mother had never treated her in this way before. She burst into tears, and started out to find Habazhu, crying all the way. She knew that her mother knew where baby was, or she would not have taken it so coolly; and she knew also that her mother expected her to bring him home. As she was stumbling along through the grass, she felt herself seized and held in somebody's strong arms, and a great, round, hearty voice said:

“What's the matter with my little niece! Have all her friends deserted her that she is wailing like this? Or has her little dog died? I thought Nedawi was a brave little woman.”

It was her uncle Two Crows. She managed to tell him, through her sobs, the whole story. She knew if she told him herself, he would not laugh at her about it, for he would sympathise in her troubles, though he was a great tease.