

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

SLEEP.

"So He giveth His beloved sleep."—Ps. 127:2.

He sees when their footsteps falter, when their heart grows weak and faint,
He marks when their strength is falling, and listens to each complaint:

He bids them rest for a season, for the pathway has grown too steep;
And folded in their fair green pastures,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

Like weary and worn out children, that sigh for the daylight's close,
He knows that they oft are longing for home and its sweet repose;
So He calls them in from their labors ere the shadows around them creep,
And silently watching o'er them,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it, oh, so gently! as a mother will hush to rest
The babe that she softly pillows so tenderly on her breast;
Forgotten now are the trials and sorrows that made them weep;
For with many a soothing promise
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it! friends the dearest can never this boon bestow;
But He touches the drooping eyelids, and placid the features grow;
Their foes may gather about them, and storms may round them sweep,
But, guarding them safe from danger,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

All dread of the distant future, all fears that oppress to-day,
Like mists, that clear in the sunlight, have noiselessly passed away;
Nor call nor clamor can rouse them from slumbers so pure and deep,
For only His voice can reach them
Who giveth His loved ones sleep.

Weep not that their toils are over, weep not that their race is run;
God grant we may rest as calmly when our work, like theirs, is done!
Till then we would yield with gladness our treasures to Him to keep,
And rejoice in the sweet assurance,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

—Golden Hours.

Daddy's Boy.

(By L. T. MEADE.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ronald was fortunate in getting back to the house unobserved. No one had particularly missed him or noticed his absence, and he joined the family tea in excellent spirits, and full of the most amiable and contrite feelings towards Aunt Eleanor.

"I accused her quite falsely," he said to himself. "She must have felt dreadfully pained. Well, I never liked her better than I do now, and I don't think her at all so unworthy to be Uncle Ben's wife."

When Ronald was going to bed that night he threw his arms around his aunt's neck and gave her a violent hug.

"Oh, don't, my dear Ronald, I beg. You have rumbled my lace and pushed my cap crooked. Don't be quite so violent, dear, if you please."

"No, I won't," said Ronald; "I only gave you that hug because I wanted you to forgive me."

"For what, my dear little boy?"

"For bothering you about your purse in

church to-day. I thought they were starving, you know, and they weren't, and I'm so delighted."

Aunt Eleanor began to frown when Ronald spoke about the purse. Now she took his two hands and looked into his eyes.

"You showed want of breeding that time, Ronald, and did not act quite as a gentleman. Another time try to remember that you must not follow your every impulse. There, we will drop the subject now; it is not a pleasant one."

"But you have forgiven me."

"Of course I have."

"Then you'll let me come and speak to you to-morrow morning on a subject of tremendous importance. You'll fix an hour, won't you, for me to come and have a talk with you?"

"Well, really, Ronnie, you are a queer little boy. I don't know that I can spare you any time to-morrow; I shall be particularly busy all day long."

"Oh, but I'm afraid you must spare me half an hour, for what I've got to talk about is tremendously important. I can't say much about it now, but it means a great, great deal; it means blankets ordered from Canton, and it means tobacco for 'when the cold strengthens,' and it means money sent to a starving son."

"My dear Ronnie, let me beg of you to explain nothing further; your explanations are most bewildering, my dear child. Come to my room to-morrow morning at ten and I will give you exactly a quarter of an hour. Now run to bed, dear, run to bed."

The next morning, punctual to the moment, Ronald appeared before his aunt. He went into her room with the brightest of bright faces, but he left it again in less than a quarter of an hour a very sad and troubled, and even defiant little boy. Never in all his eight years had Ronald felt so absolutely naughty as he did then. He was oppressed with a sense of keen injustice. He could not comprehend his aunt's reasonings; he could not comprehend her absolute refusal to let him have some of his own money to carry out his father's accustomed bequest. Aunt Eleanor had certainly taken little trouble to show him that she had spent quite as much, but in a different way over the almshouses.

Aunt Eleanor had a great dislike to ever giving money presents, and she considered the good Christmas dinner, the half ton of coal apiece, to say nothing of a gift of tea and sugar to each almswoman, quite equivalent to the customary sovereign.—There is no doubt that the almshouses did not all agree with her, as they enjoyed nothing so much as spending a little money in their own way; and Sir Ronald's Christmas sovereign had been the great event of the year to the old ladies. Aunt Eleanor was exceedingly angry with Ronald for going to see the almshouses without leave, and for giving away to them his own nice Christmas boxes, but her anger knew no bounds when she found that he had actually had the audacity to promise them their sovereign in addition to her handsome gifts.

"You are very naughty indeed!" she said, "and you deserve to be well punished. I shall be obliged to ask Miss Green to go up at once to the almshouses and tell the old women not to believe a word that a silly little boy tells them. Now run away, and don't interrupt me any longer."

Ronald, feeling most desperate and rebellious, went downstairs and into the large playroom, where a huge fire was blazing and where the Frere children were disporting themselves according to their heart's delight.

"I say, Ronnie," called out Walter, "come here, I want to whisper to you; the little fire figure of Miss Green is all right and will be here the morning of the last day of the year. We'll burn it under the schoolroom windows that night. Arn't you glad?"

"Yes," said Ronald; "I am very glad, I'm delighted. I only wish we could have a little fire figure of Aunt Eleanor burning there too."

"Of mother!" whispered Guy, rather shocked; "oh, we daren't, and besides you oughtn't talk of mother like that."

"Well, let me go," said Ronald, dashing away and out of the bright and cheerful playroom.

None of the Frere children called out to him to stay. They were all too busy planning their costumes for the great fancy ball.

"I am lonely," whispered Ronald to his own little heart; "I am lonely, and I know I'm naughty, and I do not care a bit about being naughty; I never can be good like this, I never can be good like this. Oh, is it fair to have two up there and one down here? Oh, it is hard on the one down here."

Ronald ran out, and being in that frame of mind when all ordinary ideas of obedience deserted him, he went round to the stableyard with a kind of shadowy hope that he might gain a little consolation in a conversation with Jim. As he was running through the shrubbery on his way to the stables he heard the door of one of the side entrances shut with a sharp report, and looking back he saw the thin figure of his governess walking rapidly up the avenue.

"She's going to tell them," he muttered to himself, "and how cruelly she'll do it. Oh, poor, poor Peters; what will he do without his pipe?—Why, his voice may go, it may indeed; and there'll be no singing then in church on Sundays, and Jane Perch will shiver under her thin blankets, and Ann Beale's son will quite starve. Oh, what shall I do? Oh! why won't Aunt Eleanor understand?"

Ronald ran round to the stableyard, where his sorrowful face attracted Jim's instant sympathy.

"You don't look at all lively-like, sir; come, now, but it's good to see you in the stable yard again. Shall I bring Bal Drumie, Sir Ronald? and will you mount him, sir? He looks for all the world like a pieter this morning."

But Ronald's little heart was too sore to endure the sight of his father's hunter just then.

"No, thank you, Jim," he said, "it would remind me of father, and I could not quite bear it. Jim, I'm not at all happy."

"I'm concerned to hear it, Master—Sir Ronald, I mean. Come now, wouldn't you like a ride on your own pony, Bob? He's a bit skittish, for you don't exercise him so much as you ought, sir; but, come, a gallop would do you a power of good, Sir Ronald, and I'll come along on Brown Boss; she's mad for a canter."

Just at this moment an idea darted through Ronald's fertile little brain which caused the color to return to his cheeks, and the sparkle of renewed hope to his eyes.

"I will have a gallop on Bob," he said; "it's an excellent thought, and you may come with me if you like, Jim; not that I mind going alone.—Jim, I've got an idea; I can't tell it to you for it's a tremendous secret; but it will take a great load off my mind, and it will have some people whose names I can't tell you—from losing a great gift—that's Peters' voice—whispered Ronald under his breath, and from perishing with cold—that's Jane Perch—he continued *sotto voce*, "and from starving from want of their rightful money—that's Ann Beale's son"—concluded Ronald. "Jim, I feel quite different since I've got my idea, and 'twas you put it into my head, and I'm awfully grateful to you. Now do you think, dear Jim, that you could get me a little piece of paper and pencil? I just want to write a note in a great hurry."

The necessary requisites were forthcoming, and Ronald, leaning his bit of paper against Bob's stable door, transcribed upon it in his queer round hand the following words:

"Peters and the Almshouses—Don't mind a