

bob—bob—bob—bob!" and tried to spring from her mamma's arms; and there was such hearty genuineness about all of this, that Bobboker's suspicions were dissipated, and he said:

"Tum on."

So mamma dragged Bobboker to the front of the bed, and placed The Jefful where her brother had been, and made sure that the bed was pushed tightly against the wall, so that her baby could not fall to the floor, and Bobboker kissed his sister, and The Jefful fastened both hands in Bobboker's hair, and said, "goo, goo, ahgoo!" in the most ecstatic manner; and Bobboker said, "ah," and "ee," and "oo," and several other things, and mamma literally flew to her work-basket, and began work upon the small buttonless shirts, and the little stockings, which, though numerous, were outnumbered by the holes they contained.

How mamma's darning needle flew! It was not merely because the work had to be done, and she had time in which to do it—oh, no—perish the thought of such a grovelling incentive. But there, within hearing distance, was going on a merry conversation between brother and sister, and every tone of either participant was affectionate, and laughter alternated with ecstatic crowing, and love seemed to have achieved the bliss it invariably promises, but so seldom realizes, and both children were mamma's own—her very own—and she was so proud of them, and so happy in them, and, in spite of work and care and consuming thought, the gates of heaven seemed just within hearing, though out of sight; and the darlings had a papa who was the best man in the world, and a brother and sister who were unequalled in any family of which mamma knew; and mamma herself did not see how she had ever been able to endure life when merely a girl, with nothing but dress and parties and compliments to fill her shallow mind; and she determined that she would not have time turn backward ten years for all the money in the world, and she wished that Will, her husband, might accidentally drop in just then and see that she was not always tired and absent-minded. Then another crow, more enthusiastic than usual, escaped The Jefful, and all sorts of noises were combined by Bobboker as an antiphony; and mamma herself burst into an exultant strain from the song about "Mrs. Lofty," when she heard a pronounced bump, hard yet hollow, then a long-drawn howl, and a low, but emphatic:

"Goodnish!"

Mamma dropped her work and hurried to the rescue. She found The Jefful with her head against the wall, her eyes tightly closed, her face contracted into the ugliest of lines, her mouth wide open, and a new yell just starting from her lips.

"Oh, goodness!" exclaimed mamma, as she dragged her baby to the front and took her tightly to her breast and kissed her.

"Jefful a bad dile," said Bobboker, sternly; "she wouldn't mind Bobboker, so Bobboker punished her."

"Then mamma will punish *you*," was the angry response.

"No—o—o—O!" was the response. "Bobboker got a saw om."

"Is that any reason why you should give poor little Jefful a sore head?" asked mamma, sharply.

Bobboker reflected a moment, burst out crying, and whined:

"Idono."

"Then why did you do it?"

"Idono."

"What did you do to her?"

"Idono."

"What did she do to you?"

"Idono."

Mamma stamped her foot angrily, and asked:

"Then why did you punish her?"

And Bobboker, first looking all over the room and at his finger-nails for a reply, answered:

"Idono."

Mamma departed abruptly, taking The Jefful with her; and when the infantile tears were wiped away, and a smile or two had set the little face to rights, mamma put her baby upon the floor with a spool, an empty vinaigrette, and a red stocking to amuse her, and returned to the still unfinished stocking. The Jefful attacked the stocking with her teeth, lecturing it severely as she did so, but seeming to enjoy the operation, while Bobboker wailed in the next room in a long-drawn way that promised to consume the afternoon. But mamma did not care; he might cry, and realize how naughty a thing it was to hurt his poor little helpless baby sister; so mamma worked away, and let him cry, while she enjoyed to the full every expression and act of the baby. The Jefful finally wearied of her playthings, and began to settle herself jerkily, and curve her back more and more, as sitting babies generally do when tired; but mamma, like most other mammas, had never in her life imagined that a baby's back could ever become tired. So baby went on jerking and protesting; and then mamma's elbow was twitched, and, looking to see who did it, she saw Bobboker, with a very solemn face, and heard him remark:

"Oo boosed Bobboker."

What mamma might have said we do not know, for just then in burst Fred and Bertha, school having been dismissed.

"Mamma, may I go to the park?" asked Fred.

"Oh, say, mamma, may I put on my nice clothes and go visit Ellie Millston?" asked Bertha.

"I want an appoo—a nice peilded one," remarked Bobboker. Bobboker seemed to have some doubt as to whether he had been heard, for he again asked for the apple, and repeated his request several times.

"Ow—ya—boo—goo!" declared The Jefful.

Now mamma might have answered each of the children, but one cannot very well answer four questions at a time, nor even hear them without trouble. Mamma did the best she could; she tried to imagine what her children had said; then she had them repeat it, and this is what she heard:

"Mamma, say, an appoo boo into my nice Ellie Millston," which was more than even mamma, with her faculty for translating child-talk, could understand.

"One at a time, please, darlings," said mamma.

"Bobboker was only one of them at a time, him was," said Bobboker, tugging at mamma's arm, and thus drawing her yarn so tightly that it broke.

"So was I," said Bertha. "Say, mamma, may I?"

"Ah—boo—um—ga—boobooloo," suggested baby.

"I'm wasting time awfully, mamma," said Fred.

Mamma dropped her work into her lap, and put her hands to her head, and when she had fairly taken hold of that useful member she seemed very unwilling to let it go; indeed, it seemed to her for a moment or two that if she removed her hands, that instant her head too would drop into her lap, which would scarcely be the proper place for the eyes, ears, and tongue of a busy little woman. Mamma had shut her eyes, as she tried to collect her senses, but Bobboker, who had been standing in front of her, roused her by exclaiming:

"Mamma, 'top a lookin' at me wif the outsidies of you eyeses; they don't say noffin at Bobboker."

Mamma seemed to think for a moment that saying things to Bobboker was not the sole purpose of existence, but when, a moment later, she felt one of her