

back her chair and dragged Fred up into her lap and gave back to him all his kisses and embraces, and said: "Mamma's darling—mamma's friend—mamma's dear great heart."

"I don't know what you're crying about," said Fred, as soon as he was allowed breath enough to speak with: "but I'm awful sorry for you. Are you sick?"

"No, dear old fellow—only tired—oh, so tired!"

"What makes you so tired?" asked Fred.

"Oh, baby—and little children who won't dress themselves in the morning without being continually watched and scolded by mamma."

"Well, mamma," said Fred, sitting upright and looking honestly into her eyes "I didn't see that shoe this morning until I stumbled right over it."

"You weren't looking for it, little boy; that is the reason you didn't find it. If you would only keep your mind upon whatever you have to do mamma would be saved thousands of troubles."

"Well, I put my mind on things, but it comes right off again when I don't know anything about it," explained Fred.

While mamma had been caressing Fred and talking with him, she had felt one of her cheeks being kissed, and an arm about her neck which she knew was Bertha's; but she affected not to notice either while it seemed she could do something toward reforming Fred. The boy's reply, however, was more than she could answer at once, so she put an arm around Bertha, and Bertha tried to climb into her lap, and mamma worked Fred to one side and dragged Bertha up on the other side, and Bertha scrutinized the entire operation until she was satisfied that she was as completely in mamma's lap as Fred was; then both children sat there like a double-backed chair weighing a hundred pounds, and so rickety that it took both of mamma's arms to hold it together. The proceeding did not escape the notice of another member of the family, who exclaimed:

"Bobboker 'awnts to det in mamma's 'ap too."

"Darlings," said mamma, as she rather abruptly spilled the children, one on each side, "mamma's afraid you'll have to get down; she can't hold three at a time."

"Bobboker," said Fred, with a pout, "you're a selfish, piggish little thing."

"He always wants to do what he sees any one else do," said Bertha.

"Sh—h—h!" said mamma. "Doesn't my little girl want to do whatever Fred does? And, Fred, you must never call little people bad names. Mamma might call you worse names, if she judged your character by your actions."

"But don't you see, mamma," explained Bertha, "I'm a twins, and Bobboker isn't."

"Well," said Fred, going around to Bobboker's chair and putting his arm around his little brother's neck, curls and all, "he's a ignorant 'tittle sweets, an' budder s'ant boose him."

"Ow—ye—ngya!" screamed Bobboker.

"There!" exclaimed Fred, retiring promptly; "just see how hateful he is when I try to love him!"

"Your arm pulled his hair," said mamma.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Fred; "something's *always* doing something to that young one."

"Tell him you didn't mean to hurt him—pet him a little," said mamma; but Fred had already whisked out of the room, so mamma explained in his stead, and pacified her beeboy. Then she looked at her plate again, and did not seem particularly pleased at what she saw, for the ham was glued down by cold gravy and the slices of fried potatoes had warped, like scraps of leather that had lain in the sun. But she finished her slice of bread, and tasted the coffee to find it had grown cold

and of that sickish sweetness which some sugar causes when it has been in solution for a few moments; so she poured a fresh cup, drank it in haste, took Bobboker, and went upstairs to relieve Bridget, first reminding Bertha that within half an hour she and Fred must start for school.

Reaching her own room, mamma found her bed neatly made. She disliked to disarrange neatly made beds; nevertheless she dropped down upon her couch, taking baby with her, while Bobboker climbed up on the other side, putting one elbow upon mamma's waist, and one hand in her neck, which tickled her terribly. As for The Jefful, she smacked her lips, and looked inquiringly at mamma, and put her thumb in her mouth, and took it out and smacked her lips again.

"Dear, dear!" sighed mamma, "I've forgotten to bring baby her breakfast. Will mamma's beeboy go down to Bridget and ask her for a cup of milk and some crackers for the baby?"

"I ca't," said Bobboker, who did not know how to say "can't."

"Oh, do—for poor tired mamma?"

"I ca't—Bobboker wants to lom you."

"You can love me all you like when you come back," said mamma.

"I ca't."

"Please?"

"Mus'n't say 'p'ease' to Bobboker—makes Bobboker k'y."

"Well, you shall cry all you like when you bring the baby's breakfast."

"I ca't—'awnts to k'y now."

"Well, cry—cry ever so much, and then get the baby's breakfast."

This permission rather mystified Bobboker, and he looked at mamma very sternly, but her face did not change, so the child scrambled off the bed and disappeared. Then the Jefful asked again, and more emphatically, for her breakfast, and mamma played with her so as to make her temporarily forget her physical needs. This plan succeeded for several moments, but The Jefful's monitor within suddenly prompted her, while right in the middle of a merry crow, to return to life's duties, and she did not hold her peace a second until mamma arose, took her on her shoulder, and descended to the dining-room, where she found Bobboker taking the scraps from the various plates and putting them where children imagine such things will do the most good, while Bridget was eating industriously and apparently ignoring the child's existence. Now Bobboker's digestion was anything but good, as Bridget had been told some scores of times, and ham was a little the worst thing it could attempt; so mamma exclaimed:

"Oh, Bridget! How could you let him stuff those dreadful scraps? And why didn't you send him back with the baby's breakfast?"

Bridget started as if from profound slumber, and shouted:

"Ah, ye bad little bye—fot are ye doin'? Baby's breakfast, is it, mem? How was I to know ye didn't take it up yersel'?"

"I told him to ask you for it—the baby was screaming," said mamma.

"Never a bit was he afther askin' for, barrin' a lump av sugar."

"I hope you didn't give it to him. He's already had one."

"Well, to tell ye the truth, mem," said Bridget, "he lugged that wistful that I gave him two."

"Dear, dear!" sighed mamma, and sat down to feed the baby. Mamma had just crumbled two or three crackers into the milk, and The Jefful had not made