

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

GOING HOME.

BY FRANCES BROWN.

We said that the days were evil,
We feel that they might be few,
For low was our fortune's level,
And heavy the winters grew;
But one who had no possession
Looked up to the azure dome,
And said, in his simple fashion,
"Dear friends, we are going home!"

"This world is the same dull market
That wearied its earliest sage;
The times to the wise are dark yet,
But so hath been many an age,
And rich grow the toiling nations,
And red grow the battle spears
And dreary with desolations
Roll onward the laden years.

"What need of the changeless story
Which time hath so often told,
The spectre that follows glory,
The canker that comes with gold?
That wisdom and strength and honor
Must fade like the far sea foam,
And Death is the only winner;
But, friends, we are going home!"

"The homes we had hoped to rest in
Were open to sin and strife,
The dreams that our youth was blest in
Were not for the wear of life;
For care can darken the cottage,
As well as the palace hearth,
And birthrights are sold for pottage
But never redeemed on earth.

"The springs have gone by in sorrow,
The summers were grieved away,
And ever we feared to-morrow,
And ever we blamed to-day.
In depths which the searcher sounded,
On hills, which the high heart clomb,
Have trouble and toiled abounded,
But, friends, we are going home!"

"Our faith was the bravest bulwark,
But found not a stone of trust;
Our love was the fairest gilder,
But lavished its wealth on dust.
And time hath the fabric shaken
And fortune the clay hath shown,
For much have they changed and taken,
But nothing that was our own.

"The light which to us made baser
The paths which so many choose,
The gifts there was found no place for,
The riches we could not use;
The heart that when life was wintry
Found summer in strain and tome,
With these to our kin and country,
Dear friends, are going home!"

Daddy's Boy.

(By L. T. MEAD.)

CHAPTER XXIX.

"How nice I feel in my shepherdess' dress," said Violet Frere, as she bobbed up and down and turned herself to the right and left before the long glass in her mother's bedroom.—
"Don't you like me in this dress, mamma?"

"Yes, dear; very nice, very nice indeed," answered Mrs. Frere, who was looking extremely pretty and young herself in black velvet, magnificent Brussels lace and diamonds. "Don't stand staring at yourself any more, Violet; take up your little crook and run downstairs. I think everything is now quite ready, and your guests will arrive in a moment or two. Go down and be ready to receive them,

Violet. I only wish Mary was here to-night; she could enjoy your pretty fancy ball.

"I must look for Ronald," said Violet as she tripped out of the room. "I expect he'll look rather a show as a little wounded drummer boy. Isn't it silly of Ronnie to want to be a wounded drummer boy, mamma?"

"My dear, I have no time to discuss this question at present. Tap at your cousin's door, and if he is ready ask him to go downstairs with you. Ronald is the right person to receive his little guests, and you may help him if you like."

A few moments later Mrs. Frere was standing in the magnificent hall, which was looking gay and bright now with blazing firelight, and the soft lustre of innumerable wax candles. A gay crowd of children, dressed in all kinds of picturesque costumes, surrounded her. The hall was filling fast, and the bright and pretty children flitted about and made the old place echo with their laughter and mirth.

Suddenly Mrs. Frere called Violet to her side.

"Where is your cousin, dear? I don't see him anywhere about?"

"Oh, I don't know, mamma?—Please don't keep me, for our first waltz is to begin directly, and Charley Staniland wants me as his partner. —He's the tallest boy in the room, and I do like to dance with him. Please let me run away, mamma; I really don't know where Ronald is."

"But stay one moment, Violet. Was he not in his room when you went to fetch him?"

"No, mother dear, he wasn't. I went right into the room, and he wasn't there; but it's all right, for I looked into the wardrobe, and his little drummer's suit was gone, and his old velvet clothes were tossed in a little pile on the shelves. Ronnie's all right; he has only got one of his funny notions in his head, and he'll be in the hall directly. May I run away now, mamma?"

Mrs. Frere gave permission, and soon the little shepherdess was flying round in the giddy mazes of the waltz. Mrs. Frere did not feel quite satisfied; she suddenly remembered that Ronald had not been present at the early dinner; this had given her no uneasiness at the time, for the little boy in his holidays was very fond of snatching a hasty meal under Dorothy's wing. At tea time Mrs. Frere was not present; she was very tired, and had desired her maid to bring her some tea to her bedroom. Now, however, she began to have a foreboding; Ronald, with all his vagaries, was not likely to absent himself from the hall. Certainly his having put on the little drummer boy's dress was some consolation, and made her at one moment inclined to laugh at her fears; but they returned more strongly the next, and she found that she could not remain quietly in the hall. She found herself getting quite nervous as she watched in vain for the appearance of the Waterloo drummer boy.

Walter passed her and she caught his arm.

"My dear, have you seen anything of Ronald?"

"No, mother; I have not seen the little chap all day."

"What? My dear son, Ronald was surely present at tea time?"

"No, mother; Guy and Violet and I were all alone."

Mrs. Frere felt her comely face turn pale. She gave some directions to Walter, and went a little more quickly than her wont out of the hall.

Meanwhile a little rumor began to spread among the young dancers that some one was missing. They heard reports of the very curious dress which Ronald had chosen to wear, and the little girls expressed themselves anxious to see him, and said that his was a delightful idea, and even the boys that the little drummer might as well put in an appearance.

Mrs. Frere walked quickly into a passage

and rang a certain bell which communicated with the children's part of the house. In a moment or two old Dorothy came downstairs.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Frere, "I wish you would hurry Sir Ronald; he is most likely in his room, and the children are waiting for him and expecting him. You know he is master of the ceremonies, and he ought to be present. Just ask him to come downstairs at once Dorothy."

"He's not in his room, ma'am," said Dorothy. "I went there but a minute or two back, thinking he'd want me to buckle on his belt or something, but the little darling had put on those blessed regimentals all by himself, and I expect he's figuring away now in the ball room, ma'am. Sir Ronald would scorn to ask any one to help him when he could do the thing himself."

"You gave him his dinner, didn't you, to-day, Dorothy?" asked Mrs. Frere.

"No, that I didn't ma'am; I have not seen my dear little master not for the whole live-long day."

Mrs. Frere felt her heart growing fainter; she turned into her husband's study. The Major had long ago determined not to be present at the children's ball, and he was now lying back in the depths of his easy chair with his feet encased in comfortable slippers, and a newspaper, which, however, he was not reading, in his hand.

"Ben," said his wife, coming in and standing before him in her magnificent dress, with the diamonds, which would be Ronald's some day, sparkling and shining on her white neck and in her dark hair, "Ben, I am a little anxious about Ronald; he is not in the ball room, and I have made inquiries and no one seems to have seen anything of him all day." "Good Lord!" said the Major; he sprang to his feet, his weakness and rheumatism forgotten; "good gracious, Eleanor!" going up to his wife and clutching her soft, white arm, "the boy must be in the ball room, he must. Why, he was perfectly wild about it. You don't recognize the little chap in the drummer's dress, that's all."

"No, Ben, he's not there; he has not been seen since the morning; he was not present either at dinner or at tea. Oh, my dear, what is the matter?"

"Then he's in the copse," said the Major; I know it; I am sure of it; he is in the copse, and it's my fault. The dearest, the bravest little chap! Let me go to him; he has got hurt in some way, and he is in the copse."

Scarcely knowing what he was saying or doing, for the most horrible dread had overtaken Major Frere, he rushed past his wife, and hatless and in his slippers burst open a side door, and was running in the direction of the place where he had asked Ronald to wait for him. Mrs. Frere waited one instant to call a man-servant to accompany her, and then she too, in her beautiful evening dress, and with her head uncovered, went out into the damp, dark winter's night.

The dance went on right merrily; the children were all in capital spirits, and Walter made a very good impromptu master of ceremonies.—Now and then a little voice said: "I wonder when the drummer boy is coming;" and now and then bright eyes were turning expectantly in the direction from whence a small figure in regimentals might be expected to enter.

Suddenly, for no reason that the children could ever understand, the music ceased, the little dancers stopped and looked at each other inquiringly; a servant came up and whispered something to Walter, who turned white, uttered a groan, and rushed from the hall.

"What is wrong?" asked a boy of Violet.

"Oh, nothing!" she answered, for she had not seen her brother's face.

"Perhaps the drummer is coming at last," said another child with a laugh.