

Family Department.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.—NOV. 1.

Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready.—Rev. xix, 6, 7.

They which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. * * * Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—1 Thess. iv., 14, 17.

Now in this our pilgrim day,
Brothers, it is *we* and *they*:
We, upon the weary road,
They, at rest with Christ, in God.

We, with conflicts compass'd round
Victors, *they*, with glory crown'd!
We, 'mid shadows of the tomb,
They, within the light of home.

Yet with quickened steps we press,
Through the thorny wilderness.
While on earth we sing of them
Singing in Jerusalem.

For the angels to and fro
Ply their tasks above, below,
And by countless ministries
Knit our tents, and Paradise.

Nearer yet, One Spirit bears
Witness in our hearts and theirs;
Day by day we kneel and meet,
Children at One Father's feet;

Nearer yet the Bridegroom's voice,
Bids his drooping ones rejoice;
Tears are dried, and grief is dumb
Listening His "Behold I come."

Then no longer *we* and *they*,
Former things all past away;
Then no more *that* world and *this*,
One abode of perfect bliss.

We the circle of His own;
We, the *Bride* upon His throne;
One, indissoluble, *we*
Ever, Jesus, Lord, with Thee.

BICKERSTETH.

THOSE BOYS.

CHAPTER II.—THE FEATHERS IN DAN'S TAIL.

I have said that these little brothers loved one another, but in this story I have to speak of a sad time—a time when, with all the real affection which existed between them, there were angry words spoken and unkind deeds done—a time when Mike and Ted were very unhappy.

It is a sad story, and might have had a dark ending. It tells of that bitterest of all sadness, the sadness caused by sin.

Yes, this story is of my poor Mike's first great temptation and first great sin.

It all commenced in a very small way, and the poor boy might truly have said, in the words of one of the rhymes which he knew so well—

"For though at first I might begin
With what I thought a little sin."

but there is an old French proverb which, translated, tells us, that it is the first step which costs.

Had he not taken the first step astray, the temptation to further and deeper sin would never have been.

But I must tell my story, and cease talking about it.

One bright morning in June, Mike, who was lying flat on his back, was awakened by a great beam of sunshine falling full on his rosy face. He opened his eyes, rubbed them, and looked about him.

How funny! Nursey had forgotten to draw down the blind, which accounted for that sun-

beam which had aroused the little boy from his sleep a full hour before his usual time. He looked at the clock on the mantelpiece; it had not yet struck six. He looked at Ted, and felt very much inclined to awaken him. He raised himself a little in bed and looked at Nurse Nora, who lay with her face turned towards him, snoring away lustily.

Finally his eyes rested on Dan, the canary, who was not only awake like himself, but singing at the top of his high, shrill voice, and evidently quite revelling in the sunshine which had disturbed his little master so inconveniently early.

"I'll just jump up and bring Dan to bed with me," thought the little boy.

He scrambled out of his cot, and going softly across the floor, secured the cage, and was about to return with it, when something tempted him to look out of the window.

There he saw a sight which caused him to drop Dan's cage and clasp his hands in astonishment.

His father, who had gone away from home quite unexpectedly and in a great hurry the night before, was now returning. He was returning at this early, early hour.

He was *walking* up the avenue; Mike could see the jaunting car at the gate. He was walking, and carrying something in his arms, something wrapped in a large red shawl. This something looked wonderfully like a little child.

Mike was speechless with amazement.

He saw his father disappear into the porch, and then heard him calling his mother very softly.

Leaving Dan's cage forgotten on the window sill, Mike crept back into bed. He longed more than ever to awaken Ted, and was about to do so, when suddenly a memory came before him—a very painful memory.

Mike had disobeyed his mother.

It was one of her strictest commands that neither of the children should get out of bed before seven o'clock.

Mrs. O'Donnel had made this rule because at one time Mike and Ted used to awaken very early, and Ted in particular, being a delicate little fellow, caught many a cough or toothache playing on the cold floor.

Now Mrs. O'Donnel made very few rules for her boys. She wished to leave them as free and untrammelled as possible, but when she saw the necessity of laying any command upon them, she was very particular in having that command obeyed.

When Mike had jumped out of bed to get Dan, he had in his excitement completely forgotten this rule, but when he lay down again, and was about to awaken Ted to relate to him the wonderful and mysterious sight he had just witnessed, he suddenly remembered that he had disobeyed his mother.

What should Mike have done then? I am sure my little readers can guess.

He should first of all have asked God for Christ's sake to forgive him for his want of thought, for as Mike had forgotten his mother's order, it was really nothing more; and then, as soon as ever he saw his mother, he should have told her the whole story.

This was his first step away.

Had he confessed his fault then, all that would not have been, and much sorrow would have been spared to little Mike O'Donnel. Instead of doing this, however, Mike lay and tossed on his bed, and grew more curious every moment.

At last footsteps were heard in the passage, the door was softly opened, and his mother entered the room.

Now was Mike's opportunity; but far from availing himself of it, he shut up his eyes tightly, and pretended to be asleep.

Mrs. O'Donnel went first to the window, where, seeing Dan's cage laid on the sill, she hung it on its perch, thereby probably saving the little bird's life, as the cat was very fond of prowling about in the mornings.

Then she went to Nora's bed, and awakening her, whispered something which Mike could not hear.

The nurse jumped up at once, and throwing a shawl about her, without even waiting to dress, went out of the room with her mistress.

This was unbearable. Mike could stay quiet no longer.

Stretching across to Ted's bed, he touched his little brother's hand, which lay temptingly outside the counterpane. Ted yawned, opened his eyes sleepily, and looked at Mike.

"O! I've had such a dream."

"What about?" asked Mike.

"Birthday! Our birthday will be this day week."

"Yes," said Mike, rather impatiently. "Now, Ted, listen to me, I've got the most wonderful, wonderful thing to tell you." And Mike laid his excited, wide awake face on the gilt bar which ran round Ted's cot.

"What is it?" asked his brother.

"You must first promise never, never to tell, never to breathe a word about it?"

"O Mike! is it a secret?"

"Yet, the most wonderful, delicious secret you ever heard."

"Then, Mike, course I won't tell. Do say it out, Mike; don't keep me in espense" (suspense).

"Well," said Mike, bringing out his words slowly, and enjoying his little brother's eagerness, "I woke this mornin' very early, cause that naughty Nursie didn't quite draw down the blinds, and the sun came and walked on me nose." (Mike was given to figurative language, and this remarkable pilgrimage on the part of the sun was received by Ted as a matter of course.)

"And, Ted, it was only just six, and you was asleep, darlin', and I didn't like to wake you up, and Nursie was asleep and snorin' so loud, and the only one awake but me was Dan. So I thought I'd like to have Dan to count the feathers in his new tail which he growed since he moulted, and I jumped out of bed and ran to the window. Here there was an exclamation from Ted. Mike, without heeding him, hurried on with his story. "When I got to the window I thought I'd take a little bit of peep out, and climbed on the window sill, and I saw—"

"What?"

"Ted, you know father went away last night; well, I saw him comin' back. Walking up the avenue; the car left at the gate. Walkin' up, Ted, and carrying a bundle!"

"Well?" questioned Ted, who was now intensely curious.

"Carryin' a bundle in a red shawl. I could not make out what it was, until I saw peeping out at one end two—"

"Yes," said Ted.

"Two little shoes, Ted!" losing all control of himself. "'Twas a child! 'twas a little child! and 'tis in the house, and I 'spect Nursie has gone to wash it. Oh! isn't it just delicious?"

Ted began to clap his hands; he sat up in bed, and was about to testify his glee in some more energetic manner, when suddenly a memory came to him too, and he turned his brown eyes sorrowfully on Mike.

"Mike, you oughtn't to have got up."

"No more I ought," answered Mike, "but I just forgot."

"But, Mike, you'll tell mother—she won't be angry as you only forgot."

"Well, I'll see about it," said Mike; "but, Ted, you keep my secret close."

"Course," said Ted.

Just then the clock struck seven, and Mrs. O'Donnel came in, followed by Biddie, the cook, bearing a can of warm water.

"Where's Nora?" called out Mike.

"She is busy, dears; she cannot bathe and dress you; but Biddle will, and mother will look on. Come, get up quietly, like good boys,