

## AN EVENING HYMN.

Father, breathe an evening blessing  
O'er Thy children resting here ;  
Fill our hearts with peace and gladness ;  
Banish from us every fear.

Give us faith to trust Thee fully,  
In the dark as in the light ;  
Resting here in sweet assurance,  
Heeding not the stormy night :

For a Father's love encircles  
All the paths thro' life we tread,  
Guiding, guarding, keeping ever,  
Noting all the tears we shed.

When the darkest clouds are hiding  
All the azure from our sky—  
When our dearest friends forsake us,  
Jesus, then be very nigh.

When from sorrow's cup we're drinking,  
When our cross is hard to bear,  
When our strength is fast declining,  
Christ will all our burdens share.

Life and death to us are nothing,  
With Jehovah at our side ;  
In the darkness, in the sunlight,  
He will e'er with us abide.

Then, in perfect peace and safety,  
We will fold our hands to rest ;  
Fearing nothing, trusting fully,  
As we lean on Jesus' breast.

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Mrs. J. B. HILL.

## MY FIRST UNTRUTH, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

I was living with my uncle and aunt at Rill Farm, where I had been brought up by them from a child, and was fourteen years old at the time of my telling this, my first untruth. When I say "first untruth," I do not mean you to infer that I was up to this time perfectly truthful in word, act and look, for (as those who know anything of the deceitfulness of their own hearts will too sadly confess) this perfect truthfulness is as rare as it is beautiful; but this was my first wilful, deliberate falsehood, and, I am thankful to say, my last.

Rill Farm was a charming old place. The old farm-house was built of red bricks, stained by time all manner of warm colours, and its red-tiled roof was half lost below the rich green and leaden-coloured mosses and lichens which covered it. The tall oaks and elms that clustered round hid it from sight, even to the high stack of chimneys in the middle of the roof, till you came through the garden-door, opening into the long straight walk, bordered at either side with rose bushes, hollyhocks, sunflowers, great patches of heart's-ease, rich-smelling thyme, white pinks, and clove. Behind the house was a square of

farm buildings, and here I used to spend most of the day, after I had ridden my pony in from school. The farm-yard was such a scene of busy life—dogs, poultry, horses and cows. I took an interest in all, but my chief interest lay with my doves. I had doves of all colours and kinds, and lately had been given some pure white ones, for which I had fashioned a dove-cote (very neatly, as I thought), that they might have a separate home.

"Beautiful it is, indeed, Master Harry," said Joe, the stable-boy, when I showed him my work; "but it wants one thing."

"Wants what?" I asked anxiously.

"Paint the roof, sir, and it'll stand the rain."

"You are right, Joe."

Joe was a favourite of mine, he was so kind and willing. He never seemed to make a trouble of anything, and was liked by all the men on the farm.

Next afternoon I set to work to paint the roof lead-colour, bringing the paint from the corner of the granary floor, where two or three pots of out-door paint always stood ready. I remembered that I had taken a capital paint brush to the loft above, some weeks before, and forgotten it there, so I went up to fetch it. The loft was quite dark, so instead of opening, as I ought to have done, one of the sliding panels, which let in light and air, I twisted up a wisp of hay, and lit it with a match from my pocket, found my brush, threw down my wisp, stamped the sparks out, and went to my painting work below, in an unused stable.

It must have been about twelve o'clock that night when a noise outside my window awoke me. A strange mingled sort of noise it was, when I had wakened fully enough to listen; a crackling, hissing, trampling sort of sound. I ran to the window looking into the square of farm buildings. The yard seemed full of smoke, and at that instant a red tongue of flame darted from one of the windows, or rather "opes," through which trusses of hay were lifted into the loft, where I had found my paint brush. Clang! went the bell used for calling our men to dinner—clang! clang! Then all the dogs woke and added the noise of their barking.

I knew instantly whose work the fire was, and leaned for a moment helplessly against the window-frame, with a sick, half-giddy sort of feeling I had never had before. Men soon came tramping into the yard—all our labourers, and men from the village. I could see my uncle, Joe Dennis the ploughman, every one I knew; all the figures were brought out so clearly in that vivid red light.

Hissing, roaring, leaping! now seemingly swallowed up in volumes of black smoke, now darting out like coils of fiery serpents, the flames won mastery. All along the north side of the square the fire-spirit had