

that he could help to make her more comfortable; but he never breathed it to her, for she, he knew full well, would check the thought as showing discontent with God Almighty's dealings.

She had been reading to him one day—and helping him to read—the psalm which tells of God's goodness to all things, and how he openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. The child was very thoughtful for a few minutes, and then he said:

"Mother, do you not think God might sometimes open his hand a little wider?"

"What makes you ask?"

"I think," he said, "that if you had more good things—a little more to eat, you know, and a warmer blanket—it might be better."

"Never think the thought again," she answered; "God is our Father, and he knows what is best for us, and gives to us all that is good. You can trust in me?"

"O yes," he said, and his face shone brightly as he smiled into hers, "of course I can trust in you. I am 'mother's boy.'"

"Let us remember, then," she said, "that we are our Father's children—the children of a Father who cares for us better than any parent here on earth."

And that thought was fixed in his mind—a nail driven in a sure place.

One day Ned was out in the lane. He had been set to fence up a gap in the hedge, for he was a handy boy and shrewd. A gentleman came riding that way slowly, for his horse had just cast a shoe.

"Boy, is there a farrier to be had near here?"

"Ay, sir, that there is, about three parts of a mile yonder."

"There is no help for it," said the gentleman. "Show me the way, boy, and I'll give you a shilling," (about twenty cents.)

A pang shot through the boy's heart, for a shilling was a great prize to him, but he felt he must not earn it. He had been sent there to finish a job of work; by twelve it was to be done, and then he might rest for an hour; but it was not yet noon, and the work was still unfinished.

"I am sorry I cannot show you," he said, "but I must finish my work."

The gentleman looked surprised. "Silly boy," he said, "it will cost no more than a few minutes to show me the way, ease this poor brute, and earn a shilling. Come."

"I am sorry," the boy replied, working on perseveringly as he spoke, "I am really very sorry for you, sir; for the poor horse, sir; and for myself, sir; but the few minutes are not mine. I am paid to do what I am doing, and it is as bad to thieve time as to steal money."

"An oddity," said the gentleman, getting off his horse and patting the animal's neck. "Who has taught you this scrupulosity, boy?"

Ned did not know the meaning of that word, but he knew that all he had been taught was from the lips of his mother, and so he answered:

"Mother, sir."

"Mother," said the gentleman, "must be a remarkably shrewd person, a pattern villager, to be executed in Dresden china and set on the chimney-piece; and they call you—"

"Mother's boy, sir."

The gentleman laughed outright, and then, and not till then, he saw the boy's face flush, and that his eyes were full of meaning.

"I am a poor boy, sir," he said, "and cannot be expected to know good manners. I try to be honest and to love my mother and my God."

The gentleman laughed no more, but spoke in a freer and kinder tone.

"You are quite right, my lad, and I will wait your time. It wants less than fifteen minutes to noon; then after that you can show me to the farrier's."

"Very willing, sir."

So when the gap in the hedge was mended, Ned very readily showed the gentleman the way and received his shilling.

Run! you should have seen that boy run with the prized shilling—it almost takes away my breath to think of it. Home, home to his mother, to cast the treasure into her lap, and to hear her words as she kissed his forehead, "The Lord is opening his hand."

That evening the gentleman came to the cottage and asked for "mother's boy." He was a light-haired, light-eyed, laughing gentleman, son of my Lady Fanshaw—a great notability in fashionable quarters—Dowager Lady Fanshaw's son—who had never been *his* mother's boy—lounging away his life at the club and the mess-table, and finding it rather dreary work. This gentleman had been struck by the boy's oddity, and had resolved to make Ned a liberal offer. I think I told you he was a well-made lad, tall of his age. Well, the son of my Lady Fanshaw intended to take him into his service, to put him into livery, and to let him hang on to the back of his cab as a "Tiger Trim!" Very much surprised was he to learn, as he did learn, that "mother's boy" objected to his proposal; that he would not take service, even under the most tempting offer; that he preferred doing the hardest work for the lowest pay, rather than leave his mother and live in luxury.

"Simpleton," said the son of my Lady Fanshaw, "do you not observe that by taking service you would be best looking after your mother's interest as well as your own? We should make a man of you in time, and you would be able to send your mother something handsome at Christmas."

"I would rather stay with her and work," said the boy. "She would never bear to part with me, and if she could I should never bear to part with her."

The son of my Lady Fanshaw, who thought he could get on very well without his mother, and did not scruple to say so, went his way without his tiger. He stopped at the parsonage, two miles away, and over the supper told his story.

Two or three days afterward Farmer Fordingham had a visit from the pastor; two or three days after that Farmer Fordingham offered to take Ned on his farm at seven shillings a week. From that time Ned began to prosper, and it was found that the work which his mother obtained was easier done and better paid for than it had been. Then Ned's wages were raised, and he became lawful proprietor of a small piece of ground of his own. It was the work of years, but they were years happily spent. God was opening his hand. The pastor had a pleasant word for him, so had the squire, so had Farmer Fordingham, who, except on special occasions, was rarely known to utter pleasant things to anybody—but a good man for all that.

And now it has come to pass that Ned has a small holding of his own—a small farm and works on it, and Ned's mother looks after the dairy. He is still what thriving farmers would call poor; it is more than probable the valet of my Lady Fanshaw's son—to which high dignity he would have risen by this time had he taken service with his lordship—realizes twice the money for a tenth part of the work. What of that? The worth of money is only that which it will bring. Heaps of gold would never have made Ned so happy as working for and with the mother he loves so dearly, and watching her joy in all his little successes. It is the effort of his life to make her happy, and he finds his happiness in hers.

It is a sunny Sunday morning, and the stout young farmer is in the village churchyard, his mother leaning on his arm. They are standing by his father's grave. A kind voice speaks to them. It is that of the pastor.

"All well with you, farmer?"

"All well, sir."

"Prospering?"

"God has opened his hand."

"And God," says the pastor, "is very faithful to all his promises; you know the command of love and obedience to parents is the first, with a promise—mutual honor and love to both. A good son always brings a blessing on himself."

"Ay, sir, but every son is not blessed with such a mother."

The pastor smiles very kindly, takes mother and son by the hand, and says to the former:

"Ah, Mrs. Radcliffe, your Ned is the same as ever—his mother's boy!"



"THE LITTLE ONE."

AND is it true what I am told,
That there are lambs within the fold
Of God's beloved Son?
That Jesus Christ, with tender care,
Will in his arms most gently bear
The helpless "little one?"

O yes! I've heard my mother say
He never sent a child away
That scarce could walk or run;
For when the parent's love besought
That he would touch the child she brought,
He blessed the "little one."

And I, a little straying lamb,
May come to Jesus as I am,
Though goodness I have none;
May now be folded to his breast
As birds within the parent's nest,
And be his "little one."

And he can do all this for me,
Because in sorrow on the tree
He once for sinners hung;
And having washed their sins away,
He now rejoices day by day
To cleanse the "little one."

Others there are who love me too;
But who with all their love can do
What Jesus Christ hath done?
Then if he teaches me to pray,
I'll surely go to him and say
"Lord, bless thy 'little one.'"

Thus by this glorious Shepherd fed,
And by his mercy gently led
Where living water runs,
My greatest pleasure will be this,
That I'm a little lamb of his,
Who loves the "little ones."

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

LITTLE ALLIE.

A GENTLEMAN and lady, with their "Little Allie," a beautiful, curly-headed, loving and lovable little cherub of four summers, were riding on one clear, beautiful winter's eve. They noticed that little Allie's attention was fixed intently on the clear, brightly-shining sky.

After watching it some time she exclaimed, "O, father, *there is the smoke from the angels' chimneys!*" pointing at the same time to the *milky way*, which was very clearly discernible at the time.

GENIE BELMONTE.

WILLIE asked his mother, "Have you a pa or ma?" Being told that she had not, he thought it was dreadful not to have a pa or ma, and said, "I'll be right good, and when I die and go to God I'll ask him to send you a ma and pa."