

away. Pretty playthings, indeed, for you to give a boy like him! No wonder I have to get a dozen new ones every two or three months.'

Margaret now spoke.

'Tommy, you must go up to your mother.'

She now took the clothes-pins and commenced putting them into the basket where they belonged. Her words and action had a more instant effect than all the mother's storm of passion. The boy left the kitchen in tears, and went slowly upstairs.

'Why didn't you come when I called you? Say!'

The mother seized her little boy by the arm the moment he came in reach of her, and dragged rather than led him upstairs, uttering such exclamations as these by the way:

'I never saw such a child! You might as well talk to the wind! I'm in despair! I'll give up! Humph! clothes-pins, indeed! Pretty playthings to give a child! Everything goes to rack and ruin! There!'

And, as the last word was uttered, Tommy was thrust into his mother's room with a force that nearly threw him prostrate.

'Now, take off your clothes, sir.'

'What for, mother? I haven't done anything! I didn't hurt the clothes-pins: Margaret said I might play with them.'

'D've hear? Take off your clothes, I say!'

'I didn't do anything, mother.'

'A word more, and I'll box your ears until they ring for a month. Take off them clothes, I say! I'll teach you to come when I send for you. I'll let you know whether I am to be minded or not!'

Tommy slowly disrobed himself, while his mother fretted to the point of resolution, eyed him with unrelenting aspect. The jacket and trousers were removed, and his night-clothes put on in their stead, Tommy all the while protesting tearfully that he had done nothing.

'Will you hush!' was all the satisfaction he received for his protestations.

'Now, Jane, take him upstairs to bed: he's got to lie there all the afternoon.'

It was then four, and the sun did not set until near eight o'clock. Upstairs the poor child had to go, and then his mother found some quiet. Her babe slept soundly in the cradle, undisturbed by Tommy's racket, and she enjoyed a new novel to the extent of almost entirely forgetting her lonely boy shut up in the chamber above.

'Where's Tommy?' asked a friend, who dropped in about six o'clock.

'In bed,' said the mother, with a sigh.

'What's the matter? Is he sick?'

'Oh, no, I almost wish he were.'

'What a strange wish! Why do you wish so?'

'Oh, because he is like a little angel when he is sick—as good as he can be. I had to send him to bed as a punishment for disobedience. He is a hard child to manage; I think I never saw one just like him: but, you know, obedience is everything. It is our duty to require a strict regard to this in our children.'

'Certainly. If they do not obey their parents as children, they will not obey the laws as men.'

'That is precisely the view I take; and I make it a point to require implicit obedience in my boy. This is my duty as a parent: but I find it hard work.'

'It is hard, doubtless. Still we must persevere, and in patience, possessing our souls.'

'To be patient with a boy like mine is a hard task. Sometimes I feel as if I should go wild,' said the mother.

'But, under the influence of such a feeling,' remarked the friend, 'what we say makes little or no impression. A calmly uttered word, in which there is an expression of interest in and sympathy for the child, does more than the sternest commands. This I have long since discovered. I never scold my children: scolding does no good, but harm. My oldest boy is

restless, excitable, and impulsive. If I were not to provide him with the means of employing himself, or in other ways divert him, his hands would be on everything in the house, and both he and I made unhappy.'

'But how can you interest him?'

'In various ways. Sometimes I read to him; sometimes I set him to doing things by way of assisting me. I take him out when I can, and let him go with the girls when I send them on errands. I provide him with playthings that are suited to his age. In a word, I try to keep him in my mind; and, therefore, find it not very difficult to meet his varying states. I never thrust him aside, and say I am too busy to attend to him when he comes with a request. If I cannot grant it, I try not to say "no," for that word comes too coldly upon the eager desire of an ardent-minded boy.'

'But how can you help saying "no," if the request is one you cannot grant?'

'Sometimes I ask if something else will not do as well; and sometimes I endeavor to create a new interest in his mind. There are various ways in which it may be done, that readily suggest themselves to those desirous for the good of their children. It is affection that inspires thought. The love of children always brings a quick intelligence touching their good.'

Much more was said, not needful here to repeat.

When the friend went away, Tommy's mother, whose heart convicted her of wrong to her little boy, went up to the room where she had sent him to spend four or five lonely hours as a punishment for what was, in reality, her own fault, and not his. Three hours of the weary time had already passed. She did not remember to have heard a sound from him since she drove him away with angry words. In fact, she had been too deeply interested in the new book she was reading to have heard any noise that was not of an extraordinary character.

At the door of the chamber she stood and listened for a moment. All was silent within. The mother's heart beat with a heavy motion. On entering, she found the order of the room undisturbed—not even a chair was out of place. Tommy was asleep on the bed. As his mother bent over him, she saw that tears were upon his cheeks and eyelids, and that the pillow was wet. A choking sigh struggled up from her bosom; she felt a rebuking consciousness of having wronged her child. She laid her hand upon his red cheek, but drew it back instantly; it was hot with fever. She caught up his hand; it was also in a burning glow. Alarm took the place of grief for having wronged her boy. She tried to awaken him, but he only moaned and muttered. The excitement had brought on a fever.

When the father came home and laid his hand upon the hot cheek of his sleeping boy, he uttered an exclamation of alarm, and started off instantly for a physician. All night the wretched mother watched by her sick child, unable, from fear and self-reproaches, to sleep. When the morning broke, and Thomas looked up into her face with a gleam of trusting affection, his fever was gone and his pulse was calm. The mother laid her cheek thankfully against that of her boy, and prayed to Heaven for strength to bear with him, and wisdom to guide her feet aright; and as she did so, in the silence of her over-flowing heart, the lad threw his arms around her neck, and, kissing her, said—'Mother, I do love you!'

That tears came gushing over the mother's face is no cause of wonder, nor that she returned, half wildly, the embrace and kiss of her child.

Let us hope that in her future conduct towards her ardent, restless boy, she may be able to control herself; for then she will not find it hard to bring him under subjection to what is right.

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