

"DON'T BOTHER ME."

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

MR. ALDEN had put on his slippers, seated himself in his easy-chair, and made ready to spend what he called "a comfortable evening," when his little boy came running in from the play-room.

"Oh, pa," cried the child, "you should see what a nice house Helen and I have built."

The father, without even looking at the eager child, answered crossly,

"Don't bother me!"

The face of the child fell. His lip quivered, and he crept frightened and hurt from the room.

We pass on a few days.

It was Thanksgiving. Mr. Alden, after dinner, thought he would take a walk. Just as he was putting on his hat, his little daughter ran up to him saying,

"Pa, mayn't I go with you?"

The face fairly shone with the anticipated happiness. But the father, reflecting that he would have to delay till her bonnet was put on, replied selfishly,

"No. I can't wait. Don't bother me!"

The bright look faded from her countenance. As he closed the outer-door, tears started into the child's eyes.

"Pa," timidly said the little boy, on another occasion, "won't you show me how to do this sum? It's dreadful hard."

Mr Alden was reading the newspaper, and was deep in some political article, in which, as in most such things, there was more abuse than sound argument.

"Don't bother me," he answered, testily. "I'm reading."

On another occasion, Helen was singing, as innocent children do, out of the very joy of her heart. Her father looked sternly round, and taking the cigar from his mouth, cried harshly,

"Who's making that noise? I wish, Mrs. Alden, you wouldn't let the children bother me so?"

One night little Charley had the tooth-ache; and though he tried bravely, could not help crying. His father, woke from sleep, lost temper at last, and would have whipped the child, if it had not been for the mother.

"It's all a whim, that he cries; for it will do no good; and you'll spoil the child," he

answered, out of humor. "I'm always bothered in this way."

These things happened weekly, almost daily. Mr. Alden did not consider himself a selfish man, yet he thought of nobody's comfort at home but himself, till at last he became a terror to his little ones. Their natural instinct of love toward him finally went out, for their little demonstrations nearly always met with a rebuff. If they rushed, when he came home, to climb about his neck, he put them away, saying, "There, that'll do, don't bother me." If they were lavish of their kisses, when the time came for their retiring, it was still, "Don't bother me." If, in their exuberant spirits, they made any excessive noise at their play, their mother, or a servant was sent to bid them stop and not "bother him." And in a hundred similar ways their tenderness was repelled.

Sometimes, indeed, Mr. Alden would be affable enough with his children. He would have them on his knee, help them with their studies, or even join in their plays. But then again, without any reason save the whim of the moment, he would harshly repulse their advances. By this fitful system, worse almost than a steady repulsion, his children grew finally not only to fear him, but to lose all respect for him. They did not reason about the matter, they were too young to analyze causes; but they felt that he was unjust, selfish, and tyrannical.

Gradually, therefore, Mr. Alden's children became estranged from him. When they grew up, they never gave him their confidence, but living in the same house, were almost as strangers to him. He began, as he grew old, to feel the want of their love, and to complain of it as an injustice to himself. "I have done everything for them, that a father could," he was wont to say.

Alas! that which he should have done for them most of all, and which would have won their love, he had not done at all. Their childish, affectionate sympathy he had rudely rejected. Instead of thinking of their pleasure as well as his own, he had selfishly consulted only his own comfort. And now he was paying the penalty.

Yet Mr. Alden had always fulfilled what he

thought his duty to his children. He had fed them well, dressed them well, and educated them well. From none of the amusements suitable to their age were they debarred. In matters pertaining to money he was even a liberal parent. But what is all this, when sympathy and love are denied?

"Don't bother me," was the key to all. It was in what may be called the minor duties that Mr. Alden was deficient. A great sacrifice for the sake of his family he could make. The little sacrifices of personal convenience was the rock on which he split.

ROSALIND.

BY FRANCES M. CHESEBRO.

Escaped from realms of Paradise,
Through Heavenly ether borne,
An angel child from God was sent
To bless a heart forlorn.

The mother's arms outstretched to clasp
A joy she once has known,
Closes in loving, fond embrace,
Around her child, her own.

Deep down into the parent heart
Passes a joy divine;
Soft baby hands play on her breast,
Soft eyes upon her shine.

With lullaby she charms to sleep,
A long sweet kiss she sips,
Ever burn on baby cheeks
Love prints from mother's lips.

No warmer nest has birdling found
Than that young mother's breast,
Alas! the nest is shorn and cold,
The parent's arms bereft.

Sitting alone, she makes her moan,
"My gentle bird, my fair,
Oh, where hast thou, my birdling flown,
Far through the upper air?"

With folded arms, that pain to clasp
Again that baby form,

The mother's eye is Heavenward bent,
Watching for light of morn.

The rosy dawn wakes up the earth,
Streams beauty o'er the sea,
Touches the fields with radiant light,
Steals over hill and lea.

And with the morning comes a sound,
Like music in the air,
It's but the softly whispering breeze,
Waking the blossoms fair.

The mother's heart is open wide,
Her ear drinks in the lay,
The music is not of the earth,
It melts in calm away.

No other eye can see the sight,
Looking upward into air,
The mother catches gleams of light
Streaming through the portals fair.

The snowy robes her fingers decked
Her baby's waxen limbs,
And flutter in the golden light
Borne on by angel's wings.

The mother rising from her grief,
Smiles on the dawning day,
And gratefully she blesses God,
Who wooed her bird away.

SERENADE.

BY W. F. B. JACKSON.

Wake! lady, wake! the moonlight pale is streaming
Over the woodland, meadow, vale and hill,
And countless stars, like jewels rare, are gleaming
Upon the brow of night, so calm and still.
The blushing rose is sleeping in its bower,
'The lily pale is bending o'er the lake,
The pearly dew-drop glistens on each flower,
Wake! lady, wake!

Wake! lady, wake! the gentle wind is breathing
Unto the list'ning earth, and eager grove,
And to the woodbine round thy lattice wreathing,
With winning accents, a soft tale of love.

The wild brook hears it, and the shining river,
And, as on golden sands the ripples break,
In sweet entrancing tones they murmur ever,
Wake! lady, wake!

Wake! lady, wake! the waning moon yet lingers
To bathe thy features with her mellow light,
Ere the bright morn, with dewy, rosy fingers
Casts off the jewelled veil from mist-robed night,
And chases from his sapphire-tinted palace
The timid stars, that trembling dare to take
Deep, ardent draughts from out thy beauty's chalice.
Wake! lady, wake!