

A MOTHER'S BLESSING

BY I. J.

Y OUR home is just beyond that point, is it not, Frank?"

"Yes, captain."

"It is too dark for you to see it."

"Yes; but I shall be able to see the signal."

"What signal, Frank?"

"The light in the window."

"I do not exactly understand you, Frank."

"Then I will explain to you, sir. You know that I have been with you seven years. In entering your service, my mother gave me her blessing, and committed me to the care of heaven and yourself. I was seven years of age the day I first sailed with you, and I am fourteen now. Have I ever given you any cause for complaint, sir?"

"Never, Frank. But what of the light in the window?"

"Have you never heard me speak of it before?"

"I have heard you speak of your signals as you rounded this point; but I supposed you referred to your mother's cottage or the lights burning in it."

"It was to a light which burned in one particular window at this distance."

"I will tell you, and then you may judge for yourself. When I left home my mother said to me: 'Frank, you are now going to sea. Most of your trips will be made from New York to New Orleans, and return. When you are homeward bound, you will pass that point. If it be in daylight, you can see our cottage; and if I am alive and well, our flag will be waving over it. If it should be dark when you come in sight, you will see a light in the window, for I shall know about the time to look for you, and as soon as darkness comes on, the signal shall always be waiting.'

"And you have always seen that light as you passed this point?"

"Always. This is the twenty-third trip we have made and never but once have we passed that cottage in daylight. The signal is always there; and I tell you, captain, it always makes my heart bound with joy as I gaze upon it. I shall see it again in a moment."

"Would you not like to be set ashore opposite your home, Frank?"

"If I could be spared, sir?"

"Yes. We are from a southern port, and though our ship is perfectly healthy, we will probably be obliged to remain at quarantine for a time, as the yellow fever is raging below. You will have to join us before we go into New York."

"I would like to land, sir," said Frank, his face becoming very pale.

"You can do so. But what is the matter?"

"Look yonder, sir."

"I see nothing in particular."

"That is it, sir. I cannot see it myself."

"The signal?"

"Yes, sir; the light is not there."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; and it should be, for we are several days behind our usual time."

"Perhaps that is the reason of it. Your mother may think that we are in



"LOOK YONDER, SIR!"

port, and be expecting you to enter the house every moment."

"Captain, something is wrong, for she never removes the light until I set foot in the cottage, after it has once been placed in the window."

"Are you sure that you are in sight of the cottage?"

"Yes; for I can see it, although indistinctly, in the moon's rays."

"Well, we will land you, and you can soon learn what is the matter."

It required but a few moments to set Frank Ludlow upon shore, and with a heavy heart, he bent his steps toward the home of his youth.

Frank had reached a little grove which adjoined his youthful home; but here he paused and stood for some time in silence. Tears started into his eyes, and he repeated the name of his mother in a low tone. Then, as if afraid to go forward and satisfy himself, he called in a louder voice, and still louder, but only an echo came back to greet his ears.

A faintness came over the lad, and he sank back upon the ground. But he started to his feet again as if he had been stung by a serpent. He had seated himself upon freshly turned earth, and its dampness chilled him. He turned to look upon the spot, but the tears blinded his vision. He brushed them away, however, and then gazed upon the earth where he had sunk.

A fresh mound met his gaze. It was a new-made grave; and, with a cry of agony, the boy fell upon it. He called upon his mother to come back, only for a moment, to bid him farewell. But silence, deathly silence, was

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

SOME GOOD STORIES FOR OUR JUNIOR READERS.

What Mary Gave, True Story of a Good Little Girl—The Romance of Success and the Dreaming of Things to Come.

A Nonsense Verse.

THE Runculorum in a cave Had dwelt for twenty years. It slept upon a mushroom bed, And watered it with tears; Because, to tell the truth, it had Few hopes and many fears.

That quince-and-apple jam, If eaten when the moon was full, With Canterbury lamb, Would make the kitchen chimney smoke, And cause the door to slam.

It also had a firm belief That those who climbed up trees, And didn't previously rub Some butter on their knees, Would find their Sunday hats were full Of ants and bumble bees.

"Whist! dangers such as these abound," The Runculorum cried, "I don't find life worth living, though To do so I have tried." "She was buried only yesterday," "Could you not have kept her body until I came?" "No; we did just as your mother instructed us to do."

"How was that?" "For a week before her death your mother kept that light burning in the window."

"She expected my return?" "Yes."

"Well, go on."

"Five days ago your mother called me to her side, and then asked me to bring her the light, I did so. She gazed upon it, and smiled. Then she told me to fill it afresh and trim and light it. I did so, and she told me to set it in the window."

"Bless her—bless her!" sobbed the boy.

"When I had replaced the light, she said: 'In an hour I shall be no more. I should like to see my dear boy once more, but I fear I shall not be able to do so. But keep the light burning in the window until the oil is exhausted, and it goes out of itself. Then, and not until then, place my body in the grave. If my boy arrives, he will see the light if it be still burning, and will hasten here. He will gaze upon my pale, cold face, and read there the words of blessing I would speak. If no light be burning, he will know that his mother is no more; and, bending over my grave, he will weep and mourn my loss. But tell him I am not lost. Tell him to look up to the blue arch above him, and in heaven's window he will see the light which his mother placed there, burning brightly, a signal and a beacon for him.' Saying this, she died."

"And you did as she requested?" "Yes; the grave was made in the grove yonder. At sunset yesterday the lamp went out, and we then placed her poor body to rest."

Frank Ludlow did not sleep that night, but set himself to work to beautify and ornament the spot where slept that dear clay. When morning dawned, the fresh, green sod covered the mound, and flowers had been planted upon it. This done, with a heavy heart, the lad set out to rejoin his ship.

When he entered the cabin, the captain asked:

"Well, Frank, was the absence of the light explained?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why, was it not burning?" "It has been transferred, sir, to one of the windows of heaven. I shall only see it when I have made my last voyage across the dark river of death."

Frank set about his duties with apparent cheerfulness; but it was evident that he was heart-broken.

The ship was again upon its return voyage from New Orleans. It was opposite the point where stood the lonely cottage and where slept the mother's clay. The entire ship's officers and crew surrounded the couch of the dying boy. He asked:

"Captain, are we not near the cottage?"

"Yes, Frank?"

"But can you see the light burning?" "It is not burning there, Frank."

"But it is burning up yonder, for I can see it."

The brave boy did not speak again. He smiled, and his spirit passed quickly away.

Did he not see the light his mother had placed in the window of his heavenly home, even before he had reached it?

A Lugubrious Prediction.

Although the great Arago calculated that there was but one chance out of 281,000,000 that the earth could be struck by a comet, and although scientific men think the collision would be as bad for the comet as for Stevenson's "coco," a Vienna professor is thoroughly convinced that on the 13th of November, 1899, this mundane sphere is to draw the one chance in the celestial lottery, and it only remains for him now to figure out whether our planet is to be reduced by the shock to impalpable dust or form other comets and wreck other worlds, or whether the mortal race is to be terminated by asphyxiation. Both alternatives have their disadvantages, but the world will breathe easier when fully acquainted with the exact details of its coming demise.

In some parts of South Africa, much damage is done by baboons, which go in large marauding parties to rob dens.

The Romance of Success.

No stories are so enchanting to the young imagination, dreaming of things to come, as those which narrate the

HURRIED TO CANTON.

THE PRESIDENT'S MOTHER IS STRICKEN.

Word is Sent to the President and He Leaves Washington for Canton to Be at the Beside of the Afflicted—The Recovery of Mrs. McKinley Considered Very Doubtful.

The President's Mother Stricken.

CANTON, O., Dec. 3.—Mrs. Nancy Allison McKinley, mother of the president, was stricken with paralysis yesterday morning and it feared that her death is only a question of a short time.

The paralysis at present is of but a mild form, but owing to her extreme age, nearly 80 years, Dr. Phillips, the attending physician, can give but little hope to the family. Mr. Abner McKinley, of New York, has been visiting for a few days and when his mother was stricken this morning immediately communicated with the president by telephone. The latter asked if he better start at once, to which Abner McKinley replied he had best wait a further report from the physician, who would make a call in time to advise by 1 o'clock.

The physician's statement to the family was that there was little doubt that the attack would ultimately result in death, but that there was no indication as yet as to when the end might come. The attack was very light and in a younger person would not necessarily be regarded as dangerous to one of her advanced years. There is every probability that the attack would become aggravated. The end, he said, might be in a short time or it might be in a week or even longer interval.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3.—President McKinley left the city at 7:30 o'clock last night over the Pennsylvania railroad to hasten to the bedside of his sick mother at Canton, where he will arrive today. With him went Judge Day, assistant secretary of state. The president had made hurried arrangements for his departure, and during the afternoon disposed of a large volume of business awaiting his attention. He reached the station unattended a few minutes before the time for the train to leave. Desiring to avoid any demonstration the president instructed the coachman to drive to the baggage entrance, where Assistant Secretary Day, Secretary Porter and Executive Clerk Cortley awaited him.

The president's stay at Canton will depend upon the condition in which he finds his mother. If she improves he will return to Washington in time for the opening of congress and later go again to Canton.

CANTON, O., Dec. 3.—The president and all other members of the McKinley family not already here, are en route to the bedside of Mother McKinley tonight. The message from the president was addressed to his brother Abner, who has been visiting at the home of their mother for several days. It caused the mother much cheer and comfort.

The president had not yet been summoned to the bedside of his aged mother, who, no doubt, is rapidly nearing the end. But true to the devotion he has always shown for wife and mother, he could no longer remain, knowing that his mother was seriously ill. Without waiting for the telephone message which had been arranged for at 5 o'clock, he began preparations for coming to Canton.

Mrs. A. J. Duncan, of Cleveland, a daughter of Mother McKinley, who is in Chicago visiting her daughter Sarah, who is attending school there, telegraphed that she would be in Canton this morning. Miss Helen McKinley makes her home here with her mother.

What was feared when Mrs. Nancy Allison McKinley was stricken with a slight attack of paralysis, is tonight regarded as almost a certainty; that is the early death of the president's mother. As the day advanced she grew gradually worse and the members of the family felt that she was slowly sinking, although after she fell in the semi-comatose state early in the day there was scarcely an appreciable change.

Dr. Phillips thinks the developments of the night will decide the matter. He expects no material change before morning. Although he arranged to call at any time during the night that he may be summoned, a change for the better by morning he would regard as an indication of a temporary rally, and that the end will not come for some time. Should the morning condition be for the worse, he expects the patient to sink very rapidly. The disease, he says, is not primarily paralysis, but senility, the result of old age, which has produced partial paralysis. In such cases he says there is a general breaking down of the powers and nothing left upon which to build up strength and the basis of recovery.

The doctor said after he saw Mrs. McKinley that there was some slight evidence that the facial expressions of the patient were less rigid than they were early in the day, this being noticeable when she endeavored to comply with his request to show her tongue, although she was unable to do this.

The patient is taking liquid nourishment at intervals, and will not suffer from want of food. Mr. Abner McKinley said last night that he thought his mother was sinking rapidly and he feared the end was not far off.

National Prison Congress.

AUSTIN, Tex. Dec. 3.—The National Prison Congress of the United States was convened in this city tonight in a four days' session. Governor Culbertson, on the part of the state, and Mayor Hancock, on the part of the city, welcomed the visitors and President Rolf Brinkerhoff of Mansfield, O., delivered his annual address, thanking the citizens of the city of Austin for entertaining them, and reviewing the prison association since its inception.

The navy department has finally accepted the gunboat Vicksburg.

Professor Holmes.

Prof. George Frederick Holmes of the university of Virginia, who has just died at the age of seventy-seven years, was a native of England. "He was a brilliant man," says the Baltimore American. "He was the second oldest member of the faculty, and was noted for his remarkable promptness in attending his classes, missing not more than five lectures during his forty years' term of office. He was this season, being unable to go with his lectures longer on account of failing sight and bodily strength. His ability as a writer and critic was marked, he having written innumerable essays on political questions and numerous school books, particularly for use in southern school and colleges."

Abraham Lincoln.

Austin Gollaher, the old boyhood friend of Abraham Lincoln, said recently: "Abe always remained at the head of his class, and I never knew him to be turned down. His studious habits made him a favorite with the teacher, which caused a great deal of jealousy among his classmates toward him, and, not being generally liked anyhow, it made him very unpopular."

Whittier's Modesty.

Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer tells a story illustrating the almost boyish modesty of the poet Whittier. A little woman forced her way into the pentralia of a Boston mansion, when Whittier was visiting there, and, clasping both the poet's hands in her own, exclaimed: "Mr. Whittier, this is the supreme moment of my life!" Whittier stood first on one foot and then on the other, withdrew his hands and clasped them behind his back, and replied prosaically, "Is it?"

Lupton, Ill., Nov. 6, 1897.

French Chemical Company, 356 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Enclosed please find one dollar for which send me a bottle of Anti-Neuralgic. You sent a bottle to my mother last week and it acted like a charm. She has been a great sufferer of neuralgia of the head and stomach and around the heart and never took any remedy that relieved her so quickly as this wonderful medicine did.

I thank God for giving you the power to make such a wonderful remedy and I hope you may prosper. Send as soon as possible to, Mary E. Perkins, Lupton, P. O., Illinois.

Clarence Cook will contribute to the December Century an article on Mr. Clement C. Moore, who wrote the famous poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas." The verses were written in 1822 as a Christmas present for Dr. Moore's children. A young lady visiting the family copied the poem into her album and sent it, unknown to the author, to the editor of the Troy "Sentinel," who printed it without the author's name in the issue of that journal for December 23, 1822.

Reputations Made in a Day are precious scarce. Time tries the worth of a man or medicine. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is a forty-five years' growth, and like those hardy lichens that garnish the crevices of Alaska's rocks, it flourishes perennially, and its reputation has as firm a base as the rocks themselves. No medicine is more highly recorded as a remedy for fever and acute bilious remittent, constipation, liver and kidney disorders, nervousness and rheumatism.

It is better to say a little worse than you mean than to mean a little worse than you say.

We wish to call attention to the advertisement in the issue of the National Correspondence Institute of Washington, D. C. This institution is thoroughly reliable and we cheerfully recommend them to our readers. A college education at home shows wonderful advancement in educational matters.

The average weekly loss of vessels on the seas throughout the world is twelve.

Holiday Excursions.

On December 7 and 21 the Big Four Route and Chesapeake and Ohio Rys. will sell excursion tickets from points northwest, both one way and round trip, at greatly reduced rates to points in Virginia, North and South Carolina and other southern states. Round trip tickets will be good twenty-one days returning. Write for particulars and pamphlet descriptive of climate and Virginia farm lands. U. L. Trutt, North-western Passenger Agent, 254 Clark St. Chicago.

What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small seeks is in others.

Beauty is Blood Deep.

Clean blood means a clean skin. No beauty without it. Cascarets, Candy Cathartic cleans your blood and keeps it clean, by stirring up the lazy liver and driving all impurities from the body. Begin to-day to banish pimples, blotches, blackheads, and that sickly bilious complexion by taking Cascarets—beauty for ten cents. All druggists. Satisfaction guaranteed. 10c, 25c, 50c.

Before submitting to the inevitable it is wise to be sure it is the inevitable.

Pico's Cure for Consumption is our only medicine for coughs and colds.—Mrs. C. Eetz, 439 5th Ave., Denver, Col., Nov. 8, '95.

According to an eminent doctor, the excessive use of salt tends to paralyze the sense of taste.

WHAT SHALL I GIVE FOR CHRISTMAS?

You can easily settle this question by sending for the grand new Illustrated Catalogue, showing 3,000 of the most beautiful things in Jewelry and Silverware of the Mermad & Jaccard Jewelry Co., Broadway, Cor. Locust, St. Louis, who will also, if you will enclose 35 cts., send you a Solid Silver Handled Nail File.

Employees of the Hartford Street Railway company have been ordered not to chew tobacco while on duty.

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY. Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All Druggists refund the money if it fails to cure.

Military Compliment.—Lieutenant—Good evening, miss! You look like a regiment of rose-buds tonight.—Fleegende Blatter.

Since the establishment of a cremation society in France 20,000 bodies have been cremated in Paris.

In giving thanks for your blessings don't forget the criticisms you have received.

Train the growing tree so that only dead and injured limbs will need removing later on.

Nursery Rhymes Illustrated

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.

My dear, do you know how a long time ago Two little children, whose names I don't know, Were stolen away on a fine Summer's day, And left in a wood, as I've heard people say? And when it was night, So sad was their plight; The sun it went down, And the moon gave no light! They sobbed and they sighed, and they bitterly cried, And the poor little things, they laid down and died.



And when they were dead, the robins so red Brought strawberry-leaves, and over them spread. And all the day long they sang them this song, "Poor babes in the wood, poor babes in the wood! And don't you remember the babes in the wood?"

who was absent on business, in which she gave him all the news he wanted, in such a frank, artless way, that he thanked his daughter in his heart. She gave patient attention to a long, tiresome story by her grandmother, though she had heard it many times before. She laughed at the right time, and when it was ended made the old lady happy by a good-night kiss. Thus she had given valuable presents to six people in one day, and yet she had not a cent in the world. She was as good as gold, and she gave something of herself to all those who were so happy as to meet her.

The Romance of Success.

No stories are so enchanting to the young imagination, dreaming of things to come, as those which narrate the

near his side trying to keep from laughing. "What are you laughing at?" asked the tall man of the boy. "I'm laughing at what you said to that man who just shook hands with you," answered the boy. "I don't remember that I said anything funny to him."

"Well, when he asked you if you didn't know him, you said, 'Your name is familiar, but really I can't recall your face!'"

Of the candidates for the British army who fail to pass the tests four out of five are rejected because of defective vision. The "eye-sight" test consists of being able to count correctly with both eyes, as well as each eye separately, a number of small black dots exhibited on a card ten feet from the candidate.