

Our Boys and Girls.

THE EMPTY CRIB.

I sit in the lonely chamber—
And the clock ticks steadily on,
Telling the measured moments—
While I think of the days now gone.

Hushed is the voice of nature,
And still the noisy whir,
Of daylight's active measure
At noontide's busy stir.

No sound breaks through the stillness,
Save the fall of the dying leaf,
And the west wind softly sighing,
Like the sigh of a child in grief.

From the empty crib in the corner
Comes no sound that I can hear,
No soft and tranquil breathings
Fall like music on my ear.

The pillow all unwrinkled,
Once pressed by a sunny head,
And the voice of the sweetest music
Is hushed with the early dead.

No worn and battered playthings
My longing vision meet,
No half-worn shoes betraying
The trace of restless feet.

No lisping childish accent
Makes sunshine in every part,
Nothing remains but memory
To the desolate mother heart.

But the fold of God now shelters
The little one safe from harm;
And the tender Shepherd circles
My lamb with his loving arm.

Some time when my soul is weary
With countless tears and sighs,
And the tired lids are folded
Down over the sightless eyes,

The pearly gates shall open,
Beyond the swelling tide,
And my beautiful ransomed darling
Shall stand by my waiting side.

—Anon.

TWO "ABNERS."

ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL.

The steady clip-clip, clip-clip, of Abner's lawn-mower came in through the window-crannies to Morris. It made him feel worse still.

"Oh, my suz!" he groaned—he had always said, "Oh, my suz," since he was able to say any groany thing at all — "Oh, my suz, my suz! I'd rather be sick any other day 'cept Abner-day!"

"An Abner-day, Morry? Aunt Jess was over on the couch, being sick, too. Her voice sounded interested — Aunt Jess was always sick and always interested. "I never heard of an Abner-day before. I've heard of Arbor Days, and Decoration Days, and"

Morry's sudden little laugh interrupted her. Morry himself was very polite, but his laugh forgot to be sometimes. It "scaped away" from him, he said.

"Well?" smiled Aunt Jess, waiting. "Why, an Abner-day's just — just — why, it's just an Abner-day, auntie."

"I see," gravely. Then Morry explained:

"He comes every so often to mow us, you know, and I never miss being there—'cept I'm sick," with a sigh.

"Abner's a very int-resting man. He tells bear stories."

"Oh!"

"And roaring-lion ones, and rhinos-rosy ones."

"Oh!" shuddered auntie.

"But I shan't hear any, to-day—Oh, my suz! I've got to stay right in this room."

"Morry"—auntie raised herself on one elbow a little painfully, but her voice was bright and brisk—"Morry, this lawn needs mowing. You mow it, and I'll tell you a bear story."

"But—but I don't understand, auntie."

"Guess! Put your guessing-cap on. This 'lawn,' right here, ought to be mowed to-day. I'll pay you—how much do Abners get?"

"Twenty-five cents."

"Well, you're about half as big as an Abner—I'll pay you half as much. Now run and get the car—the lawn-mower. Doesn't mamma keep it in the closet over there?"

"Oh!" laughed Morry, in sudden enlightenment. His pale little face had lost its forlorn look. Morry was not very sick now, but he had been, and he was still confined to his big, bright room. He had played in it so much and cut out so many paper soldiers and "Jackies" in it that the carpet certainly did look dusty and littered—as if it needed "mowing."

Soon Abner's clip-clip outside the window was drowned in the rumble of Morry's "lawn-mower" inside. Aunt Jessie's "lawn" began to look quite trim and neat.

"I must be careful same as Abner always is not to swee—mow too near things an' bump 'em," Morry said, steering skilfully round a little clump of—I was just going to say table-legs, but Morry's name is better. Morry called them Black Walnut Trees! He was very careful not to bump 'em.

"Over here's four Oaks," he said, steering slowly under papa's great arm-chair. "I mustn't bump these oaks."

Aunt Jessie's couch was Maple Grove, and it was so very shady, Morry said, that you could hardly see to mow. There were plenty of flowers all over the "lawn" but he mowed right over all of those. It made them look a good deal brighter!

"There's some flowers made that way," laughed Aunt Jessie's Abner. "You can walk on 'em or stand stock-still an' hop! They never wither"

"Oh, yes, when they have too much sun they do, Morry." And Morry suddenly remembered Mrs. Phineas Godfrey's carp—"lawn" that she kept covered with newspapers on sunny days. Why, of course—to keep the flowers from withering.

"Well, anyhow you can't smell 'em!" he laughed. The lawn was all beautifully mowed now, and the little "Abner" surveyed his work with pride. How nice it did look!

"No'm," he said decidedly, as Aunt Jess held up his pay. "No'm! I haven't got so much fam'ly to support as Abner has, an' I can 'ford to mow a lady for nothing—I'm happy too," and he trudged across the room to the closet with quite a grand little air. Then he hung up—somebody tell me what it was Morry hung up in the closet! — *Zion's Herald*.

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ONLY ONE OF THEM.

"Say—say, nurse!"

The voice was so weak that the nurse held her hands still, least their movement should prevent her catching the words.

"If—if I hadn't got hurted, I wouldn't 'a' been here, would I?"

"Not unless you were very ill and the doctors had sent you."

"Then—then I'm glad 'bout the hurt, 'cause—nobody—never — cared —'bout me—till—now."

The little one looked into the nurse's face with an expression of such utter desolation as even to touch a heart that had grown used to suffering.

The nurse was a quiet woman. She was even proud of her quietness of spirit, and had been more than pleased when the surgeon said of her that there was no nonsense about Miss Wayne; that she was cool, ready, and never let her heart meddle with her head.

But somehow these appealing words, following upon a most painful dressing of a wound, touched her heart. A child who could be glad of such "hurt" because of the care it insured, must lead a life that was indeed without much affection.

Miss Wayne did not know of any special tenderness in herself, either in touch or tone. She had done her part of the work faithfully as a helper of the young house surgeon; but that was all. She began to wish that a little sympathy had escaped her while dressing the little girl's wounds.

The child's lips opened again. "The doctor—he was orful good, too. He didn't swear at me. He said he'd be 'very careful,' an' he telled me, 'There, there, you're a brave little girl, I know.' I—I wouldn't 'a' made any noise er — he'd a killed me!"

As a rule in such a case Miss Wayne would have said gently but quite firmly, "You must not talk — not another word!" But she almost pleaded with her charge.

"Don't talk, dear child! It will make you worse."

"Then I won't. But I—love—you and the doctor — 'cause you're good — to me an' you—takes care of me." Then, in obedience to the nurse, the pale lips closed as tightly as the weakness would allow.

Miss Wayne was quiet for a moment, then tried to smile as she carefully laid the blanket over the child's shoulders. It would not do to lose self-control.

She went to the other cots in the children's ward—her special care—and performed her duties as usual, but all the time her heart echoed with the pathetic words, "Then I'm glad, 'bout the hurt— 'cause— nobody— never — cared— 'bout— me—till— now."

If a child's heart could be so grateful for such care as hers had been, then how must it have longed for affection!

Miss Wayne did not know it, but her sure hand became gentler and her low voice took on a tenderness that caused other faces to turn and watch her with new interest.

At last the round was over and the nurse, upon whom the visiting surgeon depended, went back to the first sufferer. The child was in a slight sleep, but the voice, that had been stilled when waking now moaned every little while.

Miss Wayne, silently watching the child for a moment, went to her own room and stood face to face with the awful problem of the child life among the depraved.

"It's too terrible to think of," she said at last. "We take them out of it

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for a little while; but they must go back. It never appealed to me so strongly until this little girl—" Then Miss Wayne, the marvel of self-control, broke down and cried.

"Dr. MacBride telephones that an operation will be on in half an hour. It's an amputation—a boy."

Miss Wayne turned quickly. The other nurse saw her face and said, "Let me get the instruments ready. You don't look well."

"O, yes, I'm well. Go on with your own work, please. I can do mine."

She went swiftly to the operating room. Another child sufferer to be sent maimed into the old life, if it could be made able to go at all.

The ambulance arrived, and later the attending surgeon. He was used to such scenes, but at once noticed that his head nurse was paler than usual.

"How about that vacation?" he said, brightly. "Don't let me find you here next week. You are not yourself this morning."

She smiled and answered, "I am coming to myself, doctor, that's all."

Later she sought the child. "I knew you'd come," was the way the little girl greeted her. "Th' pain hurted me orful, but I'd rather hev it then t' lose you

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