Daily Appeal.

MY FORENOON WITH THE BABY.

Some Scout created ill-timed and ill-fated benevolence in my heart. Satan is like scrofula, he delights to attack a man by the weakest part of his constitution.

"I'll tell you, Aunt Fanny," I said under the impulse, with the joyous smile of one who brings relief at a crisis, "I go you to church with uncle and the boys. You must not lose this fine day. I'll take care of the baby."

Aunt Fanny looked at me with some little doubt.

"Oh, yes," I said with calm, and confident dignity, "of course I can. Just as if a man of my size couldn't take care of a baby for three hours! Besides I know exactly what to do. I've seen you do it more than a hundred times. And children always like me."

If my Aunt Fanny had but this one only darling, she would have seen me in—Hackensack before she would have done it.

"Well," said she at last, "baby's a good yitty thing (—wasn't oo, baby?) and if I put him to sleep before I go, perhaps he won't wake up until we get back. I'll try you for once."

So my sins if cousin was nicely arranged in some mysterious but linen white garments, the details of whose arrangements I did not see, and dosed with (as they say about gifts to infant cousins; ergo why not to infants through the phrase be inaudible?) a bouncing repast of—Godfrey's cordial, the maternal bottle. (I thank you, Mr. Micawber!) and soothed with gentle oscillation and oft-repeated chanting of that wondrous ancient rhyme of magic song which commences with an allusion to our country's flag, to-wit:

"Hy-lo-baby hunting,"

and thus was the young immortal prosperously disposed within the peaceful realms of dreamland. Then my Aunt Fanny adorned herself with speed, and forthwith the old, lean, ever-worked farm-horse, shambled down the sunshiny country road toward the church two miles and more away. As she stepped over the threshold she looked back for an instant, and some shadows flitted indistinctly across her face. *Was it a presentiment?*

Human prosperity is a deceitful thing. I spent half an hour in profound quiet, reading by the window, and then, I had been preaching a sermon from that scarcely worth, "Religion Explained and Defended, in a series of Sermons, by Timothy Dwight, S. T. D., L.L.D."

I was in a sort of paradise, with a little angel for my companion; and as I gazed upon the sleeping child, I felt "no end" of benignity, universal friendship and pure delight, in having attained to the honor of so lovely an office of superintendence.

"Hah, me!"

This remarked my darling Sammy, suddenly waking up and writhing about, and digging in a boisterous, wavering manner, at his eyes with his fists.

I mentioned that some fiend had, doubtless, inspired me with benevolence. As early as I can, or ever, state, it was my fate that the fiend, or, in my opinion, leave me, and enter that baby. As the above mentioned suggestion about Sammy's exceptional disposition arose in my mind, an expression of confusion appeared upon my face—I remember it accurately. The fiend departed, as I Sammy, peevished with what I fancied an unexceptionable demonstration of parental culture, approximated the cradle of my chubby and innocent companion angel.

"Ah, oo potty, yitty ting? Did he want to tum and see his tunzen? So he should!"

"Is every mother's heart, in not that a first-class blandishment? I can't print the affecting drawl that I put into it, the recitative style and portments it more with which I presented it accurate array. But as far as types will show it, I contend that the very mother of Moses, if she like, couldn't have turned out a more superior article of verbal endearment.

The baby listened with some complacency to my dulcet tones; and encouraged by my success, I thought it proper to communicate to him the peculiar circumstances which rendered me his guardian for the time. Thus, therefore, to him, I said:

"Ah, potty?" Was oo murzer an gone on church? Eo ee was! An lef oo wiz ontuzzell Treday (my baptismal name is Frederick) all oo-bootiful? Ah-h-ah, ketcher, ketcher, ketcher, ketcher, ketcher! Ha-a-ah pretty jiggle, jiggle, jiggle?"

Not being satisfied with the expression of Master Sammy's minute features during the first half of this address, I began somewhat to doubt my ability to communicate with him in language half baby and half English, and therefore repeated my statement above, in pure baby as near as I can judge, pointing at him in a free and jovial manner during the words, "An, ketcher," etc.; making a kind of caress at him with outstretched fingers during the remark, "Ah, Rerr?" etc., smiling very sweetly indeed, at the word "pretty."

As I said, in despite of the profound theory and masterly execution of his nameover, I did not perform it without a secret and embarrassing apprehension. The evil spirit in the child—for no mere human baby could have failed to respond to such affectionate approaches—detected this hidden mystery of mine, and took instant advantage thereof; namely, by returning, not demonstrations of reciprocal affection, but what I may truly call demon-exhibitions of anger, mingled every with fear and aversion. While I spoke and strove on my paws at him, (for I will admit that my gestures may have been susceptible of that interpretation,) Master Sammy preserved an ominous silence, a grave and attentive expression, and entire quiet—only opening his eyes, and blowing his mouth. But no sooner had I ceased, than he looked hastily about after his mother. She not being forthcoming, a species of fearful consternation passed over his visage—his mouth opened to an extent unparalleled in my experience, occupying a space that left no room for the rest of his face, which was, therefore, distributed or hedged up together in a little pile of wrinkles in the region of the nose—his eyes whatever being visible, and only two little slits at that, which I take to be the "auditory organ," as Mrs. Baggins hath it—and from this preternatural orifice he discharged such a shriek as really hit me on the forehead and knocked me straight up again into a frightened perpendicular.

I think I stood, astounded and incapable of action, for a minute. And really, now that I am retrospecting the thing, in what a fix was I! Well-meaning, but absurdly ignorant young bachelor that I was, how was I calculated, by nature or art, to cope with a young individual of the dire alarms of an unwearied child—much more for dealing with such an instance of precocious demonstrative prowess as this? Sammy would not tell on a baby, nor by-be baby beating on an imp.

All that, however, I had no leisure to consider; and Quintus Curtius, I do not, had the nerve and hardhood in riding into that crack in the ground of the Roman Forum, than I did in closely heading me to the task of quieting Sammy. I may safely say, that in the wild and fearful struggle which followed, all the resources of an active mind, a vigorous and healthy (cause-divine) and a peculiar nervous disposition, were solely devoted to the work, and if I failed, it was an attempt beyond the powers of any mere man.

I picked Sammy up, in the first place, and carried him to the window, jumping him up and down as I went, and singing to divert his mind both by gestures and by speech.

"Oo fly fella! Was oo *fired* sleepin in Kaffie? Did oo want to turn and see oldt cock-a-doodle-doo and all-eyed biddy hens? Eh, eee! Ah, ee! Ah, ee! Ah, ee! Ah-h-h-h-h-h, chackle, chackle, chackle! Ducky go quack, quack! (Shriek continued; nurse tries another close of impressive and jumps him vigorously up and down, accompanied with a noise similar to the following:) Ha ti deedle deedle deedle dum diddy! I widdley, widdley goose, widdley goose, poor little fella, ha ha ha?"

"Pay well I laughed with unmerrited glee" hoping that a genial sympathy might create a smile upon the frown-wreathed countenance of Sammy. Vain hope! All my jumbling only served to modify that surprised and steady yell by introducing a kind of pulsation or measured emphasis into it. My words might as well have been wasted upon a Fourth Warder in a row at the polls; and my hollow merriment, although its merits as an imitation did in fact make the baby stop a minute, catch breath, and look up at me, did no more. His face curled up again, and the yell came like hell.

I had observed upon lifting Sammy from the cradle, that he seemed to stiffen himself in a somewhat writhed attitude as if to resist any purpose in anyone, by a sudden and wrigging in a rather alarming manner, so that I fancied he might be about to indulge in the pleasant diversion of a fit. All at once I reflected that he must be hungry; and that very possibly both screeching and squirming might be referred to that cause. I accordingly placed the little cake, or roll, all interlaced with plums, in a manner that would have exhausted a Mohawk war chief in three minutes, in his cradle, raked down the coals on top of the buried kitchen fire, warmed some milk in an old tin cup, watered and sugared it according to the regulations in such a case provided, put it in the "sack-bottle"—as I believe it is called—took a small precautionary pull at the preparation myself, finding a perfect nectar for luke-warmness, and proceeded to feed Master Sammy to partake, so to speak, of the festive bowl.

Lying yelling, on his back, with eyes close shut and mouth wide open, he heeded not the bottle—nor, I fancied, the delicious wine, but wouldn't look. I jerked some drops into his mouth, as "John" peppered vinegar or tomato catsup through a cruet cork at eating houses—but he spurned not to perceive the bottle inserted the bottle into his mouth, until the tip of the exciting thing, whatever they call it, fairly pulled on his nose and kept there. He only gagged, writhed, and yelled on. Evidently he was not hungry; I put away the bottle.

The business grew dreadful, Sammy began to turn purple, and I to feel like hell; and I confessed that war terrified my trembling cry. I looked about me in forlorn and hopeless perplexity. There was a rattle—one of those coral things with half a dozen silver jingles attached to it—and a penny whistle. I shook the former and blew the latter, in an industrious but rather imbecile way, near Sammy's ear. I might as well have used the same means to scare a house robbed of whelps, or a New York city alderman noting out a job. I lifted the infant, thus afflicted, from his cradle by the touch, dosed into a stony air, and shivered as a dying fish will sometimes do in the captor's hand, and with a feeble effort to preserve further the dignity and universal freedom of the child, I laid fourished so largely, and which I felt growing thinner and thinner, I sang to the child the invaluable "Lay to bye baby," and the "Bay of Biscay, ho!" also the affecting ballad of "The Three Little Kittens," and as my stock of truly juvenile literature gave out at this point, I proceeded with "Rise my Soul" and one or two other hymns. These efforts were all in vain; I felt as Sheridan must if I had been caught trying to sing a lullaby to allay his wife's fears away as I tried to raise the square built strains of old Amsterdam, like those of "the monk, her son, and her daughter, the abbess," around the coffin of the wicked old woman of Berkley, in a quiver of consternation.

It was at this point that my long tried patience utterly failed me, and with a fearful explosion of wrath, I felt myself, mentally speaking, slung around into a position of absolute opposition to this terrible child; of positive anger with a fiendish malignity unknown before. I perfectly recollect that precisely as I was feeling myself carried away by this impulse, Sammy ceased to yell in a fashion, and his head slipped back over the one arm, opened his eyes a minute. As I am a living man, the peculiar twist which his fell eye at me, never left on record, I shall never cease to be haunted by it. Wherever I go in this new frame of mind, I shall see that eye, and remember the

child, or simply out-yell and overwhelm it by sheer superiority of vociferation. So I held him up by both arms on my knee, looked right down into the fiery twisted throat, and gave him

"A well meant and a kindly wish"

in a style that would have shortened the whole British navy. It didn't discourage him at all. I tried the Pilgrim's Glee, containing some fearful chronistic whining, which I made the most of, but to no end. Then I degenerated, I am afraid, into mere nonsense, ignoble spatchcocks, and opening and mouth again, I spent some ten or fifteen minutes in a series of the most hideous complicated and disgusting yells, that probably it ever entered into the heart of a man to conceive, until my throat felt as if I had a peck of tenzler pocked into my lungs and pulled out again. Great Cæsar's ghost! what a baby! He never flinched, nor evinced a jot of heart or hope." He yelled away as peacerably as if nothing had happened.

But as for me, I was done. I fancied that, under these frightful discouragements, my intellect was beginning slightly to waver. King Herod once into my mind. I thought of the great Herod, and of his cognomen "the old fashioned kitchen fire-place. Not altogether free from uneasiness as to what I might be led to do, I put Sammy into his cradle, and shut the kitchen door.

But I quickly grew ashamed of this. Dignified indifference, I remembered, would suit me better. Besides, I recollected having heard that telling babies alone, would stop their crying when everything else failed. I think it was Mr. Micawber who first made the suggestion to me. So I erected a little fortification in the middle of the floor, of pillows and blankets, recussed Sammy within it, placed the cattle in his hands, took a "Dwight's Theology," and sat down by the window to read.

I had no perception of the duration of time, for what I know, Sammy might have done for a week. Once, with a grim smile, I started up, and truffled about half the milk out of the bottle, that I might permit it to be supposed he had fed to that extent. I had also presence of mind enough left to shape a scheme of equivocation wherewith to elude the necessity of confessing the facts of the morning to my respected aunt. Otherwise, the period which supervened is a miserable blank in my recollection, nothing more except a yell. It was some time in the distant future—as regards my reading that ominous delineation of the abodes of the wicked—that the sudden noise of stamping feet, relaxing whoops, and mingled voices, aroused me from my ear, and waked me from a kind of awful stupor. Before I had composed my countenance, my Aunt Fanny entered the room, glanced at her vociferous progeny, and bent a keen and suspicious look upon me. I fairly cowed before her—an object thing—as miserable as if I had been taken in the act of stealing sheep from my best friend. I knew I had a hang-dog look; and felt to use a certain figurative expression, "like a boiled owl."

"Well, Fred," said she, in her sharp, decisive voice, "how did you get along?"

"Well," I said feebly, "pretty well on the whole. He cried some little lustily; but on the whole, I think he enjoyed himself."

Did I lie? I don't care much if I did. But I think in such cases it is justifiable.

As the people came troping in, Sammy was apparently diverted by the noise, and "ceased firing." That is the devil want out of him, because there was no more to be further coaxed out of me. He was soon in the enjoyment of his rights, proof of support, and seemed to appreciate them fully.

"Rather hungry" said my aunt Fanny, when he had been dosing strenuously for about half an hour, and had been quiet for ten.

"I am sure," I answered, "I gave him quite a lot of milk. He half gorged least."

"Is every mother's heart, in not that a little a small lot. But I have always labored under the impression that my aunt Fanny suspected that the proceedings had been a little irregular that morning. I'm sure I think so. I don't care to press the subject much.

I've speculated often upon the causes of that failure of mine, for it was a failure. I don't pretend to explain the right way—but I invariably fail upon my demonstrat possession. No other solution is possible.

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Address me at Mason Depot, Tenn.

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Mason Depot, Dec. 1, 1858.

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