DON'T TELL FATHER!

"But recollect, you mustn't tell father!" said Mrs. Smith to her children.

"Mustn't tell father!" whispered the elder ones to the younger, holding up their fingers mysteriously and sapiently.

"Mustn't tell dada!" cried a girl of seven, swelling the family chorus, to a baby of a year and-a-half, under whose weight she was staggering.

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James Smith was foreman in the workshop of a jeweller. He was a superior artizan, and a trustworthy person. His cleverness and his faithfulness secured him the position he held, which was worth about three pounds a week. He had therefore a snug little house in the outskirts of the town, with a kitchen-garden in the rear, and a flower-plot in front. He had a young good-natured handsome wife, and a numerous family. His wife however, was good-natured, without much firmness of character. She loved her children in a foolish indiscriminating way, and to screen their faults, would often hide the truth from the father. Strange to say, she was not *always* lenient herself. She was rather capricious with them. She was so kind to them, that she was sometimes disappointed in an adequate return, and so becoming incensed she used to wreak a temporary vengeance on them—a temporary and casual vengeance; for the same child that she beat one minute, she was sure to hug, to fondle, and to soothe the next.

The father again was somewhat too stern, and too much inclined to expect his family to act with the exactness of machines, making little allowance for the buoyancy, the irregularities, the thoughtlessness, and the inexperience of children. He loved Martha, but many a grave lecture, many a serious admonition, and many a philosophical reason, was he constantly giving her on the subject of rearing children in accordance with his notions. Truth to say, both the mother and her children were somewhat afraid of the father—and they were more hushed and guarded in their conduct when the master of the house was at home.

This was not as it should be. But the fault did not entirely lie at her door. He had too hard-headed a way with him certainly; still if his wife had been less timid, that is, if the confidence of truth and good principle had animated her to meet her husband's ways of thinking, with her own good feelings, and thus to modify them, instead of evading his injunctions and arguments, by recourse to a petty duplicity, it would have been better for her, for him, and for the children.

James had some taste, and having saved a pound or two, over and above what he was in the habit of placing monthly in the savings' bank, had displaced the little anomalous dogs and lambs with bosky tails, as well as pairs of lovers sitting in crimson grottoes, which had heretofore ornamented his mantel-shelf, by a handsome vase. He had given many directions to his wife not to allow the children to play at ball or at shuttlecock in the parlour. Even in the reign of the little glazed dogs with the bosky tails, there existed a standing rule against games in that apartment, which were likely to produce devastation among the china quadrupeds; but now that the vase, the alabaster vase, occupied the mantel-piece with quite a classical effect, alone in its elegance, the old rules had been deliberately re-stated.

Poor Mrs. Smith sat in the parlour, surrounded by her numerous progeny, bawling and shouting and pulling one another about—this one laughing, that one crying. The mother sat in the midst with the infant peeping upon the scene from the shelter of her wing.

"Now John, you naughty boy, you know what your father says—no battledores here!—Ellen, I'm astonished at you—lay down that ball this instant—Bless me, children, you'll drive me distracted. But never mind if your father does not hear of this to-night. You shall suffer for it!"

Poor Mrs. Smith, her whole conversation throughout the day was in this style, she thought she was worried and "plagued out of her life" by her children; but she was quite mistaken. She was in her natural element, and would have been miserable without these same urchins screaming and tearing constantly about her.

"Now John, you naughty boy," she began again, elevating her voice into a screech above the distracting din, when —crack!—John's ball struck and toppled over the vase, the precious vase!

Then there was alarm in the camp—the very little ones being awed by the looks of their elders and the distraction of the mother. *Her* first impulse was to set the child down, seize her son John, and thrash him soundly—all of which she carried into effect. John roared like a great spoiled booby, and presently the mother relented, and said she would see what she could do, though he did not deserve it. It was found that in its passage from its place to the hard floor, the vase had been interrupted by a chair on which there was a cushion, and that it had rolled from this chair to the ground without much damage, *except* that it was broken quite through into two pieces at its small and fragile waist.

A council was held. A cement that James Smith had made for the repair of broken china, was put into requisition. The broken surfaces fitted each other admirably, the fracture being a *clean* one—that is straight through and without fragments. The cement was applied. The result called forth the cheers of the infantine group, as the vase was re-established over the fire-place, and the "mustn't tell father" passed from the one to the other.

James Smith came home, and little dreamed he either that day, or the next, or many days after, that any such petty deception had been practised against him.

But one fine afternoon, Mrs. Smith had retired to an upstairs bed-room to overlook her little museum of baby-linen, and the children were at play in the back-garden.

They were at play in the garden, and having exhausted their present meagre sources of interest, they sat in a row lazily against the house-wall, with minds unoccupied and ready for mischief. An apple-tree spread itself out before them on its paling, and tempted them with its mellow clusters. John rose and passed it a time or two—he then ventured to point at a rosy apple with the end of the stick he carried, looking, at the same time knowingly and wickedly at his brothers and sisters. At this the others interchanged with him and with each other glances of recognition, and looked what they wished, while their countenances expressed a fear of the consequences of disobedience. John now tapped the apple, and they laughed—he re-passed, and tapped it more forcibly, and they laughed more loudly. Richard started up, and *he* must strike it—Mary, too, must give it a touch. At length, John, emboldened into hardihood, gave it a knock which brought it down. Down it rolled, and its red cheeks and yellow sides caused the eyes of the juvenile delinquents to glisten while they gave a shout, the gladness of which was marred by a sense of guilty fear. They nestled together in a group; one bit out a piece, and another eagerly clutched the apple for a morsel, the little one holding up its tiny hands and whimpering for a share. They laid their heads together, and the mother made suspicious by the ominous lull in their noisy gambols, popped her head over the window. She espied them in deep conspiracy, and heard nothing but "don't tell mother—don't tell mother!" echoed in whispers from one to the other.

It was but an apple to be sure! But it was from the one apple-tree in the garden. The tree had been planted too by the father, on the birth-day of his hopeful son, John. The fruit was to be gathered on Richard's natal day, when the youngsters were to have a treat for their good behaviour in not previously disturbing the apples hanging so temptingly within their reach. No wonder, under all these circumstances, and considering that the tree was yet young and unable to bear a great deal, that the apples were numbered, and even individually known—and no wonder, as they were of a fine description, that James Smith should wish to lay an embargo on them, till they were quite ripe and good. The children knew too well how distinctly John had transgressed his father's orders.

Wroth was Mrs. Smith, I can assure you, to think that her own children, of whom she was so fond, and to whom she was so kind, could thus deal so deceitfully by her. Out she ran, seizing in her passage a stick which had once formed the shank of a birch-broom. Armed with this she flew after John, whose conscience

made him flee before her, round and round the gravel walk. At length she overtook him, and struck him on the back of one of his legs; when down John rolled —for he was a great booby—and screamed. It turned out that the end of the broomstick was traversed by a rusty nail. This penetrated John's leg just behind the ankle, and left its point in the flesh. The affair proved serious; the doctor had to be sent for; and, of course, Mr. Smith the father, who might otherwise have heard nothing of the circumstance, had to be informed of the whole affair.

"'Don't tell mother!'" repeated Martha feelingly to her husband—"it broke my heart, James, to think that they could say it."

"Had I heard them, Martha, instead of yourself," said Smith, "you would have expected me to have been as much hurt with the word 'don't tell mother,' as yourself?"

"Certainly, James, if they would deceive the one, they would deceive the other."

"Perfectly correct, Martha, and when you taught them to say 'don't tell father!' you put them in the way of cheating yourself."

"I taught them!" ejaculated Mrs. Smith, blushing deeply.

"*You*, my dear!" replied the husband, "When the vase was broken.—Yes, Martha, that little matter has come to light —you taught the little things to solder it up, and to conceal the fact from their father; and you then, not only afforded them a lesson in the art of cheating yourself, but gave them a kind of instruction, that being persevered in, might easily lead them, by-and-by, to commit fraud, forgery, or embezzlement."

"Bless me, James!" exclaimed the wife, colouring still more deeply, and becoming emboldened to defend herself—"what a dreadful, serious way you have of talking about things! Now the fact is, that it is because you are such a hard-thinking man, James, and so severe with the children when they do wrong, that I dare not be candid with you sometimes."

Some further conversation ensued, and the result was, that James saw that there had been a fault on his side too, and he resolved to amend it.

WHOLESOME ADVICE.

THE celebrated Dr. Darwin was so impressed with a conviction of the necessity of good air, that, being very popular in the town of Derby, once on a market-day, he mounted a tub, and thus addressed the listening crowd. "Ye men of Derby, fellow-citizens, attend to me! I know you to be ingenious and industrious mechanics. By your exertions you procure for yourselves and families the necessaries of life; but if you lose your health, that power of being of use to them must cease. This truth all of you know; but I fear some of you do not understand how health is to be maintained in vigour; this, then, depends upon your breathing an uncontaminated air; for the purity of the air becomes destroyed where many are collected together, the effluvia from the body corrupt it. Keep open, then, the windows of your workshops, and as soon as you rise open all the windows of your bed-rooms. Inattention to this advice, be assured will bring diseases on yourselves, and engender among you typhus fever, which is only another name for putrid fever, which will carry off your wives and children. Let me again repeat my serious advice—*open your windows to let in the fresh air*, at least once in the day. Remember what I say; I speak now without a fee, and can have no other interest but your good in this my advice."

A WORD TO THE IRISH.

A GREATER crime could scarcely be conceived than that of making use of the miseries of the people to enforce the preposterous fallacy that all their sufferings will be relieved by mere political reform! It is to divert the minds of the unhappy people from practical objects to the pursuits of theories hopeless, or dan-