

XXII.

HAPPY BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

DEAR mother, when the busy day is done,
And sleeping lies each tired little one,
Then fold your own hands on a heart at rest,
And sleep with them upon God's loving breast.

The love that gave you such a sacred charge
Is passing tender and exceeding large !
Oh, trust it utterly, and it will pour
Into each crevice of your life its store.

Then things unworthy shall no more find room,
And like a sweet contagion in your home
Your life shall be. A life that's hid in God
Tells its great secret without spoken word.

The gesture which accompanies this song is perfectly simple. It is shown clearly in the drawing. I need only mention that, in conformity with the idea and evolution of the song, the fingers should be very slowly intertwined.

No phase of the process of nurture is more tender, more important, and more difficult than the nurture of that hidden life of the heart and the prescient imagination out of which proceeds all that is highest and holiest in individual man and in humanity, and whose perfect blossom is a soul at one with God in thought, word, and deed.

We have already asked ourselves when and how this inner life begins. It is like the seed



which germinates in darkness, and which is growing long before its growth is outwardly visible. It is like the stars which astronomers tell us are shining long before their beams fall upon our eyes.

We cannot catch the first faint breaths of spiritual life, and the moment when the tendency towards God is born passes silent and unnoticed. To nurture this tendency prematurely is like exposing a seed too early to nourishing moisture and developing light. If, on the other hand, spiritual nurture is tardy or feeble, the result must likewise be a dwarfed or abortive growth.

What, then, shall we do? Let me answer this question by asking another: How does the life of the spirit make itself outwardly visible? With what gesture do we associate its birth and development? What act seems to us to be its physical analogue? In a word, do we not, each and all of us, connect devout feeling with clasped or folded hands?

And yet, what possible correspondence can there be between folded hands and the inner life? Is not this gesture merely accidental or conventional? How can that which is accidental or conventional have any necessary connection with man's inner life?

Between the inner life and its outward expression the connection must be a necessary one, and if this be so we should be able to discover some common characteristic. What, then, is the quality common to the devout mind and the