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THE OLD FASHIONED MOTHER
By Wilson Ray Duncan

Author of
The Road To hell
Sin is To Blame
Good Night or Last Words

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DEDICATION

To your mother and mine, young or old, on earth or in heaven, this little message is
lovingly dedicated.

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PREFACE

This day and age has produced a scarcity of old-fashioned mothers. The name Mother is a
forgotten word among many of our younger folk of today. To them she is just the "old woman." The
principle involved in any woman's heart makes her just another woman or a mother.

Dr. James DeWeerd, who served as chaplain in World War II, related this story. A young
sergeant went home on furlough but for some reason had returned the same week. Brother

DeWeerd approached him and said, "Sarge, why have you returned before your furlough had hardly begun?"

The sergeant said, "Chappie, when I reached home I found my mother too drunk to recognize me, so I preferred to return to the only home that I know about." With tears streaming down his face he turned and walked away.

Beloved, how happy ought you and I to be who can say, "God bless the memory of an old-fashioned mother."

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THE OLD FASHIONED MOTHER

Sermon preached at the Chillicothe High Street Church of Christ in Christian Union.

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Webster in all his wisdom did not try to define the word mother. All he said was, mother -- a female parent.

Our Mother's Day was originated by Miss Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia in May, 1907. She started out in the small community showing forth the death of her mother by wearing a white carnation. By May, 1911, it had spread to every state in the Union. In May, 1914, Congress declared it a national Mother's Day to be observed by all. Those having mothers still living were to pin the red carnation on their breasts; those having mothers gone on were to wear the white carnation.

It has been said that the future of a child depends upon the teachings he received from his mother. John Tyler, our tenth president, said these words about his mother in his inaugural address, April 9, 1841: "What on earth can be more interesting than the mother? How many recollections and ideas crowd upon the mind at the repetition of the words our mother. She nurtured us in our infancy, watched over our cradle, taught us to raise our little hands in prayer, followed us in our infantile rambles, and reared us to manhood in the love and practice of virtue. Such a mother is of priceless value. No loud-toned trumpet sounds forth her praise; she drags at her chariot wheels no visible captives made in war; but her path is strewn with flowers and her virtues attend her footsteps; God will bless her and men adore her."

Grover Cleveland on the eve of his election as governor of New York State wrote to his brother: "I have just voted and I sit here in my office alone. If mother were alive I should be writing to her, and I feel as if it were time to write to somebody who would believe what I say. Do you know if Mother were alive I would feel so much safer? I have always thought that her prayers had much to do with my success in life."

Listen to me! There are many great men who have their pictures in the paper and their names in the headlines today, but I wonder if we would not praise their mothers along with them if we knew of the definite part that they shared in the early lives of these great men.

The good Book teaches us that our mothers went into the very jaws of death to bring us into this world. I used to wonder as a child what my mother meant when she would say to the neighbor, "I count the suffering of their stepping on my toes very light to what I might suffer should they step on my heart when they grow up." I never realized the meaning of Mother's words until I grew to manhood and had a family of my own. My oldest child is eleven and despite all our discipline at home he, like all other children, takes a little walk on my heart now and then. He is reaching the age when he thinks he knows everything and the price of it. His own way seemingly appeals to his childish heart as better than the counsel of Mom and Dad. Don't get me wrong now, as he is a very good boy, yet he is a real boy, possibly just like your boy, or perhaps like the chip off the old block when he was growing up. See now what I mean? Now days the children, instead of being chips off the old block, are the blocks. I am so glad that the good Book teaches to lay the rod on once in a while for it reads, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son. . . ." Before I finish this ticklish subject, let me say, "To correct a child the parent must have more sense than the child."

A high school boy said one day: "I wish I had a Mom and Dad who understood me."

No doubt the Mom and Dad at the same time were saying: "We wish we had a son who understood us."

Let this same boy reach manhood and listen in as he stands talking to another about what a good Mom and Dad he once had. Listen to him as he says: "If I had my life to live over I would do far better for my Mom and Dad than I did while they were alive. I have learned a lesson from life that has come too late for me to remedy the fact because the fact lies now in the past -- just an experience that has passed into eternity."

Getting back to the subject of mother, a mother is an example, teacher, and keeper. Two boys who were attending Harvard University went to hear Bob Ingersoll lecture. Walking away from the lecture, one of them said to the other: "Jim, didn't Bob mop Christianity off the earth tonight?"

Jim replied: "I don't know. I am inclined to think my good old mother is left yet and I wouldn't give her with her sweet Christian life and example for all the Bob Ingersolls that could be crowded on the earth."

A member of a family on coming home one day after an extended absence said to his mother: "Mom, I guess Tom is getting on in the world."

There was a moment's pause, then the gray-haired mother by the fireside asked: "Which world?"

There is no doubt in my mind that this very moment some of your mothers are in wonder if you, their sons or daughters, will ever get right with God.

I often think of the daring story told of a young Frenchman who loved a courtesan. This woman hated her lover's mother, and when, in his passion, he offered her any gift in return for her love, she answered, "Bring me then your mother's bleeding heart." He, in his madness, killed his mother and, plucking out her heart, hurried by night through the streets, carrying it to the cruel woman to whom he had given his soul.

But as he went he stumbled and fell and from the bleeding heart came an anxious voice: "My son, did you hurt yourself?" No, even murder could not kill that mother's love; it lived on in the torn heart. Beloved, this is the message of the cross.

How true are the words of the poet who penned, "My mother's love has followed me." This is oftentimes seen when it is too late to thank Mother for the love she has shown us in our lives of rambling. A young man said one day to a group of men he was addressing about Mother: "Mother does not look as she used to. When I was a boy they called her the most beautiful woman in the community. But Father was sick for a long time and my brother and I were both ill; then Father and brother died. Mother had to manage things and work very hard; she carried a heavy load to get me through college. It stooped her shoulders and left wrinkles on her cheeks and forehead, and whitened her hair. But," and here his eyes filled with tears and his voice broke with emotion as he continued, "to me she is the most beautiful woman in the whole world, for every wrinkle reminds me of the load she carried all for me."

Look around today at the many children you know in your community who, by their fast living, are sending gnawing pains into the hearts of their mothers. Look at one of these mothers her hair is being silvered over by the frost of many winters and she is facing an early grave simply because of the disobedience in her home. There will be no end to your sorrow should you be suddenly awakened by your mother being called away while you sit by knowing that you neglected her and turned down her God-wise counsel.

Just recently in a city not too many miles from Waverly, Ohio, I was called to officiate at the funeral of an aged woman. After the sermon two ladies approached me and said, "Brother Duncan, your sermon was very touching today, especially along the line of thought of how so many will never miss their mother until she is gone."

One, with tears streaming down her face, said, "Preacher, one of our brothers listening to your sermon today hasn't been to see Mother for several months and she loves him so dearly that she is being cut to the very heart."

I said, "Sister, I will speak to your brother and encourage him to go see his mother."

But I didn't get to make the call as this young man called on me first. He said, "Preacher, you opened my eyes today. I haven't been to see Mom and Dad for a long time, but, thanks to you, I am calling on them tonight."

The poet said:

"There is a place in my home for Mother to dwell,
She may sit in the best cushioned chair;
My heart is open for Mother's embrace,
She is old, but to me she is dear."

Just recently I assisted Rev. E. Claytor in a funeral of a young man by the name of McKee who was suddenly killed on his motorcycle while laying out an endurance route for his club. While Brother Claytor was preaching the funeral, I was in constant thought of what the mother had just told the preacher before the funeral. Her son had, only a few days previous, put his arms around her shoulders and said, "Mom, this is the final run. After this run I'm going to sell my motorcycle and buy a car."

To think, this was his last run. Almost through -- but now in eternity. Almost safe to live a slower life, but the run was final -- he crossed the line of worlds.

I watched the brothers and father and the one sister march to the casket with scalding tears dripping from their cheeks to know that brother and son was gone, gone, gone forever; then march slowly to their seats in deep sorrow. When the mother walked slowly over looking upon the face of her little boy of just yesterday, you could see the quickening of heart beats in her neck and the blood draining from her face as she turned a ghastly pale. There stood a mother in bereavement deeper than can be measured in human words, with her thoughts gaining momentum as they ran from rocking the cradle to the deep, cruel, dark, and silent grave.

Yes, a mother lives in travail for her children from the day of their birth until she is caught away to glory or until she looks upon their still forms. Let me quote you a few words from a worldly song, as we term worldliness, and you take these words for what they are worth: "I want a girl just like the girl that married dear old Dad."

The great Solomon said about Mother: "Wisdom hath builded her house." Mother never spared herself or shirked in her duty toward her children. Mother made no difference in her children; she kept each one's secrets from the others, kissed away the hurt from baby fingers, wiped away every tear, listened to every story, whether of sorrow or of joy, overlooked each fault, and worked for us while we were sleeping. She was the first to arise each morning to begin the toil of another day that would enable us to have a day of happiness and protection. She was a bulwark to society and a foundation to better living. How true are the words of the poet: "Mother is gone, but her influence lives on."

I read a story one time how, back in the olden days before they had discovered antitoxin for diphtheria, a physician was called to see a little boy who was dying. Immediately he cleared the room of people and told the mother that she would have to leave also since she was very young and might contract the disease which is very fatal. They got an old lady that had experienced such things before and she stayed with the dying boy. The story goes that just before the little boy died he called for his mother; she came and stood looking in through the window from the outside. The little boy, looking up and seeing his mother, feebly cried: "Please, come in, Mamma, and kiss me. I don't want to go to be with Jesus till you kiss me good-bye."

The mother was told it would be her death if she went in, but it was more than she could stand. She went in, knelt down by her little boy, kissed him, prayed with him, and never left his side until death claimed him a few minutes later. Yes, you have guessed the rest: This young mother took this dreaded disease a few days later and she too died and was buried by the side of her little boy.

We look upon the mother of Jesus as a great woman; she stayed with her Son all the way she even walked the road with Him that led to Calvary's hill. Looking down from the cross, Jesus said unto His disciple John, "...Behold thy mother...!" Beloved, a Christian mother is a mother to all that stand in need of motherly help and advice.

When I was but a small boy of six, I had a ruptured appendix and my father, sister, and brother took turns sitting up with me. As the nights lingered on and I seemingly could not die or get well, they all became very tired, so tired that my mother had to watch them to keep them awake. Seeing their weariness, Mother took over and for two or three days and nights she never had her clothing off. I was very small but I can remember as if it were yesterday how my mother would call upon God and say: "Please, dear God, don't let me go to sleep. God, touch my little boy." I did not know how serious I was; I was too small to understand about serious things. I lay one night and watched her bite her finger nails and pull at her hair to keep awake. Brother, sister, there is no way on earth of measuring a mother's love for her family. The love possessed by the true mother is given of God, and it makes her family dearer to her than her own life, sweeter to her than the water she drinks, and nearer than the air that she breathes. From dawn to the setting of the sun her every move is for the good of her family. The father, it is said, works from sun to sun, but a mother's work is never done.

A young man was called from his job to the bedside of his dying mother. Rushing to her bedside he whispered: "Mother, do you know me? This is Tom. Mother, are you sinking?"

She rallied enough to open her eyes, look up, and say to him: "Son, how can I sink? I am standing on the Rock of Ages."

Oh, beloved, that should be our prayer. "Rock of Ages, hide Thou me." There is no greater influence in the home or throughout the world than that of a mother.

Things are sometimes hard to understand, especially as in this case. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Harmon Pfeifer, a very sincere Christian woman, has said to me many times: "Ray, I wonder, did I do my all when I taught the Kuhns boy in Sunday School at the Woodside Avenue Church in Springfield, Ohio?" She has often mentioned this because this boy just some few months back, after becoming a man, cruelly murdered his mother.

I had the privilege in one of my revival meetings of praying with this mother and hearing her testify that she had been reclaimed. Everybody in the community knows that Margaret Kuhns did her best to rear up that fatherless boy to do that which was right. Her pastor told me that when the sheriff led the boy in the day of the funeral to look upon his mother for the last time, he seemed untouched until he looked upon the face of his mother. Then he wilted for a short time and they led him out.

What a contrast to the boy visited by a governor in a southern prison. The governor, visiting the prison one day, noticed a young man watering a box of very beautiful flowers. He stopped and the guard told him the boy's name which happened to be Jim. The governor walked up, and said: "Jim, those are beautiful flowers you are watering. Tell me, why do you take such care of those flowers? Is it because you want to go free and they remind you of the outside?"

Jim, not knowing the man talking to him, said: "No sir, I care for and love these flowers because they remind me of my mother back in my mountain home."

The governor walked slowly away as if unimpressed by the words of Jim. When out of sight he hurried away and checked up on why Jim was serving time in prison. He found that it was for a minor offense and possibly he was serving for a mistake. He sat down and wrote out a pardon and when the warden handed it to Jim, he looked up through tear-dimmed eyes and said, "I didn't know that was the governor. Thank you, sir. I shall go now to see my mother."

Mother's love will follow a daughter even though she has brought disgrace to the family and leaves home to hide the embarrassment. D. L. Moody related a story about a young woman who left home to seek refuge in a rescue home in a far distant city. Her mother, after many weeks, was told by a neighbor girl why her daughter had left home. The mother hurriedly had her picture taken and sent to several of the rescue homes throughout the neighboring states. One day the girls were all in line going into the dining hall. A girl walking along with her baby in her arms and with her thoughts on mother and home many miles away, happened to look up and there over the door had been placed a picture. A second look and she recognized it to be that of her own mother. She began to sob and the mother of the home got her to talk. She told her story and the next day she, accompanied by the lady of the rescue home, opened the old home gate, started down the walk to be met and embraced by a loving mother who had prayed for God to send her darling girl home. The mother reached over and took the little bundle of coos out of her daughter's arms and said: "Honey, let your old grandmother have a peep at you."

Yes, no earthly understanding can go so deep, reach so high, extend so far, and be so everlasting as that of a mother.

Lord Shaftsbury said: "Give me one generation of Christian mothers and I'll change the course of society in twelve months." Beloved, a nation is no stronger than its motherhood.

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." -- 2 Tim. 1:5. Paul went so far as to say: "Timothy, my son, they have handed down to you a priceless possession, faith."

Napoleon said: "What France needs most is mothers." Moses so loved his own mother that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Beloved, give us mothers who are not contented with having their babies brought up by baby sitters and the future will be brighter. We are told by some returned missionaries that some of the heathen mothers are more persistent in teaching their children than some of the civilized mothers here in God's country. Thank God for a

few mothers who cannot be contented by a long-haired poodle dog. I'm definitely sure that a dog would rather sleep with his own kind in a dog house, as I am very definitely sure that any rational, reasonable, logical person would prefer to live with his own in what is known as home.

We are vitally in need of mothers like Hannah of old who said to Eli, the high priest, about her son, Samuel: "I prayed for this child." Truly a great and beautiful prayer is found in Mark 7:24-28, made by the Syrophenician woman to Jesus for the healing of her daughter. The humble prayer of this mother moved God upon the high throne of heaven.

The Bible, speaking of the Shunamite woman ' says that she was a great woman. When her only child died of a sun stroke, the servant brought him to his father and, like all other fathers, he cried out: "Take the boy to his mother." When the mother saw that life had left her son she sent for the man of God. The outcome was that the boy was, through faith, restored back to life and given back to his mother.

A woman leading a drunken boy down the street was stopped by a neighbor who said: "Why don't you call the police for that drunk?"

The woman looked up and said: "Because I am his mother."

Look with me at a few of the great women and the things that they have done for humanity. Look how unfortunate the world might have been in the past centuries if a certain group of mothers had become so broad-minded, up-to-date, progressive and so deeply interested in public welfare and the uplift of society that they had determined they would not become cumbered with the bearing and rearing of children but would devote their energies to the general welfare. The sainted Dr. Morrison made a statement similar to this just before he went to glory. A man seasoned by nearly sixty years in the ministry, I think, should be listened to yet today; he being dead yet speaketh. He will not be forgotten in the city and the place of the holy where he worshipped the Almighty in the beauty of holiness. Forever live the sermons of Dr. Morrison.

Take, for instance, the mothers of Moses, Joshua, John the Baptist, Paul, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Bishop Asbury, Shakespeare, Longfellow, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, D. L. Moody, Dr. Carradine, Dr. W. B. Godbey, and a great number of others. What a vast gap it would leave in the annals of human history, especially in the religious realm, should the mothers of these men refused to give them birth. I would shudder to think what spiritual condition our world might be in today. They were given birth, taught and trained by the Holy Spirit of God, possessed in the bosom of these precious old mothers of great faith. Personally, I would be afraid to live in a nation without godly and devout mothers who taught their children to worship according to the dictates of their conscience. A cigarette-smoking, beer-drinking, wine-sipping, card-playing, dance-crazed motherhood cannot produce the manhood and womanhood that will preserve the integrity of democracy and go forward with a progressive human living.

There is no use in denying facts. There is a scarcity of Hannahs living in this sinful world today to help combat the forces of evil which can only be driven backward by a holy motherhood.

It was Constantine's mother who discovered the tomb of Jesus. Joan of Arc led the French people to victory over the enemy. Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross. Francis Willard was the founder of the W. C. T. U. in America. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the story of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Isaac married Rebekah immediately after the death of his mother and the Bible says that his heart was comforted.

Listen to me! The outstanding fame of some of the women just mentioned doesn't make them any greater in the eyes of the Lord than the humble, meek, quiet mother who has never been known outside her community, has never traveled into the next state, or had her name in the paper, but the principle involved in her Spirit-filled heart was what pleased God.

I often look with great pity upon the many county homes and rest homes in the counties and small towns and wonder why there are so many of them in late years. Remember, we need them when they serve the true purpose for the many old folks who have outlived their loved ones and have not enough laid up to live independently, but I think it a shame and a disgrace for the children of infirm and aged parents to place them under the care of some home or institution, regardless of how properly they may be cared for. Flesh and blood is thicker than water and God grant that it always may remain so. Beloved, just a little self-sacrifice on the part of the son or daughter would bring more real life and happiness in one hour's time than all the rest homes and other institutions could bring to them the rest of their lives.

M -- is for the many things she gave me;
O -- is that she's only growing old;
T -- is for the things she did to save me
H -- is for the heart of purest gold;
E -- is for her eyes with love light shining;
R -- is for the right and right she'll always be;

Put them all together, they spell MOTHER,
The word that means the world to me.

M -- is for the mercy she bestowed me;
O -- is that I owe her all I own;
T -- is for the things she did to save me;
H -- is for the hands that made our home;
E -- is everything she did to save me;
R -- is right and regular, you see;

Put them all together, they spell MOTHER,
The name that means the world to me.

This preacher knows but little through experience about the love of a mother since his mother died when he was but eleven years of age, but he can be thankful to God for a father that acted in his awkward way the part of both mother and father to him for many years. Yes, my father and I saw some tough going, living, to my recollection, in more than seventeen boarding houses after the death of Mother until I married my wife, Kathryn. By the grace of God I preached my

father under deep and pungent conviction, for sins committed, after he had reached his seventy-fourth year of his life and two years later, just a few minutes before he was stricken and left this world for the higher world, he testified that he was ready to go when God called him. Yes, with the poet we can sing:

"There is naught in this wide world can pleasure afford,
There is peace and contentment in serving the Lord."

Last fall I officiated at the funeral of a very sweet little girl that God had lifted up to transplant into the paradise of His heavenly garden. Her father called to me and said: "Preacher, let me tell you the story of my darling little girl. When little Donna's mother was called to heaven Donna was made a very lonesome little girl and that lonesomeness she never fully overcame. Every day and night I heard her as she prayed at the table and by her bedside: 'Please, dear God, come down and get me and let me go live with my mamma.'"

I put my arms around his shaking shoulders and we stood there weeping together. Finally he looked up and said: "Preacher, God heard and answered her little prayer."

I talked to her doctor, Dr. Clifton, at Piketon, Ohio, and he told me that from the very earliest diagnosis he knew she could not live long in this world but that he did what he could for her to prolong life. Had this preacher known how her little heart longed for her mother an altogether different prayer would have been sent up. My prayer would have been, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come!"

"Mother, look down and guide me,
Help me to see thy light,
For since 'you have gone and left me
There's no one to teach me right.
We miss you at church on Sunday;
It's lonesome at home every night,
Please, Mother, look down and guide me
And help me to see thy light."

Let me give you a story about a little boy who loved his mother, as is told in a sermon by J. Wilbur Chapman. The following is a sketch, full of interest, of a little ragged news-boy who had lost his mother. In the tenderness of his affection for her he was determined that he would raise a stone to her memory. His mother and he had kept house together and they had been all-in-all to each other, but now she was taken and the little fellow's loss was irreparable. Getting a stone was no easy task, for his earnings were small, but love is strong. Going to a cutter's yard and finding that even the cheaper class of stones was far too expensive for him, he at length fixed upon a broken shaft of marble, part of the remains of an ancient one in the yard, and which the proprietor kindly named at such a low figure that it came within his means. There was much yet to be done but the brave little chap was equal to it. The next day he conveyed the stone away on a little, four-wheeled cart, and managed to have it put in position.

The narrator, curious to know the last of the stone, visited the cemetery one afternoon, and he thus described what he saw and learned:

"Here it is," said the man in charge, and, sure enough, there was our monument at the head of one of the newer graves. I knew it at once. Just as it was when it left our yard, I was going to say, until I got a little nearer to it and saw what the little chap had done. I tell you, boys, when I saw it there was something blurred my eyes, so's I couldn't read it at first.

The little man had tried to keep the lines straight, and evidently he thought that capitals would make it look bigger and better for nearly every letter was a capital. I copied it and here it is, but you want to see it on the stone to appreciate it:

MY MOTHER
SHEE DIED LAST WEEK
SHEE WAS ALL I HAD. SHEE
SED SHEAD BEE WAITING
FUR

And here the boy's lettering stopped. After a while I went back to the man in charge and asked him what further he knew of the little fellow who bought the stone.

"Not much," he said. "Not much. Did you notice a fresh little grave near the one with the stone? Well, that's where he is. He came here every afternoon for some time, working away at that stone and then one day I missed him. For several days he did not come. Then the man came out from the church that had buried the mother and ordered the grave dug by her side. I asked if it were for the little chap. He said that it was. The boy had sold all his papers one day and was hurrying along the street, out this way. There was a run-away team just above the crossing and -- well -- he was run over and lived but a day or two. He had in his hand when he was picked up an old file, sharpened down to a point, with which he did all the lettering. They said he seemed to be thinking only of that until he died, for he kept saying: 'I didn't get it done but she'll know I meant to finish it. Won't she? I'll tell her so for she'll be waiting for me,' and he died with those words on his lips. When the men in the cutter's yard heard the story of the boy the next day they clubbed together, got a good stone, inscribed upon it the name of the newsboy which they succeeding in getting from the superintendent of the Sunday School which the little fellow attended, and underneath it the touching words:

HE LOVED HIS MOTHER

Does your memory recall incidents of yesterday when your mother's wisdom was equal to that of Solomon? Some little thing happened, and in order to whip the guilty one, she gave both you and Susie a right good switching. A little later in the day when the sobs had dried and the pouting was ended, you found yourself stealing up to the arm that had wielded the switch, and, giving it a gentle touch, you said, "Mom, Susie didn't do it. I did, and I am sorry. Will you forgive me?"

You found yourself wrapped up in those loving arms and heard Mother as she said, "Honey, Mother loves you and she must correct you so that you will be a good little boy." About that time your childish heart took on a new love for Mother and oh, how good you were the rest of the day. Too, what about the many times you told her a big yarn which started out very well but enlarged, gaining momentum as you told it? She listened with kindly interest as though she believed every word to be honest truth. When you finally ran down and out and stopped to see what Mother had to say about it, she would smile and say: "Darling, don't you think you stretched your blanket just a little?"

About that time a little blush began to steal across your face and, walking away, you would say. "Oh, Mom, don't you believe me?"

Do you remember when Mother put the hickory on both legs and you screamed like it was killing you? But what about the time she punished you by sitting down and holding your hand, looking you in the face, and began to gently talk about what you had done and every now and then she took the back of her hand and wiped a stream of tears from her face. It was then that your heart swelled to within the breaking point; the whole bad deed was confessed and you promised never to do that thing again. When it was all over, the hardest whipping of your life had been given you.

What about the time you and your brother had a secret which you passed on to Mother and she promised each not to tell the other. When the other's back was turn you coaxed and begged Mom to reveal the other's secret but she only smiled and simply refused to be moved into telling the other's secret. Beloved reader, this was your mother and mine.

* * * * *

THE MOTHER WATCH

She never closed her eyes in sleep, till we were all in bed,
On party nights till we came home, she often sat and read,
We little thought about it then, when we were young and gay,
How much Mother worried, when we children went away.

We only knew she never slept, when we were out at night,
And that she waited just to know that we'd come home all right.
Why, sometimes when we'd stay away till one or two or three,
It seemed to us that Mother heard the turning of the key.

For always when we'd step inside, she'd call and we'd reply,
But we were all too young back then, to understand just why,
Until the last one had returned, she always kept a light,
For Mother couldn't sleep, until she kissed us all goodnight.

She had to know that we were safe, before she went to rest,
She seemed to fear the world might harm the ones she loved the best.
And once she said, "When you are grown to women and to men,

Perhaps I'll sleep the whole night through, I may be different then."

And so it seemed that night and day we knew a mother's care,
That always when we got back home, we'd find her waiting there.
Then came the night that we were called to gather round her bed,
"The children all are with you now," the kindly doctor said.

And in her eyes there gleamed again, that old-time tender light,
That told she had been waiting just to know we were all right.
She smiled the old familiar smile and prayed to God to keep
Us safe from harm throughout the years, and then she went to sleep.

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THE END