

IN THE COTTAGE

THE little children wept and wailed;
Heart-rending were the tears they shed.
“Mamma, mamma, we want our food!
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”
With bitter sorrow in her heart
Groaned the sick mother from her bed:
“We have no bread, my little ones;
Papa has gone to get you bread.”
“No, you are cheating, bad mamma!
You are deceiving us! You said
That when the sunlight struck the banks
Papa would come and bring us bread.
“The sun has come, the sun has gone;
Still are we hungry, still unfed.
Mamma, mamma, we want our food!
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”
“No bread your father yet has found;
Without it he dares not come back.
Wait but a little while, my dears!
Now I will follow in his track.
“In heaven there is a great Papa;
Abundant store of bread has he.
He loves you much, so very much,
He will not let you hungry be.
“There will I go and say to him
That you are faint with hunger sore.
Plenty of bread I’ll ask for you,
That you may eat, and weep no more.”

So spake the mother, and she clasped
The starving children to her breast.
On her pale lips the last kiss froze
That to their faces thin she pressed.
The mother's arms unclosed no more—
She shut her eyes and went away
Bread to her little ones to send—
And lifeless in their sight she lay.
The little children wept and wailed;
Heart-rending were the tears they shed.
“Mamma, mamma, we want our food;
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”