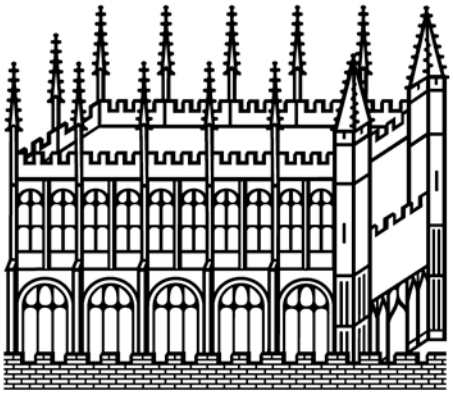
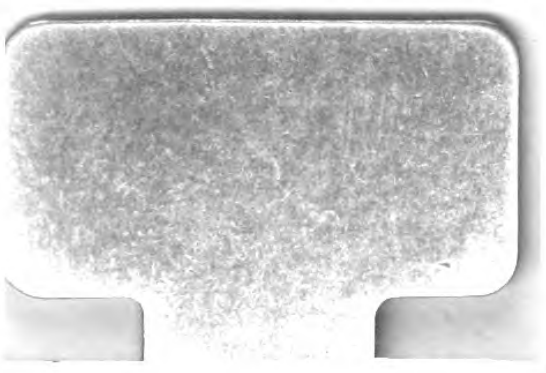


HOME AND SCHOOL OR THE NEGLECTED CHILD.



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Front.

LUCY AND AUNT LILLA. P. 75.

1863.

Front.

LUCY AND AUNT LILLA. P. 75.

HOME AND SCHOOL:

OR,

THE NEGLECTED CHILD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE TWINS AND THEIR STEPMOTHER."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CONTENTS.

HOME AND SCHOOL.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. GRANT'S SCHOOL.

In a large house surrounded by open fields and well-kept shrubberies forty-five young ladies were at school. Their ages varied from six to sixteen, but the greater number were over twelve years old. Among the elder ones none was more loved and respected than Eleanor Hammond. She had come to school when she was fifteen, and had been there a year when the event happened which gave rise to the story that follows.

One day Eleanor was informed that Mrs. Grant, the mistress of the school, wished to speak to her. It was a few days after the midsummer holidays had ended, and Eleanor had just returned to school. On entering the drawing-room she found Mrs. Grant looking rather perplexed and worried.

"Come in, Miss Hammond," said she, "and sit down. I have a favour to ask you."

In some surprise Eleanor obeyed, and Mrs. Grant went on:

"Since you have been under my care your character and conduct have been such as to inspire me with a confidence which I am about to show in a way that will not, I trust, prove very troublesome to you. During the holidays I received a letter from a very old and dear friend, once a schoolfellow of mine; she wrote to make an earnest request that I would receive among my pupils a little niece of hers, whose education, both mental and moral, has, she fears, been much neglected. From what I know of this poor little girl's history I greatly fear that such will prove to be the case; but not liking to disoblige my old friend I have, perhaps in an unwise moment, consented to receive little Lady Lucy Elton. You have always, I think, according to the custom of my school, taken some charge of a little girl much younger than yourself, and it is this kind office that I want you to undertake for poor little Lucy; I think you have had no new charge appointed for you this half-year, and you know little Emma Baynes does not return to school."

"No," said Eleanor; "I was sorry to hear that she had left, and I wanted to ask you to appoint me another 'child,' as we call them."

"And I wished to ask you to take little Lucy under your care. I am afraid you may find it a troublesome charge; but I have great faith in the results of your good influence and our joint efforts for her improvement."

Eleanor thanked Mrs. Grant for her kind confidence, and promised to do all in her power to deserve it, and also to assist the little girl, in whom, she said, she already began to feel an interest.

Mrs. Grant then told Eleanor that Lady Lucy had lost her mother when very young, and had since been under the charge of two grown-up sisters, to whom her father trusted her entirely. The elder of the two, Lady Clara, assumed all the authority, but abused the confidence her father reposed in her and only sought her own selfish enjoyment. The younger, Lady Amelia, was a good-natured girl, but too easily led, and too fond of peace and quietness to remonstrate boldly against the wrong she regretted. Their aunt, Lady Gertrude, was made to under-

stand by Lady Clara that it would be useless to interfere, and she very seldom saw any of the family. These were all the details that Mrs. Grant could impart.

In due time Lady Lucy arrived; a little pale girl, with dark hair, and a weak bending figure, which only escaped being awkward by its extreme slightness and flexibility. There was nothing particularly interesting or aristocratic in her appearance, but her manner was characterized by something between carelessness and timidity, that betokened both an indifference to please and a want of confidence in her power of pleasing. Eleanor soon discovered that she had never been properly guided or corrected, though often found fault with and blamed; she feared to be in the wrong, but was hopeless of being in the right, and consequently she cared very little what befel her. She soon, however, became fond of Eleanor, whose kindness seemed rather to surprise her.

"Well," said she one day, "I was taken away from my last school because they were not ladies, and my aunt said they were not strict enough with me, but you are not strict at all, and I am sure you are a lady."

Eleanor laughed and told her it would not become her to be strict, as she was only a fellow-pupil and not one of the teachers; whereupon Lady Lucy replied that Mrs. Grant was not strict either, and "moreover," she continued, "you may be strict if you like, though you are not a teacher, for I will do as you tell me, because I like you."

Notwithstanding these professions, Eleanor soon found it was not without reason that Mrs. Grant had warned her of difficulties. Lady Lucy was constantly in trouble. If Eleanor entered the room in a hurry with her music portfolio under her arm she would be accosted by one of the teachers with, "Oh, Miss Hammond, can you tell me why Lady Lucy does not know her class lesson this morning? Is there any good reason for her not learning it? or must I again put her down a mark for idleness?" And Eleanor could give no reason. Over and over again would she hear the lesson repeated in the evening, and over and over again would she have to leave off, hopeless as to its being said properly in the morning.

Lucy hated trouble, and had never gained

the habit of applying her mind to a lesson as to a duty.

It was some time before she made any friends among the children of her own age in the school; she was capricious and wilful, and in the former school where she had been her rank had obtained for her many foolish indulgences, and an undue influence among her companions, which those at Mrs. Grant's were not disposed to allow to her. Lucy's father, Lord O'Kerry, had a home in Ireland, but lived abroad, and Lucy being very much in her sisters' way, and too young to be their companion, was left at an inferior school, while the time and money that might have been spent on her better education were wasted in Paris. One person took a kinder interest in Lucy's fate; this was her father's youngest sister, Lady Gertrude. She was unmarried, had very delicate health, and but a small fortune, so she could not do all she wished for her neglected little niece, but it was her earnest representations that induced her brother to remove Lucy from the very inferior school at which she had been placed; and having herself been educated at Mrs. Grant's establishment when that lady only

occupied the position of a teacher under her predecessor, Lady Gertrude had persuaded Lord O'Kerry to allow his daughter to be placed under the care of her old friend. Lady Clara took no part in the business. She said only that the child did very well where she was, but if her aunt chose to amuse herself by fidgeting her out of one school and into another, she only hoped she would pay the expenses of her journey, which Lady Gertrude accordingly did, though she could very ill afford it. But the money was well spent, and Lady Gertrude would willingly have made far greater sacrifices to ensure the advantages Lucy was now enjoying.

In the long run these were not thrown away. Eleanor was sometimes almost in despair, and even Mrs. Grant felt discouraged by the almost impossibility of making Lucy *feel* her duties and her deficiencies; but there were in her character two marked features which always caused hope to revive as to her ultimate improvement: she was perfectly truthful, and she was really affectionate. Nothing would induce her to try and screen herself from blame by even the shadow of a

prevarication, and though she gave Eleanor a great deal of trouble, she was truly fond of her and grateful for her kindness. The fits of passion, too, in which Lucy at first indulged became gradually much less frequent; and Eleanor had begun to think with some satisfaction of the improvement next half-year would confirm, when the approach of the holidays brought glad excitement to the school in general, and roused Lucy to an outburst of passionate grief and indignation. She was not to go home!

Three weeks before the holidays began, Mrs. Grant had desired Lucy to write and ask for directions about her journey, &c.; this she had done, and waited anxiously for the answer. She waited a week in vain. Eleanor comforted her; "foreign posts were so uncertain, it would surely come to-morrow." But no: fourteen days passed; there was only one week now remaining. The other children had letters from their friends promising to come or send for them, and making every kind thoughtful arrangement for the happy journey. One was delighted because she was to be trusted to travel all the way into Derbyshire with her two

Eton brothers; another yet more flattered and pleased because "papa was coming the whole way on purpose to fetch her himself."

Eleanor had a long journey before her: her home was in Cornwall. Her mother wrote her word that her father would be in London on business two days before the breaking-up of the school, and wished her to join him at his hotel on the evening of the second day, if Mrs. Grant would allow her to leave a few hours earlier than usual. Mr. Hammond thought she had better sleep in London, so as to be quite fresh and ready to start with him by the early express next day. Eleanor purposely refrained from mentioning her journey to Lucy, and tried to divert the attention of the latter from the various holiday plans under discussion around her; but all her kind care could not avert the blow that was to fall.

Only four days previously to the breaking-up of the school, and when poor Lucy had nearly worked herself up into a fever, Mrs. Grant sent for her, and put a foreign letter into her hands. "Stay here, my dear, and read it quietly," said the kind

lady, seeing the poor child's excited look. Lucy read; threw the letter towards Mrs. Grant, and began stamping about the room like a little maniac, jerking out angry exclamations through passionate sobs and tears. The letter was not from Lady Clara herself, but from the younger sister. She wrote as follows:—

"Clara says she does not know what you are to do in the holidays; she thought Aunt Gertrude would settle all that. You might have gone to her, only she is gone to Madeira, you know. Clara can't have you here, of course, and so she thinks you had better ask Mrs. Grant to let you stay at her house; she must have a maid or somebody to take care of it. I am afraid it will be rather dull for you, but perhaps you will get asked somewhere. Clara says you may go if you are invited anywhere, so I asked her to send you some money in case you wanted it, but she says she can't now. I am sorry I have spent all mine.

"Your affectionate sister,

"AMELIA.

"P.S. I got hold of papa just now, and made him write you a cheque for five

pounds, which I enclose; he sends his love, and hopes you wont be very dull."

Mrs. Grant stooped and picked up the envelope which Lucy had thrown into the fender. The cheque was safe, having had a narrow escape from a burning coal which had fallen close to it. Mrs. Grant rose, went up to Lucy, and stopped her in her mad walk. "Your sister is very kind."

"Kind!" screamed Lucy.

"Yes. Do you know what she has sent you?"

"No," said Lucy, who had only had patience to read the first part of the letter.

Mrs. Grant showed her the cheque, and taking her hand, led her to the sofa. "Now," she said, "sit down quietly and read the whole letter through, and then we will talk its contents over and see what can be done." Mrs. Grant's tone was so firm, though very kind, that Lucy was obliged to control herself. She cried a good deal, but more quietly, and listened with more patience than might have been expected when Mrs. Grant told her, that though she was sorry for her disappointment, her stay during the holidays need not be as dull as her sister

feared, as five of the other pupils were to remain; three were little West Indians, much younger than Lucy, but nice merry little children, and the two others were Irish girls, whose parents not being rich, could not well afford to pay their children's journey home more than once a year. Lucy had made no friend in the school, with the exception of Eleanor, but she did not dislike her two young countrywomen, and hearing that the teacher who was to be left in charge was one who had always been kind to her, she quitted the room, and went in search of Eleanor with a clouded brow indeed, and tearful eyes, but with the weight of despair at her heart considerably lessened.

Eleanor listened with warm sympathy to the account of Lucy's disappointment, but when she read Lady Amelia's letter, a bright thought struck her, and she soon acted upon it. Writing to acknowledge her mother's letter, and to promise compliance with the directions it contained, she added a little account of Lucy's circumstances and a request for permission to bring her home to spend the holidays in Cornwall. "Please, dear mamma," Eleanor

concluded, "answer by return of post, as I am longing to tell her, she looks so unhappy."

Poor Lucy was indeed very unhappy for the next two days; losing Eleanor was a great trouble for her to bear, with the prospect of the dull holidays afterwards. But on the third day Eleanor received a hurried note from her mother, containing these words: "Do as you like about your poor little friend; papa will order a double-bedded room for you at the hotel." How overjoyed Eleanor was. She was just going to call Lucy and tell her, when she remembered that Mrs. Grant's leave ought to be asked first, and proceeded to the drawing-room. Mrs. Grant was quite pleased, and did not scruple to tell Eleanor that she thought Lady Clara's conduct heartless in the extreme; but she added that she hoped Eleanor had well considered the task she had undertaken, as Lady Lucy was certainly a troublesome child.

"She will find companions of her own age at home," said Eleanor; "and mamma wins the love of all children, so I do not fear;" and with Mrs. Grant's hearty

approval, she went to announce the good news to Lucy.

It is needless to tell of the delight with which Lucy heard the joyful intelligence, that not only was she not to remain at school during the holidays, but that she was really to spend them with her kind friend Eleanor, in the house so often described before for Lucy's amusement. Again she made Eleanor tell of her two sisters, Florence and Mabel, and of the little brothers who would be allowed to sit up and await their elder sister's arrival. Again she heard of the garden, the wilderness, the sea, all the delight she was now to behold with her own eyes; and springing up, she threw her arms round Eleanor's neck, and exclaimed, between crying and laughing, "Oh, I do think I am glad they could not have me at Paris!"

CHAPTER II.

THE JOURNEY.

THE happy day came. Lucy accompanied her friend to London, where she was most kindly greeted by Mr. Hammond, a rather grave-looking gentleman, who seemed much

delighted to have his daughter with him again.

On the following morning, while Lucy was still sound asleep, Eleanor was up and busy. She would not wake Lucy till it was quite time to dress, but employed herself in getting everything ready for their early start; when at last Lucy opened her eyes, she found Eleanor dressed and ready to help her, for her school-life had not made Lucy quite independent of assistance, and she was naturally very indolent. However, with Eleanor's help, she was soon ready, and ran downstairs quite equipped for her journey, when they were summoned to breakfast.

"What, hat and all?" said Mr. Hammond.

"Well, papa, I thought Lucy had better be quite ready, that there might be no delay afterwards; but I did not mean that she must eat her breakfast with her hat on."

"Oh, no, I knew that," said Lucy; "I only put it on to be quite sure I had it."

Mr. Hammond smiled. "And now you have taken it off," said he, "shall you be quite sure to remember to put it on again?"

"I hope so; but Eleanor will remind me, so it does not much matter."

In due time the cab was at the door, and the party were jolted away to the Paddington station; they were just in time, and, fortunately, found a carriage with three places vacant. All the other occupants, however, got out at Bath; and Lucy rejoiced when the train passed station after station, and no strangers intruded. By the time they reached Exeter her high spirits were somewhat calmed; she was very hungry, and rather tired, and having eaten a plentiful luncheon of cold chicken, and borrowed a story book from Eleanor, she read a few pages, and then fell asleep, thereby missing the view of the sea, which she had especially intended to enjoy, and remaining quite unaware of the "intrusion," as she would have called it, of some strangers at Newton.

There was something in the appearance of these strangers, however, which inclined Eleanor to regard them with interest, and she did not feel at all disposed to resent their conduct in appropriating three of the vacant seats. The strangers were four in number, but three seats were enough for them, as one was so young as to want no

seat but a mother's lap. The mother, for such Eleanor at once adjudged the young lady to be, was dressed very simply in mourning, and the three little children who accompanied her were in black also. The eldest was a boy, apparently about five years old; the next, a little girl who might be three; and the other perhaps a year, but certainly not two years old, for it could not talk at all.

These conclusions Eleanor soon arrived at, and she found herself in the right as to the first, for the little boy spoke to the lady and called her mamma. The baby soon fell asleep; and then the lady told the little boy he must take care of his sister, and amuse her that she might not get fidgety and wake baby. But the little girl did get very fidgety—she was sleepy—it was getting too dark to see the picture books with which her brother anxiously tried to amuse her; and Eleanor admired the patience with which he sought new ways of diverting her weariness. At last she too fell asleep; and then the little boy leaned across and asked his mamma if he might go to the other window, where nobody was sitting, to look

at the lights in the houses, and on the sea as they came near to Plymouth. But his mamma pointed to the little girl, and though Eleanor could not hear what she said, it seemed plain that she was telling the boy that his sister might fall off the seat if he left her side, so he had better remain where he was. The little boy looked for a moment as if he felt disappointed, then he leaned back again in his place, and Eleanor saw him take a piece of his sister's frock firmly in his hand to hold her by, in case the jolting of the train should shake her from her seat. Presently the little girl half woke up and moved her head about as if seeking for a support to it; then Eleanor, who longed to release the little boy, looked at the mother, and reading only grateful approval in her face, drew the child gently towards her, and let the little head find a resting-place on her shoulder. The little boy looked up in her face with an air of shy surprise. Eleanor pointed to the window, his mother nodded, and with a bright smile at Eleanor, he made his way gently to the place he wished for.

Soon after this, Lucy awoke; she sat up and looked about her in some bewilderment.

Opposite to her when she fell asleep had been a vacant seat; now it was occupied by a little boy. Eleanor sat next to her, but when Lucy turned to speak, she laid her finger on her lip and pointed to a sleeping child in her arms. Lucy was quite astonished. At last she found words and whispered, "Who is it?" to which Eleanor, also in a whisper, replied, "I don't know." Lucy then proceeded to examine the little boy. He was very quiet, and seldom took his eyes from the window, but once he turned them very gravely on Lucy, and looked at her for a minute or two as if to discover why she fixed such a scrutinizing glance on him. Lucy then withdrew her eyes, and sought to penetrate the growing darkness and see the mother of her young *vis-à-vis*. But this attempt was a vain one; the lady was leaning back in the further corner of the carriage; her face was bent down over her sleeping child, and her black bonnet added to the shade that the deepening night threw upon her. Lucy therefore, a second time defeated, drew back into her corner again, and began, like her young neighbour, to watch the distant lights of the busy sea-port.

At length the gradual slackening of speed gave notice that the station was near; the little boy looked eager and impatient to arouse his still sleeping sister, and a slight movement on Eleanor's part caused the little girl to open her eyes and raise her head, and by the light of the lamp in the roof of the carriage, Lucy saw for one moment the face of the young mother. It was only for a moment though, and the next instant Mr. Hammond stood up to roll and strap his railway rug, thereby completely obscuring Lucy's view; and the train stopped.

A middle-aged woman, with a kind though homely face, looked in at the window. The little boy started up.

"Ah! there you are, ma'am," said the woman, addressing the young lady. "I'm sure I'm glad to see you safe."

The door was quickly opened, the friendly maid-servant, for such she appeared to be, took the baby in her arms, and a porter lifted out the little girl; the lady followed, not, however, without a few words of thanks to Eleanor, and then the little boy having joined his mother on the platform, the whole party disappeared in the crowd.

Lucy soon found herself driving up to the door of a large hotel, where, when the carriage stopped, she and Eleanor were received by a pleasant-looking woman who greeted Miss Hammond with evident pleasure, and looked at Lucy with some surprise.

"Surely it is not Miss Florence," she said, as she threw open the door of a comfortable sitting-room, where a white table-cloth was already spread, and covered with preparations for tea.

"No, it is not one of my sisters," answered Eleanor.

"I hope I did not mistake my orders," pursued the landlady; "but I understood from Mrs. Hammond's note that I was to prepare one room for two young ladies, and perhaps it should have been two rooms."

"No, we had rather sleep in the same room, had we not, Lucy?" and, as Lucy cordially agreed, Eleanor continued: "Lady Lucy Elton is my particular friend, Mrs. Alliston, so you must make much of her, as if she were really Miss Florence."

"I am sure the young lady shall be welcome to the best of everything, that is proper for a friend of yours, Miss Ham-

mond; and here comes the Squire, so I'll go and hurry them with the tea; this is your bedroom, ladies"—and she threw open the door of a room adjoining, and followed the young girls into it, leaving them there while she departed to hasten the proceedings of the waiter. In less than five minutes she returned, and announced that they would find all prepared; so they joined Mr. Hammond, who had already seated himself, and Lucy was by no means too sleepy to enjoy an excellent tea.

That meal despatched, both young ladies were ready to go to bed, and on entering their room, Lucy was surprised to find everything unpacked and arranged, as if a maid had been there to do it for them.

"You wont mind Mrs. Alliston coming in, shall you?" said Eleanor; "she was mamma's maid once, and my nurse, and she always likes to wait on me when I come here."

Lucy made no objection, and, indeed, she had every reason to rejoice in the presence of Mrs. Alliston, who, being requested by Eleanor to attend first to her friend, undressed Lucy with all imaginable speed, and had popped her into a comfortable bed, be-

fore she had recovered from the surprise and pleasure of having to do nothing for herself.

Mrs. Alliston then returned to Eleanor, and her affectionate inquiries for different members of the family made, and answers in a low tone, had such a soothing effect, that Lucy slept soundly, while Eleanor called forth all Mrs. Alliston's best sympathies by telling her the circumstances under which her little schoolfellow had been invited to spend the holidays at Trewynden.

"And so, Mrs. Alliston, if I don't return to school, and if Lady Lucy goes alone and sleeps here on her way, you'll take care of her."

"Indeed, my dear, I will, you may depend on me; but now pray get you into bed, or your mamma will say I haven't taken care of you."

CHAPTER III.

TREWYNDEN.

The following day, after some hours spent in a mail-coach, and a drive of an hour and a half in Mr. Hammond's carriage, the travellers at length reached their destina-

tion, and Lucy wished it was not dark at seven o'clock on a winter's evening, for she was thereby deprived of as early a view of Eleanor's home as she wished for. And indeed it was a view worth seeing.

Like most of the Cornish houses, Trewynden was built in a hollow, whether for shelter or for convenience it is hard to say; the high ground sloped gradually to the east and north, but the southern side was for some distance almost flat, and a well-shaven lawn spread to some distance, bounded by a low plantation. On the west was a terrace from which green fields seemed gradually to slope towards the sea, whose bright blue surface was plainly visible from the drawing-room windows, as of course from the terrace also on which they opened.

But all this was hidden from Lucy at present. What she did see was a square entrance-hall, in which was a Turkey carpet, an immense fire, with a great dog lying in front of it, a gentle, cheerful-looking lady, and two girls who looked very much like other girls of twelve and fourteen. The only remark Lucy made to herself about them at first sight was that the eldest still wore short

frocks, and the youngest still wore her hair hanging down over her shoulders, both of which fashions Lucy thought somewhat childish, considering the mature age at which the wearers had respectively arrived.

Florence and Mabel Hammond, however, quite unaware of Lucy's disapproval, received her with great cordiality, and Mrs. Hammond having embraced her eldest daughter with warm affection, now turned to Lucy, whom Eleanor presented to her mother.

"And this is little Lady Lucy. I am so glad, my dear, you were able to come, and I hope we shall contrive to make you happy among us."

"Oh, I am sure—thank you so much—you are so kind to let me come home with Eleanor."

"Indeed, my dear, I don't think we could have given Eleanor a greater pleasure; and here are Florence and Mabel, always glad to have a new companion. You are about the same age as Florence, I dare say."

"I am thirteen and a half," said Lucy, thinking of Florence's short frock.

"Ah, and Florence was fourteen last Saturday, so there is not very much dif-

ference. No, Florry, dear, I can't let you carry off Lady Lucy yet, but Eleanor shall bring her to the school-room. Mind that tea is all ready for her in about a quarter of an hour."

Florence and Mabel went away together; and Mrs. Hammond, taking Lucy by the hand, led her upstairs, followed by Eleanor, with a laughing little brother clinging to her hand and peeping at Lucy occasionally from behind his sister's dress. When they reached Eleanor's room, the child ran away to go to bed, by his mamma's desire. He was very pretty, and Lucy longed to kiss him, but he would not let her. Mrs. Hammond told her he was very shy, but would be good friends with her very soon. Then she led Lucy into a pretty dressing-room opening out of Eleanor's bed-room. There was a small French bed in the dressing-room, and a large easy chair; also a writing table, and a little book-case, a large wardrobe, and a pretty dressing-table, with white muslin petticoat lined with pink. Best of all, there was a blazing fire. Lucy surveyed the room with delight, and when Mrs. Hammond expressed a hope that she would be

comfortable there, poor Lucy, for whose comfort her own family seemed to care so little, could scarcely speak from the lump that she felt in her throat. Mrs. Hammond saw tears in her eyes, and kissed her. That kiss quite upset poor Lucy's self-command, and she fairly burst out crying. Fortunately, just then came a knock at the door, and Mabel's voice, "Tea is quite ready, Lady Lucy, and Miss Warren told me to come and tell you, for fear the mutton-chops should get cold."

"Mabel, wait there a moment," cried Mrs. Hammond; and leaving Lucy to recover herself, she went out of the room and shut the door behind her.

Mabel was standing in the passage; her mamma told her not to ask Lucy any questions at present about her home, but to try and amuse her without making her talk much, as she was tired. Mabel promised, and said she would tell Florence, and then Mrs. Hammond opened the door, and seeing that Lucy had quite recovered herself, told Mabel to show her the way to the school-room. Lucy presently got on very well with her new friends.

Florence was not childish, though she

wore short frocks, which, by the by, she did to please her mamma and not to please herself, so it would have been hard to blame her for it; and Mabel was not at all a baby, though she had worn her hair in curls before she could walk, and wore it so still. The real baby, the pride of his sisters, was described to Lucy this evening, and exhibited in all his glory on the following morning, when Florence induced the nurse to bring him to the school-room soon after breakfast, arrayed in his most becoming blue ribbons.

"The idea of putting him on a sash and a smart frock at that hour!" the nurse had said. But Florence did so want Lady Lucy to see him looking his best at first; of course she would see him in his pinafore afterwards, but that did not matter; so would the nurse be so good, or else Lady Lucy would be seeing him first in the drawing-room after luncheon, when Florence would not be there, and would therefore lose Lucy's first burst of admiration; so the nurse was persuaded. The baby behaved beautifully; he was a little shy at first, but being very fond of Florence, he allowed her to show

him off very well: he could almost run alone, and make his way about the room from chair to chair very quickly. He was truly worthy of the admiration he received. He had a quantity of brown curling hair rolled in glossy rings on the top of his head, showing his fine forehead to advantage, and curling all round behind; bright blue eyes of a deep full colour, with long dark eye-lashes, and such a sunny smile. Lucy was charmed with him, and showed her appreciation of his fascinations so warmly that the nurse was not sorry she had put on his best sash.

"I suppose you are all very fond of children," Lucy observed when the baby was gone; "I was so surprised at Eleanor in the train taking a child in her arms whom she did not know at all."

"A child! what child?" asked Florence.

"A little girl who was there with her mamma and two other children."

"But why did Eleanor take her in her arms?"

"Well, I could not exactly make out, and afterwards I forgot to ask Eleanor."

"We will ask her all about it by-and-by," said Florence.

She did not remember it till they were all together in the drawing-room in the evening. Then she suddenly began, "Oh, Eleanor, do tell us about the little girl you held on your lap in the train."

"Whose little girl was it?" asked Mrs. Hammond, looking up in some surprise.

"I do not know, mamma; but such a nice-looking young lady, with three little children, got into the train at Newton, and the eldest was such a good little boy. I took a great fancy to them all, but to him especially;" and Eleanor gave the account of the little boy's unselfish conduct, which had induced her to befriend his sister.

"What a dear good child!" said Mrs. Hammond.

"Oh, I wish we knew who they were!" cried Florence.

"So do I," said Eleanor. "But we quite lost sight of them at Plymouth, so I fear there is not the slightest chance of our finding out."

"I don't know that," said Mr. Hammond, laying down his newspaper.

"Oh, papa, do you know?" cried Florence.

"I did not say I knew, Miss Curiosity; I only said, or rather I implied, that Eleanor

might have 'the slightest chance of finding out.' "

"But how? do tell us, papa."

"I think the lady in question lives in Cornwall."

"In Cornwall, papa?" echoed Florence, in a disappointed tone; "she may live in Cornwall, I'm sure, without our finding out anything about her. What do we know of the people who live at Bodmin?"

"I know a great deal about some of them," said her father.

"Oh! but papa, don't be tiresome; does this lady live at Bodmin?"

"I believe not."

"Then where does she live?"

"I do not exactly know, but I believe it is somewhere in the west of Cornwall."

"West; oh then, somewhere near here, perhaps. But do you really know who she is, papa?" said Eleanor.

"Well, I can't say positively; but last night, when we drove up to the hotel at Plymouth, I met Mr. Trefoil, and stopped to speak to him a few minutes in the coffee-room, as you know. He told me he had just let that pretty cottage of his at Pen-

shadow, to a Captain Somebody, whose name I did not catch, but I thought it sounded like Nelson; the waiter made a noise with some plates, so, though I did make Trefoil repeat the name, I can't be sure I caught it correctly. However, Nelson will do very well, as the man is a naval officer. He is not coming there himself, having just been appointed to a ship, the *Undaunted,* but his wife and children are to live there during his absence. Trefoil said he believed them to be nice people; he had met Captain and Mrs. Nelson once at Torquay, where they have been staying, but they were in great grief at the death of a sister of Captain Nelson's, a Lady Somebody, who had gone abroad for her health, so they did not go into society, and he saw nothing more of them."

"Then, papa, why do you think that lady in the train was Mrs. Nelson?"

"Because I understood that she was to come to Penshadow to-day, and that she had three little children; and because that lady appeared to have come from Torquay, for which Newton is the junction."

"And you never told me all this yesterday

in the coach, papa!" said Eleanor, reproachfully.

"To tell you the truth, my dear, I never thought of it again till I heard you mention our fellow-travellers this evening."

"I can't think what made Mr. Trefoil build that cottage," said Eleanor.

"I can tell you that," said Mrs. Hammond; "he built it for his sister, who was unmarried, and had always lived with her parents, but did not wish to go on living at the house when her brother came into possession. She did, however, remain there for a year, and during that time she superintended the building of her cottage, and when she had been in possession of it six months, she died."

"What a pity! Was it long ago?" said Florence.

"It was about a year after you were born."

"And since then it has been let?"

"Yes, sometimes; but I remember it once stood empty for three years. Then after that, when Mr. Trefoil's house was burnt down, he was glad enough to take shelter at the cottage himself, and lived there for four years. You must remember that, Eleanor?"

"Oh yes, I remember when they lived there; and then those quakers came and took it, such kind people; and it has been empty ever since they left, has it not, mamma?"

"Yes. I dare say Mr. Trefoil was glad to accept Captain Nelson as a tenant."

CHAPTER IV.

PENSHADOW COTTAGE.

ELEANOR got up the next morning fully determined to ask her mother to call at Penshadow Cottage as soon as possible. Mr. Trefoil's family were all absent, so there was no information to be gained, unless by going to the cottage itself, and Eleanor was most anxious to find out whether her father's surmises were correct.

She was destined, however, to receive a new and unexpected piece of information, which might affect not only the tenant of the cottage, but the guest in her own home. As she entered the dining-room, rather late for breakfast, Mr. Hammond at once addressed her. "Eleanor, your little friend's

name is Elton, is it not; surely you told me, Lady Lucy Elton?"

"Yes, papa," replied Eleanor. "But why?"

"Well, then, look here; it appears I made a mistake," and he pointed to a column of the newspaper which he held in his hand. There, under the head Naval Intelligence, Eleanor read, "Captain the Hon. Alfred Elton to the *Undaunted*."

"Is that her brother?" said Mr. Hammond.

"She has no brother," answered Eleanor.

"Then it must be her uncle. I was thinking of the sister who, they said, had died; that would be her aunt, then."

"Oh! I hope not her Aunt Gertrude," exclaimed Eleanor; "the only one of the family who seemed to care about poor Lucy."

"I hope not, I'm sure," said Mr. Hammond; "but then she would know it, of course. Oh, it must be some other family of Eltons; get me the *Peerage*."

Eleanor obeyed. But alas! the great red book contained plenty of other names, but no Eltons save those belonging to Lord O'Kerry's family; and as if to make assurance doubly sure, it testified to the fact that the Hon. Alfred was an officer in the navy."

"Then it must be a made-up story about the sister," said Mr. Hammond; "perhaps they heard she was ill."

"Oh! she really is ill, and is gone to Italy for her health; that is why Lucy had nowhere to go for her holidays."

"Ah, depend upon it, that's it, then. But, Eleanor, I would not say anything to the child till we make sure what is true and what is not; foreign posts are so uncertain, and—ah! here is mamma at last. Well, what was the matter?"

"If you had been down at prayers, Miss Eleanor, you'd have known mamma was summoned away to the school-room directly after."

"Not directly, for Florence had managed to cut her finger in the meantime."

"Cut her finger! is it a bad cut?"

"No; but she turned so faint that Miss Warren got frightened, and it was rather a serious-looking affair at first. But we have bound it up, and settled her comfortably on the sofa, with Lucy reading to her. Lucy is really a very nice little thing, Eleanor; it is a sad pity she has been so neglected."

"I'm afraid she is likely to be more neg-

lected than ever, if what I heard is true," rejoined Mr. Hammond; and then he told of the discovery to which the newspaper had led him and Eleanor.

Mrs. Hammond was much interested, and truly concerned at the idea of Lady Gertrude's death. She did not at once agree to Eleanor's proposal of calling at the cottage that day, but said she would find out first whether Lucy had any acquaintance with her young aunt, in case the new lady of Penshadow should prove to be Mrs. Elton. Mrs. Hammond undertook to do this without rousing in Lucy's mind any suspicions as to her Aunt Gertrude, but she felt that if Lucy was known to Mrs. Elton, it would be easy then to make the necessary inquiries of that lady, without putting the little girl to needless pain. Accordingly, after breakfast, Mrs. Hammond and Eleanor repaired to the school-room to make inquiries after Florence and her finger; and then Mrs. Hammond invited Lucy to come and see the boudoir, to which she had not yet been admitted. Lucy willingly accompanied Mrs. Hammond, who, while making her acquainted with various objects of some

interest in the room, easily drew her into conversation, and led to the desired subject.

A picture of one of her sons, a midshipman in his uniform, made a capital opening. After a few words about Johnnie, his love of the sea, &c., Mrs. Hammond proceeded—

"You have an uncle in the navy, I think?"

"Yes, my Uncle Alfred. He used to tell me such amusing stories about what he saw and did when he was a midshipman."

"But that must have been some time ago."

"Oh yes, of course; he is a captain now, and he was just going to be made one then; when he used to tell me stories I mean. Only of course he had been a midshipman once, you know, before I remember him."

"And have you seen him lately?"

"No, not for some time. More than a year ago, I was in Ireland with Aunt Gertrude; I spent my holidays with her after papa and my sisters went abroad, and Uncle Alfred came to see us then—his ship was at Cork; he was very fond of Aunt Gertrude, and so kind to me."

"And was he with you long?"

"No, only three days; because Aunt Lilla (that is, his wife) was in England, and

he wanted to go to her and his children. They lived at Plymouth, and he went on shore there, and left that ship altogether. He was to have a new one when he was a captain.

"He has a new one, the *Undaunted;* the newspaper mentioned his appointment yesterday."

"Oh, I am glad, because he did not know when he should get one. But Aunt Lilla will be so sorry."

"I suppose you have never gone to her for the holidays?"

"No, I never thought of it: and she never asked me. I hardly know her at all. Uncle Alfred used to tell me a great deal about her and the children; but I only saw her one evening, and the children I have never seen at all."

"How many are there?" asked Mrs. Hammond.

"Three — Alfred, and Gertrude, and Marian; but she is a baby almost."

After this description, Mrs. Hammond felt pretty sure that the lady in the train and the lady of the cottage would prove to be one and the same person — Captain

Elton's wife, and Lucy's aunt. But before informing Lucy of this discovery, she resolved to find out what truth there might be in the report about Lady Gertrude; and she therefore gratified Eleanor with the announcement that she would, if possible, call at the cottage on the following day.

At present, the snow which had fallen heavily in the night rendered the roads in that direction, which were always very bad, almost impassable. Mrs. Hammond was not without a hope, too, that some of the family might have written to Lucy at school; in which case the letter would certainly be forwarded from thence, and might reach Trewynden on the following morning.

However, the next day brought sunshine and fair weather, but no letter for Lucy; and early in the afternoon Mrs. Hammond and Eleanor started for Penshadow Cottage. It was about a mile and a half from Trewynden, the short way, which way lay chiefly through steep narrow lanes, up hill and down. A basket pony-carriage, and a well-accustomed pony, managed to get along pretty easily, but a larger carriage, and more highly nurtured steeds, would have had to

go four miles round by the road. Eleanor drove well, but even she objected to ruts, which she was sure were six inches deep, and thought the road worse than ever; but she managed to avoid the deepest ruts, and drove her mother quite safely up to the gate of the cottage-garden. The groom dismounted from his pony, and rang the bell; and the said pony became the object of immediate attention to a little observer at an upper window.

Eleanor happened to look up in that direction, and was sure she recognised the little hero of the railway-carriage; but she had only time for one glance before a very neat-looking maid opened the door, and said Mrs. Elton was at home.

Mrs. Elton did not at first appear to recognise Eleanor in the least, perhaps because the latter had worn a bonnet in the train, and now wore a hat; but though Mrs. Elton unquestionably wore a bonnet in the train, and had now no other covering to her head than her own brown hair, Eleanor knew her again directly. Mrs. Hammond began the conversation with some observations about the cottage and the neighbour-

hood, which led to a remark on Mrs. Elton's part, that she had only arrived there three days previously—"confirmation strong," had Eleanor required it—but nothing was said about the journey. After a few minutes, however, the little boy entered the room. He seemed in no way disturbed by the presence of the strangers, and came forward with pretty child-like ease, when his mother told him to shake hands with Mrs. and Miss Hammond, but when he looked up in Eleanor's face, he said, "Oh, mamma, it is that kind lady." Mrs. Elton asked what he meant, but the colour rose in her cheeks as she recognised Eleanor, who asked kindly after the little girl.

"Why did I not at once recognise you, I wonder?" said Mrs. Elton. "We have talked so often of 'that kind lady,' as Alfred always calls you; I am so very glad to have the opportunity of thanking you once more."

"Eleanor disclaimed all need of thanks, and began to talk to the little boy, while Mrs. Hammond found that the more familiar tone her hostess had now taken made it easier to enter upon the real business of her visit. She found that Mrs.

Elton was aware of the shameful neglect with which Lucy had been treated, but did not at all know where she was spending her holidays, having naturally believed she had gone to Paris to join Lord O'Kerry and her sisters.

"The death of her aunt, Lady Gertrude, will be a terrible loss to the poor child; she was Lucy's godmother, and always strove to bring Lady Clara to take a more proper interest in her."

"Then is it really true that Lady Gertrude—"

"What, does Lucy not know it?" said Mrs. Elton.

"No; she has heard nothing from home since her sister's letter of which I told you."

"What a shocking thing! and Gertrude was so fond of her! She must be told, Mrs. Hammond."

"Certainly. Would you prefer to tell her yourself? I will bring her here for that purpose; or would you come to us?"

"No; I know her so little, and you, I am sure, she must already count as among her best friends. If you or Miss Hammond would tell her, I think it would be better;

and if afterwards she should be willing to come to me, and to speak of her dear aunt to one who knew her——"

"Yes; it shall be so," said Mrs. Hammond, who saw that Mrs. Elton felt a delicacy in asserting a claim to the interest in Lucy and her concerns, which their relationship seemed to warrant; "it shall be so. But I may tell her you will be glad to see her if she likes to come."

"Very, very glad; and I am quite sure Captain Elton would wish his house to be her home whenever she likes it; but," she added, with some hesitation, as she looked round her barely furnished little drawing-room, "I can hardly fancy that Lucy will wish to exchange your house for mine."

"I think she has a longing to be with some of her own family, which you can scarcely imagine."

"Has she? Then, Mrs. Hammond, I beg you will tell her that her Aunt Lilla has a home for her at any moment—it may comfort her to know that, even if she should not care to come."

"It will comfort her, I know; but I must also tell her and you too," said Mrs. Ham-

mond, "that but for this sorrow we should not have let her think of leaving us before the holidays are over. As it is, she shall take her choice. When will you come and see her?"

"I have no carriage," said Mrs. Elton; "and even if it were fit weather for walking, I had rather hear from you first how Lucy bears the sad news."

Mrs. Hammond promised either to write or to call very soon, and she and Eleanor then took their leave; the latter having found little Alfred as charming a child on further acquaintance as she had supposed him to be from his conduct in the train.

CHAPTER V.

LUCY'S CHOICE.

During the absence of Mrs. Hammond and Eleanor, Lucy had spent a very pleasant afternoon. First, as the snow was all gone and the gravel walks were dry, she and Mabel had persuaded Miss Warren to let them go out for an hour; poor Florence had paid for her fainting in the morning by a

headache in the afternoon. Lucy and Mabel made the most of their time, and though they returned pretty punctually by Lucy's watch (a possession which Florence greatly coveted, but which Lucy did not greatly value, as it was given her when her father and sisters went abroad, to console her for not going with them), they managed to find out the best view of the sea, to select a good place for a pic-nic—in case Lucy should come for the summer holidays, "as of course she must," said Mabel—and to become tolerably intimate with each others thoughts and feelings, on things in general. Things in general, but not things intimate and particular. Thus Lucy did not confide to Mabel her uncomfortable idea, that though she had been asked so kindly to Trewynden, it was because they felt it would be a charity to ask her; nor did she say that when Mr. Hammond spoke lovingly or merrily to his little girls, it gave her a bitter pang to feel that her father, whom she really loved, did not care even to see her once in the year. She did not express the feeling that had entered her mind of a sort of disgrace in being thus neglected by her

own family and thrown upon strangers; but she would have given her watch and all else she possessed to be as happy in a home she had a right to, as Florence was in hers.

Oh yes, young ladies of twelve or fourteen, or any age above and below those centres of school-room life, you may have particular mammas, strict governesses, many lessons, and even—though at your age it seems a shame to confess it—dull lives; but for all these things be thankful, for they are part of the home life which is yours by right, yours by no earning of your own, but simply because you are a child in your father's house, and his house is your natural home. What would you do without a home? What if your mammas, now so sadly particular, cast the care of you entirely off their hands, refusing even to provide a substitute in the strict governess whose rule is now so irksome? What if, instead of the many lessons, your education was a thing not thought of, and you were allowed to grow on in an ignorance which might indeed render your life dull, but that you would have the pleasing excitement of providing for that life, of clothing, feeding, teaching,

guiding yourself, of doing all for yourself that is done for you now, because you have a father, a mother, and a home; a home with all its duties, all its difficulties, all its dulness—must we add, all its discontent? Those only who have felt the want of a home in early life, can perhaps appreciate the value of it in all its fulness. Lucy did appreciate it. Home had never been home to her, and now the Hammonds had shown her what it might be. On returning from their walk they found Florence much better; she had had a nice quiet sleep she said, and now she was glad of their company, so the three sat down for a chat, but were soon interrupted by the entrance of little Freddy, who wanted to know if baby might come too, or if his sisters would come into the nursery to play, as he could not go out, and was tired of playing with his bricks.

"I'll come and build you a very high tower," said Mabel.

"And we'll go and play with baby, shall we, Lucy? May we, Miss Warren?" said Florence.

"Yes, dear, it is Saturday afternoon; you may do as you like."

"Miss Warren is a very good-natured

governess, I should think," said Lucy, as they went upstairs.

"Yes," said Florence; "but she's very strict, too, in some things. I don't mind that much, though, because one always knows what she is going to be strict about."

"What is it?"

"Oh! she can't bear our being unpunctual for one thing; and then she used to fancy that Mabel did not tell . . . . no, I mean if she thinks one has any particular fault she is so fussy about it in everything. I am sorry she is going away, though."

"Oh! is she going away? Why?"

"Well," said Florence, "nobody has told me why, but I mean to ask Eleanor when I have a good opportunity; she is sure to know. *I* believe it is because she is going to be married."

"Oh, Florence, she is so old!" (Miss Warren was scarcely thirty.)

"Ah, yes, she is old, but still——only Mabel thinks that is not the reason."

And now they had reached the nursery, where Florence was greeted gladly by both little brothers.

"Oh! see what a high tower Mabel is

building," cried Freddy, rushing up to Lucy, with whom he was now quite friendly. But alas! in his zeal to show off the grandeur of his tower, he had forgotten its fragility, and the skirt of his frock touching it, the whole structure fell to the ground.

"Oh, you stupid boy!" cried Lucy.

"No," said Mabel, angrily, "you're not to call him stupid; it was his frock. Never mind, Freddy, I'll build another."

Freddy stood looking at Lucy for a moment, then turned from her with a sort of little jump, and seated himself on the floor by Mabel.

"Mabel can't bear Freddy to be found fault with," said Florence, as Lucy joined her at the window, where she stood, with the baby in her arms.

"I did not mean to find fault with him, only he might have taken more care."

"He is only four years old: but you are not used to little children; they always do those sort of things."

Florence spoke like a person of experience, and Lucy felt her ignorance.

"But still," she said, "Mabel was very touchy."

"She is not so at all, generally," said Florence.

The conversation dropped, but Lucy felt that these sisters and brothers held each others' characters and conduct sacred from the animadversions of strangers, and she thought that was one reason why they all were so happy. Nobody was allowed, as is too often the case, to point out to one the failings of the other.

"Look, baby!" said Florence; "there's the pony, and there's mamma and Eleanor, and Bob on his pony too."

The baby made great efforts to show his satisfaction, and Freddy ran to the window. Lucy, to make her peace, offered to lift him up on a chair, and he consented by nodding his head. Florence told him to say "thank you," which he did, and then, as Lucy kept her arm round him, that he might not fall, he sidled away from her grasp, and said, "Don't hold me; Lucy Lady; hold my frock."

He always would call her "Lucy Lady," unless when he pretended utterly to forget her name, and his remembering it now showed she was restored to favour. So she

obeyed and held his frock, till Eleanor's entrance caused him to descend from his post of observation to run to his sister, his dear Nelly, as he called her.

"Lucy," said Eleanor, "mamma is gone to the school-room to look for you. She wanted to speak to you; you had better run down to her boudoir."

"Shall I? are you sure she wanted me?" said Lucy, doubtfully.

"Yes, she said so. Why, surely you are not shy of mamma now, dear," remarked Eleanor, kindly.

"No, not shy, only I should not like to go into her boudoir if she did not want me."

"I'll go down with you," said Florence.

"No, no," said Eleanor; "I am sure Lucy does not need your protection. Go alone, dear; mamma *does* want you." So Lucy went.

"Now then, Eleanor, begin," said Florence.

"No, you shall come to my room, and I will tell you all about it there," replied Eleanor, who now had the baby in her arms.

"May I take him away?" she asked, addressing the nurse.

"Well, Miss Hammond, I shall want him again very soon; it's nearly tea-time."

"Oh, but you can send Eliza to fetch him. I must have him a little, or he will grow shy of me again; he is just beginning to remember me." And Eleanor carried off the baby to her own room.

Arrived there, she placed him on the floor, with some favourite toys; Florence sat on the floor too, leaning against Eleanor's low chair, and Eleanor told all she knew concerning Mrs. Elton and her relationship to Lucy. Of course the story was often interrupted by the baby's smiling appeals for sympathy in his play, and when he was tired of his toys, Eleanor took him up and walked up and down the room with him in her arms, while she finished the sad account of Lady Gertrude's death. Florence was full of pity for Lucy, and indignation at the cruel neglect with which she had been treated. But her indignation was as nothing compared with that of the ill-used child herself. Mrs. Hammond had found some difficulty in introducing the subject, but she at last made Lucy understand that Mrs. Elton had heard bad news, which would touch poor Lucy nearly. Then Lucy became pale, and named her father. Mrs.

Hammond said it was not about her father, and then the poor child exclaimed, "Not Aunt Gertrude; say it is not Aunt Gertrude!"

Mrs. Hammond was silent. Lucy did not cry. She looked fixedly at Mrs. Hammond for a moment, and then said:

"Then now I have nobody, nobody at all to go to."

"Yes, dear, you have indeed a kind uncle and aunt to go to still; their house is open to you now, and will be always."

"Did Aunt Lilla say that?"

"Yes, she did."

Lucy's tears now began to fall.

"But she does not love me! she only does it for kindness; but Aunt Gertrude loved me, she really did, though I was never good. How long had Aunt Lilla known it?" she asked, quickly.

"Not very long," said Mrs. Hammond, wishing to spare Lucy as much as possible.

"But *how* long? Oh! in the train—Mrs. Hammond, she knew it then; she was in mourning, and I——! What a shame they never told me! That is worse than anything, not to tell me! and I should not

have known now but for you. I hate them. I do hate them!"

Her cheeks were in a flame, her eyes full of tears, partly passion, partly grief, and Mrs. Hammond found she was destined to witness one of those uncontrolled outbursts of which Eleanor had told her. For a minute or two she let Lucy alone, only watching her as she lay, with her face buried in the sofa cushion, her whole frame shaking with the violence of her sobs, and her voice still uttering passionate denunciations of those who had injured her. At length Mrs. Hammond laid a gentle hand on Lucy's shoulder, and said, "Lucy, your Aunt Gertrude loved you; try and be worthy of her. Try and think how she would have wished you to bear this grief."

Lucy made no answer, but no more violent words were heard. Presently she raised herself, and said: "Did Aunt Lilla send a message to me?"

"Yes, she sent the message I gave you just now, that your uncle's house was always open to you, and that she would be ready and glad to receive you whenever you wish to go there."

"Might I go to-morrow, do you think?"

"Yes; but you do not wish to leave us to-morrow, I hope."

"Yes, I do. You will think me very odd, and I am, I dare say, but I should like to go to Aunt Lilla's house to-morrow. May I?" she added timidly, looking up at Mrs. Hammond, as if she feared to offend her.

"You shall do just as you like, dear, and if you like to come to us again, you have only to say so. Would you like to write a note to Mrs. Elton?"

Lucy said she would, and Mrs. Hammond gave her writing materials and advised her to remain where she was, promising to go herself to the school-room and request Miss Warren to send Lucy her tea.

Lucy's note to Mrs. Elton sufficiently explained her desire to go; it was as follows:

"My dear Aunt Lilla,—I am very miserable. I scarcely remember you, but you knew Aunt Gertrude, and Uncle Alfred was so fond of her that I long to be with you in his house. Mrs. Hammond gave me your message, so I am coming to you to-morrow. I'll try and not be in your way.

They are all so kind here, but they are so happy.—Your very wretched niece,

"LUCY ELTON."

To say that Mrs. Elton felt quite easy on the receipt of this note would not be true, for she was only twenty-five, and was rather alarmed at the task before her, of consoling Lucy and making her comfortable in the cottage. But she knew what Captain Elton's wishes would have been, and was sure she had followed them in at once offering his niece a home for her holidays, so she resolved to put aside her fears and do her best. Mrs. Hammond wrote her a kind letter, stating the substance of her conversation with Lucy, and repeating the offer to receive her again at any moment, concluding also with a hope that there would be frequent intercourse between the family at Trewynden and that at the cottage. Mrs. Elton saw that, at any rate, Mrs. Hammond was not offended at Lucy's behaviour.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW HOME.

It was settled that Eleanor should accompany Lucy in the carriage that conveyed her to the cottage. Eleanor was very sorry that Lucy had decided to leave Trewynden, but from her acquaintance with her little friend's character she understood the feelings that had prompted the decision, and she felt glad that her invitation had, at any rate, been the means of placing Lucy within reach of the relations she was so anxious to join. Also she had little doubt that Lucy would be at Trewynden again before the holidays were ended. During the drive, Lucy frequently reverted very sadly to the loss she had sustained, but mingled her lamentations with so much invective against her sisters that Eleanor at last remonstrated, and said that, perhaps, had they known how much it would pain Lucy, they would have acted differently.

"Had they known!" said Lucy, indig-

nantly; "they did know, they knew quite well that Aunt Gertrude was the only being who cared for me, and she told Clara what she thought of her conduct, I believe, and that's why Clara never liked her. Aunt Lilla liked Aunt Gertrude, that is why I want to go to her, you know," she continued, her eyes filling with tears. "But I never wish to see Clara again, never! I hate people who hate my friends. Oh yes, Eleanor, I know I'm very wicked and passionate, and all that, but it's all very well for Florence and Mabel, with a mother. Ah! if mine were alive, how different it would be! Some people have everything and others have nothing! Florence and Mabel have a sister as well as a mother. I mean a real loving sister, wise and good; and a home where they are cared for in everything; and I have no mother, and a sort of sham sisters, worse than none at all, because they keep between me and papa, who *does* love me a little, I think; and as to a home——"

"Dear Lucy, I hope you will find a happy home here for the present," said Eleanor, as they stopped just then at the cottage.

Lucy answered with a warm kiss. Then

she turned and saw her aunt standing at the open door, so she said "Good-bye!" to Eleanor and got out of the carriage.

Eleanor just saw Mrs. Elton lead Lucy into the house, and then drove off. Mrs. Hammond had determined that Lucy should make her own way with Mrs. Elton from the first; she thought it would be the easiest plan for both, and so it was. Mrs. Elton told Lucy how glad she was to have had her invitation accepted. "It shows me," she said, "that you know your Uncle Alfred, for you have done what would have pleased him best in coming here."

Having greatly comforted Lucy by these words, she showed her what was to be her room. It was small, but very comfortable, and neatly furnished with white dimity. "I dare say that from having been at school you are able to wait on yourself pretty well; at least I hope so, for I have no maid. You know we are poor," said Mrs. Elton, smiling; "but the nurse will help you if you should want help in dressing."

"Oh no, thank you, I can dress myself quite well," replied Lucy. Indeed she was prepared for this drawback, as she thought

it not likely that there would be a lady's maid at the cottage, and, indolent as she naturally was, it had cost her some resolution to forego the indulgence of having Eleanor's maid at her beck and call. But then came the thought that it was better to dress herself in her own uncle's house, than to be dependent on other people's charity for a maid; so she resolved to try and forget that it had once been a hardship. The children were an amusement and relief both to Lucy and her aunt during part of the afternoon. Then came tea, early tea, at six o'clock, and after tea Lucy sat down on the hearth-rug and gazed into the fire for a long time without speaking. At last she said, "I wonder what Uncle Alfred will think of Clara?"

"I do not know that he has thought at all of Clara, my dear, but I know that he has thought of you."

"Do you? how do you know?" said Lucy, quickly, turning round to look up in her aunt's face.

"I had a letter from him to-day. I will read you a part of it;" and she drew a letter from her pocket. Lucy remarked the black border, and thus spoke her new thought:

"Aunt Lilla, stop a minute. My dress—what *shall* I do? Can't you get me a black one?" This in a voice of real distress.

"Yes, dear, I can certainly; indeed, I have one in the house. I had a piece of merino to cut some off for the children, and I have not yet sent it back." Then fancying Lucy looked only half-satisfied, she added, "Would it comfort you if I told my nurse to begin it to-night."

"But can she?"

"Oh yes, she can make it with the help of a woman who comes from the village to work with her. I must go and see the children, so I will tell her about it; and we will read your uncle's letter when I come down."

Lucy remained alone, still watching the fire, but not still thinking of Clara's sins. Her aunt's kindness had turned her thoughts in a happier direction; and she was now thinking how calm and contented Mrs. Elton seemed, though she was poor. When Mrs. Elton returned, she had something white in her hand—a baby's frock.

"Are you going to work at that?" said Lucy.

"Yes, presently."

"But, Aunt Lilla, do you work at it that the nurse may do my frock?"

"Oh, I always work for the children, to help her."

"Then I must help too;" and Lucy got up and seated herself near the table. "Let me have some work, please; I will do it neatly, really."

"I am not afraid to trust you, dear, and I shall be very glad of your help, but we will put off the work till to-morrow. Come to your warm place again, or sit on this foot-stool, and listen to what your Uncle Alfred says about you. These are his own words:"

"In all my thoughts about dear Gertrude, that poor little girl of my brother's seems to come before me. I wonder where she is spending her holidays—I suppose at Paris. Gertrude was very fond of little Lucy, and I always hoped she might in time make her such an one as herself; but that is over now, and what other good influence is likely to come near the poor child, I am sure I do not know. How I wish she could be with you, but that I fear is at present impossible."

"Ah, how little he thought—" exclaimed Lucy, smiling up brightly through her tears; "but go on please, aunt."

"In the meantime, we must hope that Gertrude's prayers for her godchild will not be unanswered, and that God will raise up for little Lucy some other true friend, in the place of the one she has so early lost."

"Oh! I *am* glad I came," cried Lucy, after a pause. "I am not good, or amiable, Aunt Lilla, but if you'll try and put up with me, perhaps I shall some day be more like Aunt Gertrude. It is my only chance, I know;" and she burst out crying.

Mrs. Elton soothed and comforted her, and they had a long talk about Lady Gertrude, and Lucy's life—past, present, and future; and they gravely and solemnly built a castle in the air, which, unlike other such castles, became in good time a real fact on the earth.

CHAPTER VII.

COTTAGE LIFE.

On the following morning, immediately after breakfast, Lucy again asked Mrs. Elton for some work.

"You wish to help me, do you not, dear?" said Mrs. Elton in reply.

"Yes; and to help the nurse who is making my frock."

"Then shall I tell you how you can best help us both? It is not by working yourself now; but would you mind amusing baby for half an hour? after that, she will have her morning sleep; but just now, unless I take her, Jane cannot do anything, and your frock would not get on—and I have other business."

"Oh, yes! I will; and I will take such care of her—I shall like that better than work."

"But, Lucy, if she is rather cross, as she may be?"

"Oh, I shall not be impatient—is that what you mean?"

"No, indeed, dear; but it is a new thing

for you to take charge of babies; I thought you might dislike it."

"No, I don't; I like the baby at Trewynden very much; and little Marian is my own cousin."

"Then shall I tell Jane to bring her down to you?"

"Yes, please, Aunt Lilla; and I shall feel useful—I like that."

Mrs. Elton left the room, and in a few minutes the baby was brought down. She shrank back at the sight of Lucy, and would not allow her to touch her; so the nurse placed her on the floor, and gave her a picture-book to look at, assuring Lucy that she would soon be sociable.

Lucy seated herself on the sofa, and watched her charge, who, finding herself unmolested, soon made efforts to attract attention; and then Lucy sat down on the floor, and began to explain the pictures, as she had seen Florence do for her little brother. Little Marian was pleased, and all went on happily for some time; but at length, appearing to tire of so quiet an amusement, she suddenly set off crawling as fast as she could.

Lucy did not stop her at first, but seeing

that she was approaching the fire, jumped up and caught her by the frock, stopping her so suddenly that the child began to cry. Lucy took her up in her arms, but she went into a violent passion, and kicked and struggled so violently, that there was nothing for it but to put her down on the floor again, at a safe distance from the fireplace.

Lucy now tried with playthings and pictures to check the tears and sobs that still went on, but all was of no avail, and her patience was nearly exhausted, when, happily, she bethought her of her watch, and held it up for the baby's admiration.

The sobs ceased, while the little hands were held up to grasp the glittering treasure, and it was delightful to see a smile gradually steal over the baby's face, as she listened while the watch was held close to her ear. Then she rose to her feet, and insisted on holding it to Lucy's ear, and was still amusing herself thus, when the door opened and the nurse appeared.

"No, no!" cried the baby on perceiving her; and Lucy felt much flattered.

"Why, I have not had her half-an-hour," said she.

"Oh, yes, Lady Lucy, it's rather over the half-hour, and I was afraid you would be getting quite tired. I hope she has been good. Have you, baby?"

The baby shook her head, and Lucy said, "She went into one passion."

"Oh, I am sorry for that," replied the nurse. "I do hope she will get out of these passionate ways soon. It's such a terrible thing for a young lady to go into passions."

And so saying the nurse carried off her charge.

"A terrible thing for a young lady to go into passions!"

And Lucy remembered that she had been in a passion two days ago in Mrs. Hammond's boudoir. Even this nurse thought it a dreadful thing in a baby of Marian's age, and what must Mrs. Hammond, a lady of taste and refinement, have thought of it in Lucy, at thirteen.

She wondered if Florence and Mabel ever went into passions. She rather hoped they did; but it did not appear likely, as she had heard each of them in turn found fault with and crossed in their desires by some decree of Miss Warren's, and both had borne the

trial with patience and ladylike quietness of demeanour. Lucy felt much ashamed when she remembered that she was older than Mabel, whose childish looks she had rather despised at first; she began to hope that Mrs. Hammond and Eleanor had never told Florence and Mabel that she was so passionate, and even resolved that when next they met she would ask Eleanor not to tell, promising to cure herself so completely that Florence and Mabel should not find it out. Her reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Elton, who thanked her warmly for having made the baby so happy, and hoped she had not had much trouble. Lucy said she had quite enjoyed the half-hour, which had seemed very short. "And now," she added, "may I have the work?" Mrs. Elton gave her some, which she had brought down on purpose.

"If you will hem the bottom of this skirt for baby you will do me a great service; I will show you how to measure the hem."

Lucy assured Mrs. Elton she knew quite well how to do it, having been very particular in making her doll's clothes; "and I always measured the broad hems of their

frocks with a piece of card, so if you will give me that I can begin directly."

"Had you not better get your work-box?" And Lucy ran up-stairs. As she approached the door of her room she saw little Alfred coming out of it; he heard her step, and turning round, instantly came to meet her, holding something in his hand. "Oh, Lucy," he began, "I am so sorry." And then she saw that what he held was a little flower vase with the top part broken.

"That was in my room," said Lucy. "Did you break it?"

"Yes; but it is not that—come into your room, please—oh, I am so very sorry!"

Lucy went in, and what was her surprise and anger when she found that the flower-vase had been upset, and that the water it had contained had all been spilt upon a drawing which lay upon the table: it was a sketch of Trewynden which Eleanor had given her. Dashing the flowers away, and seizing the drawing, which was partly covered by them, she turned sharply to the little boy, who stood sorrowfully by.

"I'll tell you how it was"—he began.

"No, I wont hear; you had no business

at all in my room, and that is enough. You are a very naughty, meddling boy. Go away to the nursery, it is the proper place for you; go, I say"—and she stamped her foot. "Why do you stand there to provoke me?"

Alfred kept his ground, his face was flushed, and his voice trembled. "It was my fault; let me tell you about it," said he.

"Not your fault! you dare to say so! not your fault, and *you* broke it; go away, you naughty boy; telling stories is worse than breaking vases."

"I don't tell stories," said the child, his eyes flashing.

"You do," said Lucy.

"*You* tell stories to say so," cried little Alfred, losing all his self-control.

Scarlet with passion, Lucy gave the poor child a violent box on the ears; he screamed, turned from her, and hid his face in his mother's dress—for there stood Mrs. Elton! The noise had reached her ears, and she had come to inquire the cause of the disturbance. Lucy stood confounded. Still very angry with the child, but angry with herself too, she was heartily wishing she had not given him that box on the ear

when Mrs. Elton spoke: "I am sorry Alfred has vexed you, Lucy, but you should not have struck him." Lucy burst out crying. Mrs. Elton took her little boy away, and shut the door. Lucy sank on her bed sobbing violently. Where were all her good resolutions now? Where was the home with her uncle's family she had hoped to win? Forfeited now, of course: her aunt would never forgive her. What should she do with herself? nobody would ever love her —nobody; and she thought of her Aunt Gertrude. That thought calmed her a little, and she remembered how, after some such outbreak as she had just given way to, Lady Gertrude had said: "You will have to pray and try, and pray and try, and yet be disappointed in yourself; and then you must pray more and try again—it is weary work, dear, and sometimes disheartening, but don't give it up; think of me when you want more hope, and go on trying—never give it up." And Lucy had promised, and her aunt had shown her the place in the Book of Proverbs where Solomon says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh

a city." But it was hard work, and but for her dear aunt's assurance, that trying would not be in vain, Lucy would have despaired of success now, though she had been so hopeful an hour before. She rose and took her Bible, and quickly found the text her aunt had shown her. Then she found courage for a little prayer for help and forgiveness, and then thought of going to ask Mrs. Elton's pardon. This was no easy task. Lucy felt so ashamed of herself—she so dreaded her aunt's reproaches and Alfred's resentment, for Lucy could not bear anybody, even a child, to dislike her; but it must be done, so she opened her door gently, and went down-stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

LUCY'S PUNISHMENT.

When Lucy entered the drawing-room, Alfred was reading to his mother; it was his ordinary lesson time. Mrs. Elton looked up as the door opened, but said nothing. Alfred stopped reading, but his mother told him to go on, and Lucy sat down to her

work. She felt miserable. Mrs. Elton had not looked at her unkindly, and, indeed, as Lucy seated herself in the window, her aunt pushed a little table towards her and smiled; but no scolding could have made Lucy feel half so unhappy as that smile. She worked on, however, occasionally stopping to measure the hem she was working at, but the tears would come into her eyes; faster and faster they fell, and she could scarcely see to work, but she would not leave the room for fear of attracting Alfred's attention, and she did not wish him to see that she was crying. At last his lesson was over.

"You may go now, dear," said Mrs. Elton.

"But, mamma, I have not said my spelling."

"Never mind, I will hear that in the afternoon; go now:" and Alfred obediently gathered up his books and left the room. Mrs. Elton rose, went to her Davenport, and began to write a letter. Lucy saw, and instantly concluded that that letter was to contain her doom. What should she do? Oh, if her aunt would only speak! Mrs. Elton, meanwhile, wrote quickly, and had nearly covered one side of her paper, when

work. She felt miserable. Mrs. Elton had

AUNT GERTRUDE'S ADVICE.

"You will have to pray and try, and pray and try, and yet be disappointed in yourself, and then you must pray more and try again."—P. 74.

she was startled by a deep sob from Lucy, who had checked her tears and kept quiet as long as she could, but at last found she could bear the silence no longer. Mrs. Elton looked at her: Lucy hid her face in her work, which lay on the table before her, and shook from head to foot with her sobs. Mrs. Elton rose and went to her.

"Lucy," said she, quietly, "I do not want you to make yourself so miserable about what you did in the heat of a moment. Do look up, dear, and don't cry so sadly. I assure you it is all forgotten now."

Mrs. Elton was quite young still; she could not take towards Lucy the motherly tone that Mrs. Hammond had used, but she pictured to herself one of her own young sisters in Lucy's position, and could not bear to see her in so much distress. She had really been angry for a moment when she saw Lucy strike Alfred, and was angry again, though she did not show it, when he told her that Lucy had accused him of telling an untruth, but she never allowed her anger to last, and one tear of real sorrow melted her directly. Finding that Lucy did not raise her head, she said, "I have heard the whole

story from Alfred. I am very sorry the little vase was broken."

"It was not mine," sobbed Lucy.

"No; it was Alfred's."

"Alfred's!" and now Lucy did raise her head.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Elton; "he is very fond of flowers, and his nurse made him a present of this vase on his birthday, and when we were preparing your room, he brought it to me and asked me to put it there with some Christmas roses for you which he had gathered."

"But how was it broken?" asked Lucy, too much astonished to make a remark on what she now heard.

"Why, it seems that Alfred was playing with the kitten with a piece of cork tied to a long string. The kitten had taken the cork in her mouth, and the end of the string slipping from Alfred's hand, she carried it into your room. He ran in to fetch her, and she jumped on the table, and Alfred saw the end of the string and caught hold of it, to make the kitten come down, as he hoped; but the string caught the flowers, and so the vase was upset and broken, and the drawing, I fear, was spoiled."

"Oh, never mind that, the drawing does not matter; but poor little Alfred and his vase that he had lent so kindly; he was sorry enough I dare say about its being broken, and I made it worse by being so unkind to him. I wish I had not gone into a passion; you do not know, Aunt Lilla, indeed you do not, how sorry I am for that: and can you ever forgive me for giving Alfred that blow? I suppose you cannot."

"Do you think if you were in my place you would be angry about it?"

"Yes, I should," said Lucy; "and not quietly angry as you are; but if I had been you I should have gone straight into a passion."

"Oh no, Lucy; when you are as old as I am, you will have learned to control yourself better; but now I will confess to you that I was angry. I have seldom found it necessary to punish my boy, and I have never doubted his word or had reason to do so, and that you should do both of these things so hastily and so unjustly did really make me angry at first."

Lucy began to cry again. "But don't cry any more, dear; my anger is all turned to

sorrow at seeing you so unhappy, and if this morning's troubles have taught you a lesson, I know you will be glad to learn it."

"Then you don't mind keeping me still?" said Lucy.

"Keeping you! What do you mean? You are only just come."

"But I thought you would not like me to stay now," replied Lucy, vainly trying to check the fast-falling tears.

"My dear child, your uncle wishes his house to be as your home. Are people turned out of their homes to show their faults to the world at your age? No, no, dear; stay at home and cure them."

So Lucy stayed. There was no change in Alfred's manner to her. She told him how sorry she was about his vase, and contrived to get him another, which pleased him very much. Somehow, this little circumstance, occurring so soon after her arrival at the cottage, had made her feel more intimate with Mrs. Elton than she could have supposed possible on so short an acquaintance. Perhaps we do feel intimate chiefly with those from whom our faults are no secret. But Lucy did not forget her Aunt Lilla's

kindness in making so light of the offence against her little boy, and many a movement of impatience was checked by the recollection. Eleanor and Florence called at the cottage when Lucy had been there about ten days. It happened that little Marian was very unwell; she was cutting some teeth which gave her great pain, and she slept very little at night. Lucy, who had become very fond of her, had gone upstairs one afternoon to try and amuse her, and the weary little child had at last fallen asleep in her cousin's arms. Lucy was seated on a low chair, almost holding her breath lest she should disturb the baby, and the other children were downstairs, so there was no sound heard in the nursery but the little click of the nurse's needle as she sat busily stitching at the table. Lucy felt happy—at peace with herself for a wonder, and with her neighbours, for of late she had scarcely thought of her sisters at all, and Captain Elton had written another letter to his wife, expressive of his great satisfaction on learning that Lucy was staying with her. There was, indeed, one drawback to her happiness: she had a great longing to hear of her father,

and, as she sat silently there, she made a resolution that she would write a letter to him that very evening, and beg him to give her a few lines herself in reply. She had a great request to make to him, but doubted whether she could make it without first applying to her Aunt Lilla, as it concerned her almost as much as it did Lucy herself. Pondering on this, she looked down at the sleeping child and sighed. It was not Lucy's sigh—it was something quite different that caused Marian at that moment to wake up with a start and begin to cry violently. The door was burst open and little Gertrude rushed in, shouting Lucy's name, "Come down, Lucy; mamma says so."

"Oh! you naughty, noisy child; you've woke baby."

Gertrude stood aghast. Lucy turned from her, and tried to quiet the crying child. Gertrude took hold of her gown; "But, Lucy, you are to come."

Lucy gave her a great push. "Don't be tiresome; go away directly," said she, very angrily. "Poor baby was just sleeping quietly, and see what your naughtiness has done."

"It is a pity; but she did not mean it,"

said the nurse, as she took the child from Lucy's arms.

"Had you not better go down, Lady Lucy, if you are wanted?"

"I do not want to go down because naughty children call me. I dare say nobody wanted me."

"But yes, they do," said little Gertrude, with tears in her eyes; "mamma did send me for you."

"What for?" said Lucy.

"Miss Hammond is come," said Gertrude, "and I came to tell you; and I can't go down again, because my eyes have been crying, and mamma said I might go down again."

"Oh, Miss Gertrude, you may leave off crying now; it did not hurt you much."

"What did not?" said Lucy.

"Why, when your ladyship pushed Miss Gertrude just now, she knocked her head against the table. I thought you did not observe it, my lady," said the nurse, rather stiffly.

Lucy coloured crimson. The nurse, who was a very simple, kind-hearted woman, had never spoken to her in this very formal way

before, and Lucy quite understood her meaning now.

"I am very sorry," she said, and stooping down, she wiped Gertrude's eyes with her pocket-handkerchief, and gave her a kiss. Then, as the little girl seemed still unwilling to show herself in the drawing-room, Lucy said, "Will you come to my room, and let me wash your face with some rose-water?"

Gertrude was pleased at the proposal, and the nurse approving, Lucy soon appeared in the drawing-room, leading her smiling little cousin by the hand.

"How you smell of rose-water," said Alfred to Gertrude, the next minute. "Oh, it's on your hair," and he lifted a curl that was plentifully besprinkled; "who put it on you?"

"Lucy," replied Gertrude.

"Lucy spoils you," said Mrs. Elton, who knew that Gertrude's hair was an object of great admiration to Lucy.

Lucy, who was talking to Eleanor, tried hard not to colour up when Gertrude looked towards her; and Gertrude, leaving Florence, who had been making much of her and Alfred, seated herself on a footstool, and leaned her head on Lucy's knee.

"How very fond she is of you already, and how very pretty," said Eleanor, in French.

"Yes," said Lucy, charmed to have her little cousin admired. And on the way home Eleanor and Florence agreed that it must be a great thing for Mrs. Elton to have such a nice "elder daughter" as Lucy seemed to have become.

That evening Lucy told her aunt what had passed in the nursery, and was not blamed, but congratulated on having recovered herself so quickly. Gertrude, who considered herself in fault for waking her little sister, had said nothing about it, Lucy's subsequent kindness having quite done away with every other impression.

CHAPTER IX.

MINOR TRIALS.

FIVE weeks of the holidays had passed away, and Lucy was looking forward with sorrow to their end. She had spent some pleasant hours at Trewynden, and once she had gone there for three whole days; then it was that on her return she had made Alfred happy

by giving him a little flower vase which she had bought at Falmouth, whither Mrs. Hammond had one day taken her. Her return to the cottage was so warmlywelcomed that Lucy felt she had indeed "come home," as the children expressed it in their delight at seeing her once more. Lucy had grown fond of the little home; there were, indeed, few luxuries, for Mrs. Elton was not rich: no pony, no carriage, and Lucy not only had to dress herself, but to mend her clothes, as she did at school; she would have liked more attendance, but never asked for it, for she knew the nurse had plenty to do. One day, however, having taken a scrambling walk with Alfred, who was proud to be her companion, she tore her gown so badly in helping him over a ditch, that when she got home she took it off, and stood looking at it in despair. She could never mend that, never; and then, foolish Lucy, she began to cry, tormenting herself with the reflection that her sisters had a maid of their own, and why should not she? There came a knock at the door. Lucy dried her eyes, and admitted the nurse.

"Excuse me, my lady; I'm glad to see

you've got your gown off. I came to see if you were wet, for Master Elton's boots are soaked through, and I thought if yours were, you'd like me to take your dry ones to the nursery fire and warm them a bit."

Quite touched with this kind thought, Lucy sat down to take off the wet boots which she had forgotten in her distress about the gown. The nurse carried off the dry stockings and shoes to warm them, and bringing them back quickly, took Lucy's gown off the bed to put it by. Then she discovered the rent.

"Bless me, Lady Lucy, look at your dress; why, it's torn half in two!"

"Yes; what *shall* I do? I can't mend it if I sit up all night, and I have no other for to-morrow."

"Oh, well, we're none of us going to sit up all night, but I dare say we shall manage it somehow. Don't you fret, Lady Lucy. But why did you not tell me about it at once? I'm cross sometimes, but I know my place, I hope, and it's not likely I should refuse to mend such a thing as this for one of the ladies of the family. I should hear of it from your uncle if he knew it."

And having helped Lucy to dress with unusual attention, the faithful Jane carried off the unfortunate gown. The fact was, that Alfred's pleasure in walking with Lucy pleased Jane, who was devoted to the children, and she grew fond of the young lady in proportion as they liked her. Lucy had carried out her intention of writing to her father, and had received a few lines from him in reply. He was pleased with her for writing, and seemed well satisfied to know she was with her aunt. He sent her another five pounds, and said something about being sorry not to see her during the holidays, but no word of her going abroad to join him. On the contrary, he said he wished he were well enough to return to England, but he did not feel up to the journey, having been ill with a bad attack of influenza. Mrs. Elton looked rather grave when Lucy read this to her, and said she knew Paris to be a very cold place in winter, and it would therefore probably be very imprudent for Lord O'Kerry to leave the house at all while the severe weather continued. Lucy heard nothing of her sisters at this time, as they did not write, and her father did not

mention them. A few days before her return to school she went with her aunt to pay a farewell visit at Trewynden. There she heard with great delight that Florence was to be the companion of her journey to Mrs. Grant's, as Mr. and Mrs. Hammond had decided not to take another governess now Miss Warren was leaving, and Eleanor, who was to remain at home, was both able and willing to instruct Mabel. Lucy regretted very much that she would no longer have Eleanor's help and protection at school, but it would be a new interest for her to befriend Florence, who was very shy about going, and quite looked up to Lucy as being experienced in the life that was so new to her.

It was arranged that Lucy should sleep at Trewynden the night before the journey, as the travellers were to start early. Mr. Hammond was to escort them as far as Exeter, and there they were to meet Miss Smith, one of the teachers belonging to Mrs. Grant's school, who would take charge of them for the remainder of the route. Lucy left her aunt and the children with great regret, but strange to say, she was far happier now the holidays were ended, than she

had been when they began. Mrs. Elton said one day, "When do your summer holidays begin, dear? do you know?"

"No, Aunt Lilla; but I think it will be about the 24th of June."

"Well, you will be sure to write and give me due notice, that we may arrange the journey comfortably. The cottage will be looking so much prettier in June; I shall quite long to have you to admire it with me when the leaves come out. But you have no Easter holidays, I think?"

"No, and—am I certainly to come here for my next holidays?"

"Certainly; unless your father forbids it, or you prefer staying at school."

"Oh! papa wont forbid it; you know what he says in his letter, and as to me, oh! Aunt Lilla, I had rather be with you than with anybody else in the world now." And she threw her arms round Mrs. Elton's neck and kissed her affectionately. "But, Aunt Lilla," she resumed, after a pause; "I have a favour to ask you; it has to do with my coming home again."

"Well, dear, ask—what is it?"

"Why, you know Eleanor is going to teach Mabel now?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Elton, who did not at all see what that was to lead to.

"Well, I want to know if I work hard at school and learn all I can, will you let me teach Gertrude in the holidays?"

"It is a long time to look forward to, dear Lucy, and though I quite appreciate your kind wish now, you may change your mind, so I will not promise."

"I dare say you are afraid to trust me," said Lucy, rather disappointed; "but I think I could do it, and I am quite sure I shall not change my mind. I do not ask for Alfred, because he has a cleverness that I could not manage, but I should be able to teach Gertrude, I know."

"That you would be able I am quite sure; you will be fourteen, and she will be five; so, if you have any power at all of teaching, you could doubtless teach her; and I know you have the power, for you did it very well the day I had such a bad headache, and, moreover, Gertrude enjoyed her little lesson with you. Still, my dear Lucy, I cannot allow you to take my promise, and so to bind yourself to what you would probably find irksome and dull. You know summer and

winter are so different—you might possibly wish to be out all day, or to make expeditions with the Hammonds, who are great people for pic-nics, they tell me; and then what would become of the lessons, for if it be but one hour a day, they ought to be regular."

"I should not go to the pic-nics then."

"'No, I can't go, I have that tiresome child, Gertrude, and her lesson to attend to,' —would that be the form of your refusal?"

"Oh, Aunt Lilla, you are too bad; I do call her a tiresome child sometimes, I know, but she doesn't mind."

"This morning in my room I said to baby, 'What does Lucy call you?' and she said, 'A lovely darling;' and Gertrude said, 'Lucy calls *me* tiresome child.' "

"Then I wont call her so any more. I shall have all the time I am at school to break myself of it, and when I come home I shall have left it off quite."

"And then you may also leave off calling baby 'a lovely darling,' for though the word lovely has to her at present no meaning but love, she will soon find out something more," said Mrs. Elton, laughing.

"Well, she can't help seeing how pretty she is when she looks in the glass, but I wont be guilty of telling her. Now I'm going to fetch her to play with; may I? I'm so sorry it is the last day." And Lucy betook herself to the nursery.

Mrs. Elton thought with much satisfaction of the successful issue of the arrangement that had caused her so much anxiety at first. She had invited Lucy to her house as a matter of duty, and was well repaid in the real affection Lucy now manifested, both towards her and towards the children. Still there had often been moments when Mrs. Elton felt very thankful that the whole responsibility of Lucy's education and training did not rest with her; and though very sorry to part with her, she could rejoice to think that at Mrs. Grant's Lucy would enjoy the advantage of a really judicious and clever woman's influence, with the most careful instruction that could be bestowed. Alfred and Gertrude did not part from Lucy without many injunctions to her to come home soon. She was especially enjoined to be home in time for Gertrude's birthday, which was impossible, as that important anniversary

was in May; but Lucy promised to write Gertrude a letter, which promise she faithfully kept, and moreover accompanied it with a present.

So the holidays ended; they had been very eventful ones for Lucy, and her visits in Cornwall had more influence on the happiness of her future life, than she had ever imagined in all her joyful surprise at Eleanor's first invitation.

CHAPTER X.

SCHOOL LIFE.

THE journey was uneventful, except that Miss Smith, whom Lucy particularly disliked, and who had a peculiar talent for offending people, contrived to offend both young ladies during the first quarter of an hour that she was in the railway carriage with them.

"So, Lady Lucy," said she, "you did get an invitation for the holidays after all! Well, I'm sure I hope now you're come back, you're not going to be as troublesome as you were last half-year."

SCHOOL LIFE.

VICTORIA DE VERE, HELEN ROSS, AND MISS FORRESTER.

as you were last half-year."

SCHOOL LIFE.

VICTORIA DE VERE, HELEN ROSS, AND MISS FORRESTER.

Lucy looked vexed and coloured deeply, but made no reply. Miss Smith went on,

"Oh, you needn't look so put out; it's no secret, I dare say. I'm sure if this is Eleanor Hammond's sister, she'll have heard enough about you."

Now Florence spoke. "My sister told us a great deal about Lucy, and that's why we were all anxious to know her. I thought you knew Eleanor was her great friend."

"Friend, indeed! I know she had plenty of trouble with her."

"I'm sure Eleanor never said so," said Florence, angrily.

"Oh no, not to me. She was like all the other young ladies that sit at Miss Forrester's table, far too grand to have anything to say to me. But you need not suppose you are to give yourself such airs; you're too young to be at that table, and will probably sit at mine."

"Eleanor never gave herself airs," said Florence, who recognised in the speaker a habit which Eleanor had mentioned, of always finding fault, if possible, with the eight elder young ladies of the school, who sat at the table of the head teacher, Miss

Forrester. Miss Forrester did not treat these elder girls as if they were little children, but allowed them to converse with her and with each other, and was in the habit of finding a sort of companionship among them. They generally became very fond of her, and to be one of Miss Forrester's young ladies was accounted rather a privilege, while nobody cared to be one of Miss Smith's. Miss Smith was therefore excessively jealous, and often unjust. Miss Forrester, on the contrary, was remarkable for the strict justice of all her dealings. Florence was thoroughly offended by Miss Smith's remarks, and Lucy was feeling very uncomfortable; but now Miss Smith, scorning to reply to Florence's last observation, settled herself in her corner of the carriage, took out a book and began to read, only interrupting herself once to say, "Young ladies, if any strangers should get into the carriage, you must come and sit by me." They promised compliance, and then a most interesting conversation followed between Lucy and Florence, who were seated on either side of the farther window.

"I can't bear her," said Florence; "do

you really think I shall have to sit at her table? Where do you sit?"

"I sit at Miss Thornton's table, and I dare say you will too. She is strict, but I like her much better than Miss Smith."

"But Miss Smith said I should be with her."

"Well, but she does not know; of course, Mrs. Grant or Miss Forrester will settle it."

"And," said Florence, "what elder girl shall I be given to, as you were to Eleanor?"

"Oh, I do not know at all. I shall be given to somebody. I only hope it will not be Clementina Fane; I can't bear her."

"Whom do you wish for? Eleanor hoped Miss Ross would take me."

"Ah, that would be very nice, I dare say. But I should be rather afraid of her; she is tall and so very clever."

"But very kind, is not she?"

"Yes, I believe so, but not like Eleanor; how I wish Eleanor was to be there still."

"So do I, indeed; if it were not for you, Lucy, I don't think I could have gone to school."

"Think, then, what it must have been for me at first, with no creature I knew."

"Dreadful! But then Eleanor was kind to you directly, was not she?"

"Oh yes, directly; I don't know what I should have done without her."

Lucy paused, and gazed silently from the window for some minutes. Then she said, with tears springing to her eyes, "Florence, did Eleanor tell you I gave her a great deal of trouble?"

"No," said Florence; "don't vex yourself about that."

"But I believe I did," pursued Lucy; "only I could not bear Miss Smith saying it in that way."

"No, of course not; and I shall give *her* trouble if she makes herself so disagreeable."

They stopped at a station while Florence was speaking. The guard opened the door to let in some strangers, and Lucy and Florence crossed to the other window, to sit by Miss Smith, who forthwith gave up her seat to Florence, that the two children might still have full possession of a window; for Miss Smith was good-natured at times, only it was a pity she was not so always.

They reached their destination at half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and were

at once conducted to Mrs. Grant's drawing-room. She kissed Lucy, and said she was glad to see her again, and received Florence very kindly, inquiring affectionately after Eleanor. After a light supper, the two little girls were dismissed to their beds.

"You will sleep in the same room," said Mrs. Grant, "as you are both to be under Miss Thornton's care."

Florence gave Lucy's hand a tight squeeze, and felt as happy as it was possible to feel the first night at school. Oh! that first night! who that has felt them will ever forget its horrors. But the room was comfortable, the fire bright, and Miss Thornton kind. Florence remembered where she was just sufficiently to cry herself to sleep, but was fortunately too tired to lie awake and think. The remaining four beds in the room were already tenanted, all but one—Miss Thornton's, and she left the room when Lucy and Florence were in bed, and returned half an hour after to find them both sound asleep.

In the morning, soon after breakfast, as Mrs. Grant came into the school-room, the young ladies all rose at her entrance; she then said, with a pleasant smile:

"Sit down, my dears. I want Miss de Vere."

A tall young lady stood up; she belonged to Miss Forrester's table.

"Have you any little girl in your charge now, Miss de Vere?"

"Yes, ma'am; Alice Young."

"She is a good child, and gives no trouble, so I think you can take another; you shall have Lady Lucy Elton."

"Yes, ma'am;" and Miss de Vere sat down.

"Miss Fane," said Mrs. Grant, and Lucy trembled for Florence, who also looked with some trepidation at the handsome black-eyed girl who now rose. "Miss Fane, I think you had the charge of Miss Fitzurse."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Perhaps you will oblige me by taking Miss Emily Goodford instead."

"Yes, ma'am;" and Miss Fane sat down, not at all pleased, and wondering who was to have Ada Fitzurse; while all the elder girls came to the instant conclusion that Clementina Fane was not considered equal to the care of Ada, whereas Emily Goodford, who always went on steadily, needed no care at

all. Florence and Lucy rejoiced in the safety of the former.

"Miss Taylor," said Mrs. Grant, "will be kind enough to take Miss Judith Byng; and Miss Ross" (a tall, fair girl, who then rose close to Miss Forrester's chair,) "will take charge of Miss Florence Hammond and Miss Ada Fitzurse."

Miss Ross acquiesced readily; Florence looked delighted; Miss Fane looked vexed. Mrs. Grant left the room, and a very pretty little girl of twelve years old crept up to Florence, and said—"I am so glad we are to be under Helen Ross, she is so good tempered." So Florence knew this was Ada Fitzurse. In the course of the day, several more pupils arrived, and before the evening the forty-five young ladies had all re-assembled. Florence amused herself during the tea-hour in looking at the various faces around her. She sat at Miss Thornton's table, as did Lucy; and most of the other young ladies at the table were of ages varying from twelve to fifteen. Next to Miss Thornton, at the top of the table, was Emily Goodford, and opposite to her a little girl, whom Florence immediately set down

for a younger sister of Miss Fane, as the resemblance both in features and in dress marked the relationship. Florence had taken no fancy to Emily Goodford's appearance, and wondered why she sat at the top of the table. Alice Young sat next to her, and then Lucy, and Florence herself. Next to little Miss Fane were two sisters in mourning, whose names Florence did not know. After tea, all the young ladies rose from the table, and sought the books they required to prepare for the next day's lesson. Florence had none to learn, for she was not yet appointed to any class. Lucy was already busy with hers, and as silence was absolutely enjoined, Florence felt very dull and sad. Presently, Emily Goodford, who had looked at her two or three times over the bent heads of her neighbours, spoke a word to Miss Thornton, who nodded and smiled; and Emily left her place and went to the cupboard where she kept her books. In a few minutes, Florence felt a touch on her shoulder, and looking up, she saw Emily Goodford with two books in her hand.

"I hope you have not read them," said she, in French; "and they may amuse you this

evening." And before Florence could thank her, she had walked back to her place.

Florence opened one of the books. She had read it at home, so she put it aside and took up the other. It was a pretty story, and she soon became much interested. In about an hour there was a general movement; the little girls took their books, and went to say their lessons to the elder ones. Lucy carried hers to Miss de Vere, rather shyly. Miss de Vere heard Alice Young first, so Lucy had the more time to look hers over, and she said them very well. Miss de Vere was pleased, and said something good-natured, to the effect that she hoped having begun so well together, she and Lucy would go on in the same manner; and Miss Forrester looked (Lucy fancied) rather surprised to see her acquit herself so well. As she was about to return to her place, Miss Forrester stopped her.

"Well," she said, "how shall we make up to you for the loss of your friend, Miss Hammond? Lucy said she was sure Miss de Vere would help her now."

"Yes; so she will," said Miss Forrester; "those who make a friend of Eleanor Ham-

mond do well, and those who make a friend of Victoria de Vere do well too."

Miss Forrester added a few more kind words, and Lucy returned to her own place. A sudden feeling of intense home sickness had overcome Florence during the short interval of Lucy's absence, and closing her book, she had hidden her face in her hands to try and conceal the tears that *would* come.

"We know what it is, we can feel for you," said a gentle voice across the table.

Florence looked up and saw the two sisters in mourning regarding her with deep sympathy, and the younger of them had tears in her eyes as she again repeated: "My sister and I can feel for you; we knew it ourselves so lately."

The bell rang for prayers, and no more words passed, but Florence looked her thanks for the kind sympathy shown her, and longed to know more of the quiet-looking sisters in black. Alice Young and two little Miss Wilsons shared the bedroom of Lucy and Florence, and the second night was so much less terrible than the first, that Florence felt as if she had already been at school a week.

CHAPTER XI.

OUT WALKING.

Now it happened that Ada Fitzurse took a great fancy to Florence, who was not unwilling to return the compliment, as she thought Ada very pretty; also, she was two years younger than Florence, who had, therefore, the pleasure of meeting her advances rather condescendingly. Lucy had never made a friend of her own age at school, and now depended on Florence to fill the vacant place; therefore, when they were going out walking on the third day since their arrival, and Lucy, as a matter of course, called Florence to walk with her, she heard with surprise and annoyance the answer—"No; I'm going to walk with Ada Fitzurse." Certainly Florence had a right to choose her companion; but Lucy did not consider this, and felt very angry. She fancied Florence was forsaking her and preferring new friends, and in her indignation she resolved to follow the example thus presented to her.

"Well, Lady Lucy, and what has put *you* out?" said a well-known voice; "you're looking crosser than I've seen you since I came back."

Lucy was now indeed looking cross, and in another moment she would have got herself into disgrace for the day by an answer more full of wrath than of respect, but her name was now uttered in gentler tones. "Lucy Elton," said Miss de Vere who made her way through the throng then pressing towards the door, "I see Florence has another companion to-day, so I *may* ask you to walk with me." Lucy felt much flattered, for Miss de Vere was considered one of the most important persons in the school, and was certainly the most distinguished for talents, for high breeding, for an appearance so singularly refined and ladylike, that her want of real beauty scarcely seemed a want at all; and, above all, for a peculiar power of impressing on others the value and necessity, as well as happiness, of that religious faith which was the ruling principle of her life, and showed itself in her every word and deed. Lucy assented with delight to Miss de Vere's proposal, and felt almost

glad of Florence's fickleness. Miss Smith took no pains to conceal her astonishment.

"Well," said she, "there's no accounting for taste, but if I were Miss de Vere, I should not choose to walk with the crossest-looking child in the school!" But Miss de Vere had drawn Lucy out of hearing before the sentence was concluded. She and Lucy had a great deal of pleasant conversation: it began about Eleanor, whom both liked almost equally, and Miss de Vere remarked that Florence was very like her sister.

"Yes, in face," said Lucy.

"Not in character, do you think?"

"No; they are very different. Florence is not half so steady as Eleanor."

"But then she is much younger."

"Yes; but there is another thing; you know Eleanor thinks nothing at all of herself."

"And Florence is not quite so humble, you would say. But then, Lucy, there is hope for her again in being so young. We all grow humbler as we grow older, I hope; and I am sure Eleanor did."

"Miss Fane is older than Eleanor, and she is not humble."

"Suppose we do not discuss Miss Fane's character; I think we neither of us know her intimately enough to do it fairly."

"I thought all the 'young ladies at Miss Forrester's table' knew each other quite well."

Lucy had imitated Miss Smith's voice as she said this, and Miss de Vere laughed.

"Lucy, Lucy, we must not do that. You do not like Miss Smith, but we ought to treat her with respect and not ridicule. As to Miss Fane, you are mistaken, for I only just know her enough to speak to."

"Miss de Vere, will you tell me one thing?"

"What is it?"

"Do you like Miss Smith?"

"For some things I do. When my little sister was ill, Miss Smith was very, very kind to her."

"Oh! I scarcely thought she could be kind."

"All people can, I believe; and if we try and fancy so, we shall find it easier to like them."

"Your little sister is not here, is she?"

"Yes; she came back with me this time;

she stayed at home for six months, that is why you never saw her before."

"I don't think I have seen her now. What is her name?"

"Emma; she was sitting near you at tea last night, but I dare say you did not observe her."

"She is not like you, I suppose? I did not see anybody like you; and I knew Lydia Fane directly, by her likeness to her sister, last half year."

"No, I don't think Emma is like me; but here she comes, so you shall judge."

A little girl now met them, in whom certainly Lucy saw no likeness to Miss de Vere. Emma had rather an awkward, square-looking figure, a fair face, delicately pale, and features by no means good, with the exception of her eyes, which were deep blue, and shaded by dark lashes; her eyebrows also were dark, and well marked. Her hair was short and straight, and fell down at the side of her cheek with no attempt at curling. She wore a very broad hat, which threw her whole face into shadow.

"She is not at all pretty," thought Lucy, "nor does she even look ladylike; and yet—"

Yes, Lucy might well pause. Nobody who looked at Emma de Vere for a whole minute could doubt her being a lady; nobody who heard her speak and saw her smile, for one moment could fail to be sure of it.

"Why are you alone, dear?" said her sister, as Emma joined them.

"I was walking with Emily Goodford, but she is gone in to practice."

"And you are going to find another companion?"

"I was looking for you. Alice Young told me Lady Lucy was with you, and Emily gave me a message for her."

"What was it? But, please, don't call me 'Lady.'"

"Emily said you had borrowed the second volume of her Markham's France, and she will be very much obliged if you would put it back on her shelf this afternoon, but she can let you have it again to-morrow."

"Oh! I will. I hope I sha'n't forget to do it directly I go in."

"Shall I remind you, if I think of it?" said Emma."

"Yes, do, please."

Emma now seemed to hesitate about re-

maining with her sister and Lucy, or finding some other friend; but little Judith Byng came running up.

"Oh, Emma de Vere, here you are! I've been all round the shrubbery looking for you. We want another to make us even —we're playing at stones; do come."

"Judith was out of breath, so that she could hardly speak, and her articulation, singular at all times, was now almost incomprehensible. She had a remarkable lisp, and not only did she pronounce every "s" as if it were "th," but she could not pronounce "k" or a hard "c" at all, so she ended her sentence with "do tome."

Lucy began to laugh, and said, "You odd child, why don't you try to talk properly?"

Judith looked angry, and having now recovered her breath was able to reply slowly, "You thilly girl, of tourth I thould if I tould; but people that thpeak well thould not thay ill-natured thingth. Lady Luthy, indeed! Thath the reathon you thould behave like a lady, and not make remarkth; ith bad mannerth." Having delivered herself of this lecture, Judith ran off again,

followed by Emma, who had looked much distressed at Lucy's speech. Lucy laughed again as Judith departed.

"I did not say any harm, did I, Miss de Vere? I only called her odd; and she is very odd, she must know that."

"Do you know anything about yourself which you had rather other people did not tell you? I fancied, for instance, that Miss Smith told you something to-day."

"She told me I looked cross, but if I did, it was no business of hers."

"Well, was Judith's way of speaking any concern of yours?"

"No; but one must make a remark sometimes, and I did not mean to offend her."

"I know you did not; but I cannot agree with you that one *must* ever make a useless remark that is so personal as to risk giving offence. Besides, if you consider for a moment, you will see that Judith's difficulty in speaking is really a misfortune, and therefore it is natural that she should dislike to hear unfeeling remarks made about it."

"Unfeeling! oh, Miss de Vere! you know I did not mean to be unfeeling."

"But I have no doubt Judith thinks you

so. She has very warm feelings herself, and will probably dislike you for a time, and show it plainly, as she always does to those who offend her. I hope you will have patience and be kind to her."

"I will try. Are you very fond of her?"

"I never see much of her; but I pity her for her many difficulties."

"Has she others besides that about speaking?"

"She has a very hot temper."

"Whose school-child is she? Oh, I remember; Mrs. Grant gave her to Miss Taylor; Miss Ellis had her last year."

"She is well off with Miss Taylor, and so is your friend, Florence, with Miss Ross."

"Who does Emma, your sister, belong to?"

"Miss Egerton. I think Emma gives nobody any trouble."

"You help her, I suppose."

"When I can, but I have not much time. I shall help you, too, as much as I can; and Lucy, I shall be so disappointed if you do not do Eleanor credit. I hope you will work hard; and do, dear, try and keep quiet with Miss Smith, whatever remarks she may make."

Miss de Vere said these last words in a

low tone, and stooped and kissed Lucy before they re-entered the house. It was well the caution had been given.

"You're not going in yet, Lady Lucy; it's only the elder girls who are in Mrs. Grant's poetry class. It will be some time before *you* are there."

Lucy turned from the door again very hastily.

"Lady Lucy!" She only hastened on. "Lady Lucy, stop my dear!" the voice that called now was surely not Miss Smith's. Lucy turned. Miss Thornton was hastening down the steps. Lucy ran to meet her.

"My dear, I wanted to ask you for the key of your cupboard, if you don't mind letting Emily Goodford look for a book of hers which she says you have there. I will see that nothing is disarranged."

"I am afraid you will not find it very tidy," said Lucy, producing the key from her pocket. "I am sorry I did not stop when you called me first, Miss Thornton, but I thought—"

"Never mind, my dear; I should have sent Emily herself to look for you, but she has such a bad cold that I would not let her go out again this afternoon." And Miss

Thornton took the key and ran into the house.

"I wish everybody spoke as pleasantly as Miss Thornton," said Lucy to herself.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOLL.

For some weeks all went on smoothly and pleasantly with our young friends. Lucy and Florence made up their little difference, and Lucy became more sociable and found it possible to make more friends. She attached herself particularly to Emma de Vere, but the latter being Judith Byng's particular admiration, had some trouble in allaying the jealous displeasure of that excitable young lady, who, as Victoria had expected, had taken, a great dislike to Lucy. Florence soon found out the names of the friendly sisters in mourning. They were Mary and Fanny Hume, and had recently left their home for the first time, but were so happy in being together that they were full of compassion for Florence, because she was parted from her sisters, so they considered her to be much worse off than them-

selves. They were fourteen and fifteen, and were so well able to help each other that they were not put under the supervision of any elder girl. Florence often walked with and talked to them, and as they were both clever and good, they were very nice friends for her. Altogether, Florence began to find school life very endurable, sometimes even very pleasant. It was true she had a great deal to do and not much time to amuse herself; and her doll, which was an object of great admiration to Ada Fitzurse and many of the younger girls, lay neglected in its cradle for days together; but on Saturday afternoons, if the weather did not permit of a walk, the week's neglect was made up to the "Lady Octavia," as Florence called her.

"What is her other name?" said Ada, one day.

"She has no other," replied Florence.

"Oh, she ought to have a surname," said Lydia Fane. "Call her 'Octavia de Cire,' as she is made of wax."

"A capital name," cried Ada; "and it sounds so like de Vere; Victoria de Vere and Octavia de Cire—nobody would guess one was a doll."

Florence highly approved of the name, and at once adopted it for her favourite.

"But," said another little girl who was of the doll party, "Victoria and Vere begin with the same letter. You ought to give the doll a name beginning with C to match Cire."

"Ah, but then," said Florence, "her name is Octavia because she is our eighth doll. Mabel is taking charge of the other seven at home."

"Eight dolls! Oh, Florence! how I should like to see them all," cried more than one voice.

"But why could she not be named Cecilia Octavia; my brother's name is Cecil Octavius because he is the eighth."

"That would give such ugly initials; you must put another name in between."

"There's the 'de,'" said Florence.

"Yes; but C. O. is ugly; it is just like the end of a shop."

"The end of a shopkeeper's name, I suppose you mean," said Florence; "don't you know that Co. is short for 'Company?'"

"Well, do you mean to name your doll 'Company,' then?"

"Don't be silly, Ada. I think I'll put in Helen, after Miss Ross."

'C. H. O. Why, she'll be 'choke,'" cried Ada, almost bursting with laughter herself. Of course the others all joined, and Florence laughed too, though beginning to feel rather provoked.

"I've heard my nurse say it's very lucky when people's initials spell a word," said Lydia Fane.

"Hush!" said Emily Goodford, who was passing. "You should not talk of things being 'lucky,' Lydia; Mrs. Grant does not like it."

Lydia shrugged her shoulders, and Emily went on her way.

"I'll tell you what I shall do," said Florence; "her initials shall spell a name, you shall guess what it is; it begins with C and ends with O, and the 'de' will come after."

"But is it a name we know?"

"I'm sure I can't say. It is a classical name," said Florence, conceitedly.

"Classical! we don't know Latin and Greek."

"I know Latin," said Ada.

"It's not a Latin name; at least, I'm almost sure it is not. I'll ask Miss Ross."

Miss Ross was much amused at the question and its cause, and good-naturedly left her book and joined the little party. Two or three of the elder girls inquired what was going on, and when they heard of the problem Florence had propounded, they also began to guess the name.

"Was it one of the Furies?" asked Ada.

"Of course not," said Florence, indignantly.

"Was it a learned or accomplished lady?" asked Miss Taylor.

"I suppose so," said Florence.

Miss Taylor smiled. "A lady who had several sisters, I think."

"Yes, I see you know; but, please, don't tell," said Florence.

"Several sisters, that is quite right for your doll; who can it be?"

"I know," said Lydia Fane, contemptuously closing a book she held in her hand. "Clio, of course."

"Yes," said Florence; "but you looked in that book for it."

"How stupid!" cried Ada; "I don't call that guessing."

"Well, you could not guess, Ada," said the elder Miss Fane, who was standing by.

"Nor you," retorted Ada.

Reassured by her sister's support, Lydia began, "Now let's guess what the L and the I are to be."

"No," said Florence; "I shall say no more about it now. Come, Ada, we'll put the doll to bed."

And having thus manifested their desire to avoid Lydia, the two friends walked off together with the doll. Lydia Fane was very much annoyed, but she was too proud to show how much she cared. She therefore joined a group of children in the other room, and said she was tired of Florence and her doll.

"You are very changeable," said Judith Byng.

"That is nothing to you," said Lydia, who was in what is familiarly termed a bad temper.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I did not know you were 'troth.'"

The charge of being cross did not sweeten

THE DOLL'S NAME. P. 118.

The charge of being cross did not sweeten

THE DOLL'S NAME. P. 118.

Lydia's temper at all, and she felt as if no employment suited her, so she verified the well-known words of the hymn, and took to mischief. At the table immediately behind her, Lucy Elton and Emma de Vere were seated side by side reading. There was very little distance between them and Lydia, and they might easily hear what she said, so she resolved to be revenged on Florence and Ada for their desertion. Lucy did not care about dolls now, nor did Emma, so they had not been of the party in the other room where the discussion about the name was carried on.

"Georgy," said Lydia, in a rather loud tone, addressing a little girl who sat opposite, busily drawing; "what do you think Florence Hammond has been doing?"

The name caught Lucy's ears, as Lydia had hoped.

"Why, what?" said Georgy Harrington, going on with her tree.

"She has been naming her doll after Victoria de Vere."

"Has she? Why? because she is so fond of her?"

"Oh no, not at all; only to make it look

ridiculous. The doll is to be Cecilia de Cire, because that is just like the sound of Victoria de Vere."

A merry laugh behind her quite startled the speaker. Emma had heard and was much amused, but not in the least aware that she ought to be offended.

"Well," said Lydia, looking round at her, "I should not laugh if people were rude to *my* sister."

"Rude! I see nothing rude in it," replied Emma, astonished.

"And if it were rude, I am sure Florence never meant it for rudeness," said Lucy.

"If she did not, Ada did."

"I do not believe it," said Emma, quietly. "They would not be rude to my sister; why should they, she is always kind to them?"

This was said with an almost touching appeal to the general appreciation of her sister. Nobody would lightly have shaken Emma's faith in her sister's hold on the affection of her schoolfellows, nobody, that is, who could discern the beauty and genuineness of that faith; but Lydia, whose regard for her own sister partook in no sort of manner of the respect and admiring love

which Emma felt for hers, was utterly unable to estimate the amount of pain her careless words might inflict.

"Kind! Oh, yes, I dare say; but what they laugh at is not that, I suppose."

"Then, what do they find to laugh at in Miss de Vere?" asked Lucy, indignantly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Lydia; "you should ask your friend Florence herself."

"You said just now it was Ada."

"They were playing together."

"And you were playing with them," said Judith Byng.

"I came away," said Lydia.

"Not till you were tired of playing, you thaid tho."

"Yes," said Lydia, "for they quarrelled with me about the name; but they had settled to name it Cecilia de Cire because of Victoria de Vere," and she laughed.

"Well, I should not care if they named it after me," said Georgy Harrington, "and if I were you, Emma, I would not care either."

"No, indeed I should not, if it were my name, but to have my sister laughed at."

"It ith not true, Emma," said Judith; "I know it ith not. Lydia hath told one

thtory already, and why thould the not tell two. The thaid the came away becauthe the wath tired, and now the thayth it wath becauthe they quarrelled with her."

Lydia was furious now. "You rude little thing, you are not to say I tell stories."

"Don't do it, then," said Judith, unabashed.

"Hush, my dears, what are these loud voices about," said Miss Forrester, entering from the next room. "Is not Miss Smith here?"

"No, ma'am," said Lucy, "she is gone to lie down, as she has a headache; she told us to be quiet, and we said we would, and Miss Smith said you were coming to sit here almost directly."

Lucy volunteered this answer because she was the oldest girl in the room, and, moreover, was not afraid of Miss Forrester.

"I was detained, and now I do not find you as quiet as I should wish. What is the matter?"

Nobody spoke.

"You are the eldest, Lady Lucy, what is it?"

But Lucy did not like to say anything unpleasant about Florence. Judith Byng pressed forward.

"May I tell you, ma'am," said she, looking up at Miss Forrester.

"Yes, Judith; but you must speak slowly, that I may be able to understand what you say."

Judith began in a measured tone. "It wath Lydia Fane, the came and told uth that Florenth Hammond and Ada had been laughing at Mith de Vere, and naming a doll like her name to make a joke of her. Thith made Lady Luthy angry, and made Emma very unhappy; but I don't believe it."

"What," said Miss Forrester, "does Lydia say that Florence and Ada were laughing at Miss de Vere. It was very silly and rude of them; but it was not kind of you, Lydia, to come and tell Emma."

"I did not tell Emma, I told Georgy Harrington."

"But Emma could not help hearing," interposed Lucy. "I was sitting close to Emma, Miss Forrester, and I heard every word Lydia said."

"Perhaps, then, Lydia did not know you were so near."

"Yeth the did."

"How do you know that, Judith."

"I thaw her look at Luthy and Emma before the thaid it."

This was the first time Judith had condescended to drop the "Lady," having chosen to be on very formal terms since Lucy offended her; but now she was pleased at the part Lucy took.

"Well, Lydia, let me advise you never to make mischief if you can help it. And Emma and Lady Lucy, keep quiet and don't distress yourselves; I will speak to Florence and Ada, but I am pretty sure there is some mistake."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAWING-ROOM PARTY.

Miss Forrester remained in the room where we left her until the bell rang for tea, when all the young ladies present accompanied her into the other school-room, where their meals were taken. Just as Lucy entered, one of the children came to her, and said, "You are to go to tea in the drawing-room; and where is Florence? she is to go too."

Lucy looked at Miss Forrester.

"Very well, my dear; go and tell Miss Thornton."

Lucy obeyed.

Miss Thornton said, "I am glad to hear it, my dear; I hope you will have a pleasant evening. Florence Hammond and Emma are going, too, from this table, so we shall be quite a small party."

When Lucy and Florence reached the drawing-room, having first changed their frocks and arranged their hair, they found Ada Fitzurse there; she belonged to Miss Smith's table, and they had not known that she had an invitation to the drawing-room as well as themselves. Lucy and Florence had been alone in their room for a few minutes, and a short explanation had taken place; so Florence was indignant at Lydia's treachery, and Lucy was longing to tell Emma the truth. In came Emma almost immediately, and Lucy had only time to say, "It was not true!" when Mrs. Grant followed Emma into the room. She greeted all the children cordially, and the tea being now brought in, they all sat round the well-spread table. All the young ladies were very shy at first. They had never

been on familiar terms with Mrs. Grant, and felt as if that drawing-room was more awful than any drawing-room they had ever seen. Ada was the first to recover her self-possession, and she handed cake and bread-and-butter, and did the honours to Florence, as being still less accustomed to the privilege of drinking tea there; for Ada had been invited twice during the last half-year. Mrs. Grant talked very pleasantly, and told the children some amusing stories of a tour she had made in Ireland during the holidays. Lucy was much interested, though Mrs. Grant had not been in the part of Ireland Lucy had known, but only in the north and west. She told them that great numbers of the people in the north of Ireland are not Roman Catholics but Presbyterians, and further explained how this was owing to the emigration from Scotland that took place many years ago, when a large portion of the province of Ulster was settled by Scotch families, one of the most distinguished of which was headed by a certain Claude Hamilton, whose descendants hold large estates there to this day, and perpetuate in their family the Christian name of their ancestor

as well as his surname. Then the celebrated siege of Derry was spoken of, and after tea the little girls took out their work, and Mrs. Grant read to them a most interesting account of that memorable defence, and of the inexpressible eagerness with which the tardy relief was at last welcomed.

"When they saw the ships really coming in," said Emma, "what must they have felt!"

She spoke almost breathlessly. Lucy, scarcely less affected, glanced at her and thought, "Emma *is* pretty, after all."

"How shocking," said Ada, when Mrs. Grant laid down her book; "war must be so dreadful."

"Yes, Ada; and think what has been even in our time; the ladies in Lucknow! you and I might have been there," said Florence.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Grant, "and even had you escaped with life, you might have suffered through all the remainder of that life from cruel treatment and privations. I know a little girl who was there during the whole of the siege. She was a baby at the time. She became very ill, and the want of proper comforts, medicine, and food, which her poor mother could not possibly procure,

caused the poor little child an injury from which she will never recover. You see, Ada, we ought to be really and truly thankful that we are allowed to live untouched by these horrors of war. Florence may well say that you and she might have been there. Two ladies among the many who died in that sad time were brought up in this house, and have sat where you are sitting now." Mrs. Grant looked very sad as she said this, and did not speak again for some little time. Then she looked up with a cheerful countenance and said, "What is it, Lucy, that you said was not true?"

Lucy coloured and hesitated.

"Don't be afraid to tell me; it was something of importance either to you or to Emma, I fancy."

Lucy then told the story, though rather unwillingly. Mrs. Grant said it was wrong of Lydia to convey so false an impression, but promised not to punish her unless Miss Forrester mentioned the affair. The doll's name was made a subject of much merriment. Mrs. Grant at first pretended to be shocked at so old a girl as Florence having a doll; but then she said it was a good plan, if

Florence made its clothes neatly, which Mrs. Grant wished to ascertain; and she finally declared she must be introduced to Cecilia Leonora Isabella Octavia de Cire, and Mrs. Grant, to whom Florence had confided the names in a whisper, pronounced them all with emphasis and deliberation. So the doll was sent for. Mrs. Grant declared its frock to be very neatly made, and was told it was Lucy's work. Florence did not think she could do it quite so well. Mrs. Grant complimented Lucy, and asked Florence if she had the material to make another. Florence said she had.

"Then," said Mrs. Grant, "you shall all four come to tea with me again, if all is well, this day three weeks, and the doll must come, too, in a new frock made by Florence herself."

The children were full of smiles and thanks, and when the bell soon after rang for prayers they could scarcely believe it was time, and rose with reluctance when Mrs. Grant had hastily finished a story of a poor sick woman with a real baby, for whom she said she would allow them to make some clothes. The story of the poor woman had made them grave again, but they were none the less happy,

and, as Lucy ran into the school-room to fetch her Bible, she passed Miss Thornton and whispered "I *have* had a pleasant evening."

Lydia *was* punished, for Miss Forrester, who had further investigated the story, by questioning Agnes Lloyd, the other little girl who had been of the doll party, told Mrs. Grant of it in the evening, after the young ladies were gone to bed. It was perfectly clear that Lydia had told a direct falsehood in asserting that any rudeness had been intended by Florence or Ada in what they did; and untruthfulness was too great an offence to be overlooked, even had it not been joined, as it was in Lydia's case, with an evident desire to make mischief among her companions.

Accordingly on Monday morning, after prayers, as soon as the servants had left the room, Mrs. Grant said, "I am sorry to learn from Miss Forrester that a young lady in this school was guilty on Saturday afternoon of bringing a false accusation against two of her companions. I hope this young lady's conscience may have smitten her when she heard the ninth commandment read in church yesterday; but I fear that one who can not only tell an untruth, but also try to make

mischief between friends, must have a conscience that is not easily touched. Miss Lydia Fane, stand up." Trembling and tearful, the culprit rose from her seat. "You are not a fit companion for any of these young ladies till you have suffered the punishment of your very great fault, and begged pardon of those against whom you have offended. You will therefore breakfast and dine alone in the small dining-room, and walk alone when you go out to-day. Young ladies, you may go."

Much surprise was created by this discovery of Lydia's misconduct. Few of her school-fellows, besides those immediately concerned, were aware of it, and many asked for explanations from Florence and Ada when their share in the business became known. Florence did not like to talk of it, being exceedingly sorry that anything that passed in their playhours, and to which she was a party, should have brought disastrous consequences to Lydia; but Ada told the whole story with the assistance of Judith Byng. Lydia well knew to whom she was indebted for the public disapprobation with which she was met on her return to society, after her day of exile. She begged pardon of Florence, whom

she had accused, and of Emma de Vere, whom she had tried to offend, but omitted all notice of Ada, who, however, did not seem to observe the omission.

"Have you asked pardon of your companions?" said Miss Thornton, before admitting her to the tea-table that evening.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Lydia, and no more was said, especially as Emma and Florence both answered eagerly at the same time—"Oh yes, ma'am, she has."

Lydia therefore in her heart forgave Florence, but did not feel cordially towards Ada. Some time after this, it happened that Lydia and Ada were seated side by side, very busy writing letters, for it was the day on which all the pupils had time allowed them to write home. Ada had taken out of her desk a letter from her mother which she was proceeding to answer. Judith Byng was seated near. By-and-by, somebody came and handed round newly arrived letters to some fortunate recipients: all eyes were fixed on the bearer of the important packet.

"Is there one for me?" cried Lydia.

"No; here's one for you, Judith," and the messenger delivered the letter and passed on.

"You can't read writing, can you, Judith?" said Ada.

"Yes, I tan;" and she opened her letter and began to look earnestly at the contents of the first page.

"I don't believe she can make out a word," said Lydia, maliciously.

"I tan," said Judith; "I know the wyting, and I tan wead wyting I don't know. I tan wead that," looking at the envelope on Ada's desk.

"Read it, then," said Ada. Judith read: "The Honowable Ada Fithurth."

"Oh, Judith," said Lydia, "why did you read it."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because Ada did it only that we might all hear you read that 'honourable' she is so fond of."

"Becauthe I tant thay the r's?" said Judith, firing up.

"Oh, no, because she thinks it grand."

"Nonsense!" said Ada, who had sat looking in utter disdain at Lydia during the colloquy.

"Ah, you may say nonsense, but anybody can see how stuck-up and absurd you are about it."

"I can't help my name," said Ada, proudly; "I'm sorry it offends you."

"It does not offend me," said Lydia, "but I'm sorry you are so silly as to be proud of it; there are other old families in the world besides yours, and everybody is not descended from a murderer. I'm sure I hope your papa *is* 'right honourable,' though it's vulgar to put that on a letter, but, at any rate, his ancestor was not."

"What do you mean about a murderer? None of papa's ancestors were murderers!" said Ada, fiercely, hazarding a bold assertion in her filial zeal.

"Oh, I thought as you were of such an old family," said Lydia with a provoking manner, "that you might be descended from the Fitzurse who helped to murder Thomas à Becket. I could easily fancy a relation of yours doing so."

Ada was furious, and catching up a pen-wiper she threw it in Lydia's face. Miss Smith saw the action.

"Very well, Miss Ada Fitzurse, that is the way young ladies of rank behave now-a-days, is it? That piece of ladylike behaviour shall be reported to Mrs. Grant, I

can assure you. Miss Lydia Fane, there's always sure to be mischief where you are; just come to this end of the table, if you please, and if I see any more of this kind of thing, you both walk alone in the garden by-and-by."

Clementina Fane, who was writing at another table, now looked up, and calling Lydia, inquired what had gone wrong. Lydia laughingly explained. Clementina laughed too; but said Lydia was very silly to be always getting into scrapes.

"It is Ada this time, not I."

"But Miss Smith is sure to tell of you too; and there's Helen Ross always begging me to persuade you to let Ada alone—you make her so idle and naughty, she says."

"Idle and naughty! what stuff. Ada is idle enough without me, and so you may tell Helen next time."

So saying, Lydia left her sister and returned to finish her letter. Clementina Fane, however, knew that Mrs. Grant would be extremely vexed should this quarrel reach her ears, so she resolved to prevent that, if possible. She waited till Helen Ross came into the room, and then privately told

her what had passed. Helen was very sorry Ada had so far forgotten herself, but even Clementina allowed that Lydia had probably been very provoking, and both agreed to beg Miss Smith not to mention the circumstance to Mrs. Grant. Miss Smith was not easily propitiated, and even Miss Ross found it rather difficult not to show a little annoyance when she said, "If the elder young ladies are to come and interfere in this way, all the discipline of the school will be at an end." But, at length, on Helen's promising to speak seriously to Ada, Miss Smith granted the request made to her; so this silly affair had, happily, no further consequences. Helen did speak to Ada very seriously, and found she was really sorry; moreover, Ada ingenuously confessed that she should not have minded so much, only Lydia always would say it was nonsense to have her letters directed "The Honourable," and she was sure if it was, her mamma would not do it. But it did look pretty, and she did like it, that was true. Helen explained that it was not wise or ladylike in Ada to boast of such a distinction, which was, in truth, no credit to her, but which

she by her conduct and character should try to deserve; and it was probably only Ada's childish pride which caused Lydia to object to it. Clementina, however, had promised to show Lydia how foolish her conduct had been, and, therefore, it was to be hoped anything so silly would never happen again.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DAY OF MISFORTUNES.

With all Lucy's good resolutions it was yet not to be supposed that she should never transgress, and she accordingly began again to manifest some of her old disposition to carelessness and negligence. One evening after tea, when Miss Thornton asked her usual question, "Has everybody practised to-day?" Lucy was obliged to confess that she had not.

"Then go now," said Miss Thornton; "you can have the piano in the great parlour."

"But my lessons for to-morrow!" said Lucy; "how can I learn them if I practise after tea?"

"I can't help that, my dear; you should have managed better."

And Miss Thornton appeared to consider the subject concluded. Lucy spent half an hour at the pianoforte, heartily wishing she had not spent another half-hour earlier in the day in reading a story-book. Her practising finished (for she had practised one hour in the morning, but an hour and a half was the time prescribed), she returned to the school-room. It was now more than half-past seven, so she had scarcely half an hour left in which to prepare her lessons by heart. She placed herself at the table in a very desponding mood, and thought more about the impossibility of learning her lessons in time than she did about the lessons themselves. Before one was perfect, the half-hour struck, and the children took up their books and went to say their lessons.

"Lady Lucy, my dear, why don't you go," said Miss Thornton.

"I do not know my lessons," said Lucy, looking up with tears in her eyes. Alice Young now came back, saying:

"Miss de Vere is waiting for you, Lucy."

Lucy jumped up, taking only the book she had in her hand, and went to Miss de Vere.

"What, only one book, Lucy?"

"Oh, Miss de Vere," said Lucy, almost crying, "I am so sorry, but I do not know my lessons; will you excuse me to-night?"

"But how is it that you do not know them?"

"I had to practise. May I go back and learn them now?"

"Yes; and pray be very attentive, or you will not know them to-morrow."

Lucy went back and really did her utmost, but the prayer-bell rang while her class lesson was not half learned, and to add to her trouble, she knew she would have to say it to Miss Smith. As to her French grammar, she had not opened it, but Mademoiselle was very good-natured and would perhaps let her off. She could not forget her anxiety about the unfortunate class-lesson: it was geography. Miss Smith was particular about all the rivers being traced on the map, and Lucy had not found one. Her attention during prayers was absorbed by these thoughts, and as all the pupils were prohibited from carrying books up to their bed-rooms, the Bible only excepted, she could not help herself that night. The next morning, when she entered

the school-room, she sought her books at once, but before she could open the Atlas, the bell rang and Mrs. Grant came down-stairs; Lucy was soon in her place, Bible in hand. Mrs. Grant read a certain portion and gave a few explanations, every now and then asking a question, according to her frequent custom.

"Lady Lucy, what was that prophecy I mentioned just now?"

The question came quite suddenly, and Lucy started. She was just tracing in her mind the course of a river, and had not heard a word Mrs. Grant said. She looked up, but remained silent.

"Adela Egerton, what was the prophecy I referred to just now?"

"Balaam's prophecy, 'I shall see him, but not now,'" said a little girl six years old.

"Yes, those were the words I read out to you, and those who were listening heard them. This one quarter of an hour in the day, in which I teach you, is of more importance than all the hours in which you are studying the books and the accomplishments that educate you for this life. It is not because *I* am your teacher, but because, if my prayers are heard, God will be your

teacher too. Neither is it because other study is not valuable, for it is good and valuable, and necessary to enable you to fill properly the station in which God has placed you; but the subjects on which I try to instruct you in this place, and at this hour, are the most valuable, the most holy, the most necessary, for they help you in your life here, they guide you to the life hereafter; and if you follow the instruction you here receive, you will discover and realize by your own experience the truth, that 'Godliness is profitable both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.'"

A whole morning's instruction was lost to Lucy by an hour's idleness the day before. A day begun badly seldom goes on well. Miss Smith, for some unexplained reason, took her class this morning half an hour earlier than usual. The consequence was, that when Lucy, with tearful eyes and a sorrowful heart, came away from the class where she had been turned with a poetry lesson by Miss Forrester, she was obliged to go straight to her seat at Miss Smith's desk, without any time to look out her unhappy rivers. There were eleven girls in the class,

and they sat on a form opposite to Miss Smith's chair. Lucy had for some time been third in this class. Mary and Fanny Hume were above her, but they were older and would soon be removed to Miss Forrester's class, so then Lucy hoped to take and to keep her seat at the top. The lesson began. Mary and Fanny did well, and the first question that came to Lucy was one she could answer easily. By-and-by, however, Miss Smith had many questions to ask about the rivers, and here, in spite of guessing and even catching at the half-breathed hints of a good-natured neighbour, Lucy was soon utterly at fault.

"Lady Lucy, you don't know your class lesson at all. Come and sit down here at the bottom, and you'll stay and learn it when the others have done. Georgy Harrington you'll lose your place, too, another time if I see you prompting."

Poor Lucy was in despair. The idea of being detained to learn that horrible lesson; it would keep her back all day! and there was Mademoiselle to propitiate, and the German master coming; and she would have no time to practise, and must again do it

after tea, and set the next day all wrong too. Miss Smith was as good as her word. When her class had finished she kept Lucy seated there for twenty-five minutes, at the end of which time the lesson was said very creditably. Lucy then hastened into the other room to find Mademoiselle. She was occupied with a younger class and said—

"Ah, Ladie Lucy, vous êtes trop tard, mais revenez à une heure et demie, je vous attendrai." Away went Lucy again. She took out her German exercise, which was not quite finished (the story-book had interrupted it), but a quarter of an hour of real hard work made it ready for Herr Lehrer's inspection; then hoping to get that dreadful practising off her mind, she went and asked Miss Thornton if she could have a piano-forte.

"I am sorry, but they are all engaged just now; I had the great parlour one ten minutes ago, but you can have it at half-past twelve."

"Mr. Lehrer comes at half-past twelve."

"Well, half-past one, he will be gone then."

"I am to go to Mademoiselle at half-past one."

"You had better ask Mademoiselle to take you sooner, but you must not interrupt me any more now."

Lucy looked at the clock; it was now past twelve. She went again into the other room. Mademoiselle's little class had finished, and she met them coming away, but Emma de Vere had seated herself by Mademoiselle, and was beginning to read.

"Oh, Emma! may I speak?" said Lucy, looking at Mademoiselle.

"Oui; mais vite, vite."

"Then would you let me come now, Emma? Could you come at half-past one instead, or I shall never have time to practise again to-day?"

Emma at once assented, if Mademoiselle had no objection.

"Mais venez toutes les deux." And as they were both good readers, Mademoiselle departed from her usual custom of hearing her special pupils alone and separately; and, moreover, Lucy read so well, and was so attentive, that Mademoiselle excused the lesson of grammar when humbly requested to do so. Emma and Lucy then proceeded to the German master's class, but on the

way Lucy did not forget to beg Miss Thornton to keep the great parlour piano for her at half-past one. The German lesson went off well; Lucy's exercise was commended, and with her portfolio under her arm, she proceeded towards the great parlour. Her day was beginning to look a little brighter, but, alas! there would still be a whole hour to make up at the pianoforte, and after dinner she would have to go out walking, and that took up so much time. But suddenly a welcome sound met her ear. Rain! Oh, what a comfort; if the day were overcast out of doors, Lucy's day indoors would be all the brighter. Might it only continue! Harder and harder the rain poured down, higher and higher rose Lucy's spirits, and better and better did she study her piece of music.

When the dinner-bell rang the rain was still falling heavily, and when dinner was over Miss Forrester said, "There will be no going out this afternoon, young ladies. You will all walk up and down the school-rooms for half-an-hour, and then you may amuse yourselves as you please. The younger children must not be noisy." Lucy now had a considerable part of the afternoon at her own

disposal, and got over her practising successfully before five o'clock. Then she had nearly an hour for writing her exercise before the table was cleared for tea; but when she went to get out her French Grammar, the first thing that met her eye was the charming story-book of yesterday. She could not resist the longing to open it, and read a very little; about a page, certainly not more than a page she meant to allow herself, but the book was very interesting, and Lucy had already turned over three pages, when Miss de Vere happened to pass close to her.

"Well, Lucy, you are beforehand with your lessons to-day, I hope."

Lucy closed the book with a start, and quickly replaced it on the shelf. "Oh, Miss de Vere, I am so sorry!—so glad, I mean, that you spoke. I wish I had not opened that book; but I will be busy now."

Miss de Vere noticed the title of the book, and smiled. "Lucy," she said, "do not think I mistrust you; but would it be a help to you if I were to take that book and keep it in my cupboard till Saturday afternoon?"

"Oh, yes; will you? Thank you; then I shall not have the temptation."

So Miss de Vere took the book away, and Lucy had just time to finish her exercise.

"A piano for you, Lady Lucy?" said Miss Thornton, when tea was over.

"No, thank you, ma'am," said Lucy, with a happy smile. She applied herself at once to her books; the turned lesson for Miss Forrester still remained; it was to be said with the new one next morning. She exerted herself, however, and said her lessons well. Miss de Vere was pleased, and Miss Forrester said, "I hoped the turned lesson this morning was for the first and last time this half year." Lucy resolved that it should prove so. Had she not told her Aunt Lilla she meant to work hard?

CHAPTER XV.

ADA IN TROUBLE.

THE tea-party to which Mrs. Grant had invited the doll in its new frock took place on the day appointed. Florence had made the frock very nicely, and Cecilia de Cire

looked very well in it. Miss Ross, Miss Fane, Miss Taylor, and Miss de Vere were in the drawing-room that evening as well as Florence, Lucy, Emma, and Ada. Mrs. Grant's daughter, of whom the elder young ladies were very fond, had lately come home, and they were invited specially to meet her. Miss Grant was many years older than Miss Ross, being past thirty, but Miss Ross had been seven years at school, and her friendship with Miss Grant was well-founded and warm. Now Miss Grant had returned (she had been to France for her health during the past winter), Miss Forrester's class was divided, and some other changes took place, so Lucy found herself transferred from Miss Smith to Miss Grant, whose lessons in geography were not so formidable. Other pupils, however, were not so fortunate as to escape from Miss Smith's jurisdiction. About three weeks after Miss Grant's return, when Lucy and Florence were looking over their Bible lesson one morning before prayers, they were surprised at not being joined by Ada Fitzurse, who, like Florence, belonged as school-child to Miss Ross. All the other occupants of Miss Smith's bed-

room appeared in due time, but still no Ada; and while Lucy and Florence were anxiously watching the door and fearing Ada would be late, they heard Anna Harvey, a half-boarder, whose duty it was to take down the names of those who were unpunctual, say to Miss Ross, "I fear I must put down Ada Fitzurse, unless you can give a reason for her being late."

"I can give none," said Miss Ross; "but I am very sorry for it. Wait as long as you can."

Anna did wait, but the bell rang; the name was written down, and the piece of paper placed on Mrs. Grant's table, when Ada at last appeared. She looked miserable. Her hair all rough, hanging low on one side, and caught up too high on the other, tears streaming down her cheeks, and her eyes red, as if she had been crying for an hour. Miss Ross saw and hastened to meet her.

"My dear Ada, what is the matter?"

"Oh, Miss Ross," sobbed Ada, "it is not my fault, indeed it is not; and I am late, and I shall be put down, and Mrs. Grant will be so angry!"

"But try to stop crying, dear, and tell me all about it," said Miss Ross, kindly, "and we will see what can be done."

"Why," began Ada, "you know when I'm at home I never do my hair myself, and when I came to school, Anna Harvey always did it at first; and when she left our room Grace Evans did it, and sometimes Miss Smith herself; but this morning, while Grace was dressing Adela Egerton, I was waiting for her, and Miss Smith said it was nonsense to wait, I was to do it myself, so I tried; and when Grace had put on Adela's frock, she came to help me, but Miss Smith said, 'No,' I was to do it myself, because I looked cross. I could not manage it, for it is very long; but indeed I did try, Miss Ross; and at last I fastened it up, and then Miss Smith said it was shamefully untidy, and pulled it all down again, and then I knew I should be late"—and the sobs and tears burst out afresh.

"But had Miss Smith ever said before that she wished you to do your own hair?"

"Never, Miss Ross, I assure you; she never said a word about it. You can ask Grace Evans."

"Now Ada dear, tell me honestly, were you rude or impertinent to Miss Smith this morning?"

"No, Miss Ross, I was not."

"You did not answer impatiently when she told Grace Evans not to help you."

"I did not say anything. I will tell you why. If I had spoken I should have cried, and I did not want to cry."

"Well, I am glad you did not speak. Wipe your eyes and keep quiet now. Miss Grant is come down, I see, but Mrs. Grant is not down yet."

Miss Ross went into the next room, where Miss Grant was standing near the window, surrounded by several of the elder girls. Just then Helen caught sight of Grace Evans; she hastened towards her, and at once asked about Ada's sad tale. Grace said it was perfectly true, and she could not conceive what had led Miss Smith to act as she had done. She added, that Ada had not been at all rude or impertinent to Miss Smith. Helen Ross then made her way through the little crowd of girls which had gathered round Miss Grant.

"May I say one word to you, ma'am?" said Helen.

"Certainly, dear; you look anxious, what is it?"

As shortly and quickly as she could, Helen told her story, ending with an account of poor little Ada's great distress at having her name put down as "late."

"Never mind, my dear," said Miss Grant.

She had placed her hand on Helen's arm, and walked once up and down the room while listening to her tale; they now passed close to Mrs. Grant's table, and as she spoke, Miss Grant took up the piece of paper on which Ada's name was written, tore it in two, and threw it into the fireplace. Helen thanked her warmly, and went back to tell Ada, but just then Mrs. Grant entered the room, and everybody having to take their places, Helen could only glance at Ada, and then at the table where the piece of paper was not; and Ada saw, and was comforted. But many of the bystanders had heard a part of Helen's story, and all these saw the action that followed it. Miss Smith was no favourite, and Helen's spirited appeal, and Miss Grant's summary kindness, caused universal satisfaction. Lucy's delight at what she somewhat disrespectfully termed

"the defeat of her old enemy" was unbounded; though knowing the expression of her enthusiasm would not be approved by either Miss Ross or Miss de Vere, she contented herself with sharing it between Ada and Florence, who both admired and respected Miss Ross as if this circumstance had made her a heroine. What Miss Smith felt on the subject was never known, but Miss Ross had perhaps her private opinions on the subject of Miss Smith's interview with Mrs. Grant that afternoon, of which Miss Ross accidentally happened to become aware.

Florence had now been at school nearly three months, and though there were little ups and downs in the daily life there, as in every other variety of daily life, she had come to the conclusion that it was, on the whole, a satisfactory sort of life. Each person knew well what she was required to do, and knew also, in most cases, how she was to do it. Neglect brought punishment, or at any rate trouble, as we have seen in Lucy's case; but industry brought its own rewards—success and satisfaction. There were no prizes given at Mrs. Grant's school, nor was emulation the stimulus offered to

perseverance. Work was regarded as duty, and those who religiously and conscientiously performed the duties allotted to them, were respected and acknowledged as good and honest citizens of the little community. Those who omitted their duties and transgressed the rules of the establishment, appeared in the light of disturbers of the public peace, and the voice of public opinion deterred them from a frequent repetition of their fault, more perhaps than any punishment would have done. The rules were strict, but they were not tyrannically enforced; and if a slight remission of their strictness were fairly asked, it was almost sure to be graciously conceded. Thus it was a rule that no talking should be allowed in the bedrooms; but when Lucy, just as she was getting into bed, remembered that she had not given a message with which Miss Grant had entrusted her for Florence, she asked Miss Thornton to allow her to speak to Florence, and received immediate permission to do so. Curiously enough, the very next morning Mrs. Grant asked, as she not unfrequently did, "Who spoke in their rooms last night?"

Lucy instantly rose.

"Lady Lucy! and what had you to say, my dear?"

Lucy, looking towards Miss Grant, acknowledged her forgetfulness of that lady's message, and Mrs. Grant said, "Well, I will forgive you for speaking, if Miss Grant forgives you for forgetting." Miss Grant smiled, and so did Lucy, as she resumed her seat.

There was another rule which had been a great trouble to Lucy at first, and this was the speaking French constantly; every evening each young lady was asked if she had spoken English in the day, and during Lucy's first half year, all Eleanor's persuasions and entreaties failed to induce Lucy to take pains to learn to talk French. But this time a secret hope of teaching Gertrude, added to a really increasing sense of the sacred duty of obedience, helped Lucy to overcome her indolence and habit of forgetting, and the "Oui, madame," which used to place a mark against her name almost every day, was now seldom heard. Indeed, so conscientious did she become, that Miss Forrester was agreeably surprised one day by a request from Lucy to be allowed to

speak English for a few minutes, as little Adela Egerton could not understand in French something that Lucy wished to explain for her assistance. "Certainly, dear," said Miss Forrester; "say it all to her in English; I know you will be honest about it, because you came to ask me."

Lucy little guessed the use to which her powers of French conversation were shortly to be put. She made the lesson plain to little Adela, a child to whom she had taken a fancy, from a fancied likeness to Gertrude. She received the little girl's thanks, and remonstrated with her for expressing them in English, and she was just returning to her own busy occupations when Miss Grant came into the room rather quickly, saying: "Where is Lady Lucy? Oh, there you are, my dear. Put down your pen and come with me; Mrs. Grant wants to speak to you."

CHAPTER XVI.

A SUMMONS.

In order to explain the scene that awaited Lucy in Mrs. Grant's drawing-room, we must for a short time return to Penshadow Cottage, and see what had happened there during Lucy's absence. Captain Elton had returned to his home; he had three weeks' leave previously to joining the fleet in the Mediterranean, and was quite sorry that Lucy was gone, for she had already been at school many weeks when her uncle arrived at Penshadow. About a fortnight after his arrival he received the following letter from one of his nieces:

"My dear Uncle Alfred,—I think you will be surprised to hear from me, as I have never written to you before; but now I am so unhappy about papa, that I don't know what to do. Clara does not see it, but I do think he is very ill, and he keeps on talking about little Lucy and says he shall never see her again, but he does not say this when Clara is by. He never talked so before, and he looks very thin and has a bad cough.

Clara is out so much that she does not see it as I do, but I do so wish you could see him; only don't say I asked you to come. Or do you think little Lucy could come? Clara would be furious if she knew I had asked for her, but I think papa would so like to see her; it would be a change for him now he never leaves his room—a child is so different from us. If you can manage to bring this about, Uncle Alfred, I think you will, for you used to be so kind to us. You need not answer this if you can do what I have asked, for I don't want Clara to know I have written.

"Your affectionate niece,

"AMELIA ELTON.

"P.S.—Papa has just sent for me and desired me to write and beg you to come; he is very ill and hopes you will come as quickly as you can. I send this to Cornwall, but I shall also send a note to your Club in London, in case that should find you sooner."

Fortunately this letter did, as we have seen, find Captain Elton at Penshadow. Immediately on the receipt of it, he prepared to leave home for his journey to Paris. Arrived in London, he sent a telegraphic message to Mrs. Grant in these words: "Lady Lucy

Elton to be ready to start for Paris immediately. Must meet Captain Elton at R. Station at 5.3 this afternoon." It was the receipt of this important message that caused Mrs. Grant to summon Lucy immediately, as we have seen.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Grant, taking Lucy's hand very kindly, "I fear there is bad news for you, but there is good with it, for your uncle is going to take you to Paris immediately; and I know, whatever the sorrow may be, you will wish to be with your dear father."

"Paris! oh, Mrs. Grant, papa is ill! I know it, he said so in his last letter; and has he sent for me? How soon can I go?"

"This is all I know, dear," said Mrs. Grant, giving Lucy the paper on which the message was written.

"Directly," said Lucy, when she had read it; "cannot I start directly, Mrs. Grant?"

"You shall, dear. Miss Grant has given orders about your things, and will go with you to the station, and see you safe in your uncle's charge. The carriage is ordered. Come, now, and put on your bonnet."

Poor Lucy was trembling all over. In her bedroom she found Miss Thornton, who had

packed up a few things for her, and now came forward and helped her to put on her cloak and bonnet, without asking a question or making a remark; only when Lucy, with a faltering voice, tried to thank her, she said, "God be with you, dear, and give you good speed!"

Mrs. Grant kissed the poor child and said she hoped her fears were unfounded, but Lucy shook her head. Mrs. Grant whispered, "He doeth all things well."

The carriage now appeared, and Lucy was soon on her way to the station, accompanied by Miss Grant. It was a distance of five miles that they had to drive, and as it was past four o'clock when Mrs. Grant received the telegram, the time was very limited, though Lucy had left the house a quarter of an hour after the message arrived. Indeed, the whole thing had been accomplished so quickly, that the poor child felt quite bewildered; when sitting still in the carriage she was once more able to collect her thoughts. She leaned back for some minutes in perfect silence. The coachman, who was aware of the importance of the hour, drove as quickly as he could; but, alas! there was a long hill

to be surmounted, and though he urged the horses so that they trotted bravely up the first part, he was at length obliged to let them walk. The slow pace roused Lucy. She started up, and took out her watch. "Oh! Miss Grant, we shall never be in time; he is letting the horses walk. Can't you tell him?"

"My dear, I did tell him, and he promised to drive you to the station in time if it were possible; I think the horses will go faster afterwards for walking up the hill."

"But then they might walk faster. Oh! may I ask him? do let me."

Miss Grant knew it would be a comfort to Lucy, so she said "yes."

Instantly Lucy let down the front window. "Coachman, do you know I want to be in time so *very* much, and I have to be at the station at five. Could you, please, drive a little faster?"

"My Lady, I'll drive you there in time if it's in the power of man to do it. I dare say it do seem aggravating to you to see the horses walking, but if you'll trust me, my Lady, I'll manage so that they do the other three miles all the quicker; they can't trot

up this hill. I wouldn't disappoint you for the world; and if we're not in time, I shall be as sorry as you will almost."

Lucy shut the window, and sank back. "He is very good-natured, but I don't think he quite knows how fast I want to go."

Miss Grant told her she could trust his kind-heartedness and desire to oblige; and in another ten minutes they gained the top of the hill. Then the coachman redeemed his promise, and on went the horses as if they, too, knew the importance of speed: a mile of level ground was soon passed, and then down hill they sped at a pace almost alarming. At any other time Lucy would have been frightened, but now the dread of being late excluded all other fear. Miss Grant still felt anxious, though she was too kind to show it, and she remembered a difficulty that Lucy had happily forgotten. A branch railway crossed the road at a short distance from the railway station. If the Dover express were due or had arrived at the station, the carriage would not be allowed to pass, as an up-train would then also be due within a few minutes at that crossing. That the coachman was well aware of this

impediment, Miss Grant knew, as it had once before nearly made her lose a train. Lucy was now very hopeful, and began to withdraw her attention from the pace of the horses to other subjects of interest

"Miss Grant, you don't think Uncle Alfred would have sent for me like this, unless it was for something very important, do you?"

"No, dear, I should think not; and yet it might not be anything sad. It is just possible that Captain Elton may have been going to Paris, and that Lord O'Kerry may have written, at the last moment, begging him to bring you. Then, not having time to write to you, Captain Elton was very likely to telegraph, I should think."

"It might be that," said Lucy, pondering. "I never thought of that. What shall I do if we are late?" said she again.

"You must go by the next train."

"But alone! I could not go alone."

"No, my dear, I never meant that; I should go with you."

"Do you mean it, really?" said Lucy.

"Most really and most certainly, dear Lucy; but I heartily hope we may be in time."

"You think it *is* very important, then."

"I think one never knows the difference one hour may make, and you see you have to catch the steamer at Dover or Folkestone."

"Oh, yes; and if it was gone! I hope we shall be in time; he is driving very fast."

"Very," said Miss Grant, who, furtively looking at her watch while Lucy's head was turned the other way, guessed what had made the coachman suddenly whip his horses into a gallop as they came in sight of the crossing. The Dover train *was* due, and the gates were shut in their faces. The carriage stopped.

"This is not the station," cried Lucy.

"No, dear; sit still; this is a crossing, and we must wait till the other train has passed."

"Wait! how long? Oh, we can't wait."

"You *must* wait, Miss," said the policeman; for Lucy had put down the window, and spoke loudly in her excitement.

"Oh! but what train is that?" cried Lucy, seeing white smoke in the distance; "is that the one we are to wait for?"

"That's the down train to Dover; you can cross when that's passed; but there's another got to pass first."

"The down train to Dover," exclaimed

Lucy, the tears springing to her eyes; "but it is the train I am going by. I must get to the station."

"Can't now, Miss. I daren't let anything pass here after them two trains be due."

Lucy looked at the man for a moment in speechless dismay, and then fell back in the carriage, and covered her face with her hands. Miss Grant beckoned the man round to the other side of the carriage, and inquired with much anxiety if there were no possibility of getting across. The policeman shook his head.

"I can't do it, ma'am, indeed I can't; I daren't; it's as much as my place is worth. I would if I could, ma'am, without a word, for the sorrow I see in the young lady's eyes. I'm afraid," said he, lowering his voice, "it's along of that telegraph as went up to-day."

"It is, indeed! do what you can."

The man touched his hat, and passing round to the other side of the carriage, said, loud enough for Lucy to hear: "I say, coachman, so soon as ever you see the up-train coming, you be ready to whip across as sharp as you can, and I'll have the gates open before the last truck has passed 'em. You see, if it wasn't

for this 'ere curve, I'd risk my place and let you pass now, but one can't see a quarter of a mile a-head, and it aint hardly safe for a bird to fly across these ten minutes."

Indeed it was not; he had scarcely ceased speaking when the whistle of the train was heard, and in another moment the train itself appeared. Lucy thought it the longest she had ever seen. Carriage after carriage passed those inexorable white gates; at last came a horsebox, then a truck, now another, and—the white gates were swung open, and the carriage passed. They drove on hastily, the station gate was soon reached; passed those great coal sheds, passed the up-platform. A sound of hissing, a shrill whistle—and the down-train for Dover was off!

"Gone," said a porter to the coachman, as the carriage stopped.

Miss Grant looked round; Lucy had fainted. When Lucy recovered her consciousness she was lying on a sofa in the ladies' waiting-room. Miss Grant was bathing her forehead with eau-de-Cologne and water. Lucy sat up, looked round for a moment, as if bewildered, for her head felt giddy, and she scarcely knew where she was; then she fell

back on the sofa and cried bitterly. Miss Grant busied herself with something at the table, and in a minute or two she brought Lucy a glass of sherry, which she begged her to drink. Lucy at first only shook her head, and went on crying.

"Lucy," said Miss Grant, "I insist on being obeyed; drink this immediately."

In utter astonishment at Miss Grant's changed tone, Lucy took the glass, and emptied it in silence, and then, strange to say, she did not feel inclined to cry any more. Miss Grant took the glass from her, and replaced it on the table. Then she seated herself by the fire, and said, "Our train starts at seven, so we have two hours nearly to wait. I have telegraphed to your uncle at Folkestone, and as he will arrive there before we leave R——, he will tell us to do."

"Oh, Miss Grant, how kind you are. And you will really go with me?"

"Yes, dear; there is no difficulty about that."

"But will not Mrs. Grant be frightened?"

"No; I shall send back word by the coachman."

"What time shall we get to Dover?"

"We will go to Folkestone, I think, and we ought to arrive there soon after nine. We shall have some tea here before we start."

Two hours to wait; it was dull work, but Lucy had a book, and Miss Grant let her choose another for the journey, at the book-stall on the platform, and at half-past six came a telegraphic message from Folkestone. "Captain Elton to Lady Lucy Elton: I must sail to-night. You can't be in time. Sleep at Ship Hotel, Dover; a letter there for you."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN TIME.

When Miss Grant and Lucy arrived at the Ship Hotel at Dover, they found the promised letter, in which Captain Elton told Lucy that he would have waited to cross the water with her the next morning, had not another message reached him at Dover urging him to make all possible despatch, as Lord O'Kerry was very ill, and wished to see him on important business. Captain Elton added, that he trusted to the kindness of the lady who had accompanied Lucy so far, to

arrange for the safety of her further journey, and that immediately on his arrival at Paris he would send off a trustworthy person to meet her at Calais. Miss Grant at once decided to accompany Lucy the next morning as far as Calais, though Lucy assured her she would feel perfectly safe in the charge of the captain of the steamer. Captain Elton had told Lucy to go to a hotel which he named, and wait there till her escort should arrive; and Miss Grant would not hear of her being alone all that time. Lucy was scarcely surprised to hear of her father's severe illness. She had been making up her mind for bad news of him all the time she was travelling, and now her only dread was, lest she should not be in time to see him. She felt thankful that her uncle had gone on, his presence would be a comfort to her father, and perhaps he would ask the boon she was longing to ask for herself.

On the following morning early the steamboat started. Lucy went on board much refreshed by her night's rest, and the weather being fine and calm, the short transit was easily accomplished. At the Calais Hotel another telegram was brought to her: "No

immediate danger. Marsh will be with you by three o'clock." The first words were an inexpressible relief to Lucy. They brought a hope, almost a promise, that she might still be in time. Miss Grant was very thankful for the intimation contained in the last part of the message, when she learned that Mrs. Marsh was Lord O'Kerry's housekeeper, and had lived in the family ever since Lucy could remember. They took a little walk about Calais to dispel the weariness of waiting three hours at a hotel; and at three o'clock precisely Mrs. Marsh arrived. She gave Lucy a rather more cheerful account of her father than Miss Grant had expected to hear, but told that lady privately that she thought it best to cheer up the poor child a little, "to give her spirit for the journey, but that the doctors"—and here Mrs. Marsh shook her head and looked ominous. Miss Grant accompanied Lucy to the station, and saw her safely into the train for Paris with Mrs. Marsh, who looked a very proper escort for her, and seemed very kind and careful. Lucy thanked Miss Grant over and over again for coming so far with her, and promised to write as soon as she could.

The evening had closed in before the travellers reached Paris. Lamps were lighted, and the streets looked gay and bright. A footman was waiting at the station, and in answer to Mrs. Marsh's inquiry said, "His lordship was not worse when I left the house." Lucy had been afraid to ask the question, but her heart bounded at the reply.

"Does papa know I am coming?" she asked Mrs. Marsh, as the carriage rattled through the streets.

"He did not know when I came away, my dear, but Lady Amelia was going to tell him as soon as he woke. His lordship has often talked of you lately, so I am sure he will be very pleased."

The carriage stopped. Lucy was led through the *porte cochère*, and up a flight of broad stone stairs. The footman opened a door on the first floor, and Lady Amelia came to meet Lucy.

"How is papa?" were Lucy's first words.

"Oh! he is so glad you are come; he heard the carriage, and said, 'There is my little Lucy, go and fetch her.' "

"Oh, let me sit down here and wait one

moment," said Lucy; "I must not cry when I go to him, Marsh says, and I'm so afraid I shall."

"Now, Lady Amelia, do be sensible, and don't hurry your sister so—been travelling all day, poor thing, and tired to death; you go and order a good cup of coffee for her, that's what you'd better do, and—oh, here's the Captain."

"Lucy, my dear child, thank God you are here safely at last. Your father will not be happy till he sees you, and I have come to take you to him, but only for a minute. It is not good for you or for him to talk just yet; he must get used to the idea of your being here, he is too weak to bear anything unusual—even pleasure."

"Must I not speak to him, Uncle Alfred?"

"Better not, dear; but at any rate, don't cry."

"No, I wont." And though Lucy's lip quivered as her uncle led her away, she behaved quite firmly. Her father held out his hand and drew her to him, and kissed her very fondly. Then he put his hand on her head and said,

"Bless you, my dear little child. We must

not talk; *he* says so"—looking at Captain Elton with a smile; "you must always do what he tells you, Lucy."

Lucy tried to check a rising sob, for she guessed what this meant. Captain Elton saw that the effort was almost too much, so he came near, and said,

"She has had a long journey, brother. Shall she go and rest, and come to you again?"

"Go, darling," said Lord O'Kerry. "Amelia will be good to you. Come back —if you are not tired."

"I will come back, dear papa." And as she again bent down to kiss him, he whispered,

"You grow like my sister, Gertrude."

"I am glad," whispered Lucy in return.

Lord O'Kerry smiled faintly, and let her go. When Lucy returned to the room where she had left Lady Amelia, she found her sister still there.

"Oh, here you are, Lucy. I have ordered tea for you up-stairs in our little sitting-room; and you are to sleep in my room, which I will show you too. You will be glad of tea, I'm sure. I would not order coffee, as Marsh said, because I thought you were not so used to it."

Lucy thanked her sister for this proof of consideration. Amelia put her arm round her and they proceeded up-stairs together.

"What a little thing you are, Lucy; you have not grown much, but you have a nice little face," and Amelia condescendingly stooped to kiss the said little face.

"Where is Clara?" said Lucy.

"She is at Versailles, thank goodness, staying with some friends."

"Staying with friends—and papa so ill! Why does she not come home?"

"I am afraid she is coming home. You must have forgotten her, or you would not want her. She will be in a fine way at finding you here."

"Does she not know papa sent for me?"

"He did not send for you."

"Not!" and Lucy started back, and looked at her sister in astonishment.

"No; *I* sent for you. I'll tell you all about it while you're having your tea. I took it upon myself, Lucy; but wont you thank me?"

Amelia looked rather hurt, as she said this, and Lucy, putting her arms round her sister's neck, exclaimed:

"I do thank you, over and over again, I

know you did it for kindness, and it was very good of you."

Amelia was satisfied—she told Lucy no more till she had seen her busy with a good cup of tea, a fresh roll and an excellent omelette, which Lucy was well able to enjoy after her journey.

"Well," said Lady Amelia, "now I'll tell you all about it. Papa and I were alone, for Clara was away on a visit. It was dull for her at home. But I liked those quiet evenings with papa, and if I went out in the afternoon, I used to come in very early, for I thought it was dull for him. Well, one evening papa said, 'Where is Clara?' I told him she was out; when he said, 'It's very good of you to stay at home and amuse me, my dear; but what shall I do when you go?' for you know, Lucy, I'm going to be married."

"Are you? I did not know."

"Didn't you; oh, I did mean to write and tell you; but you'll be my bridesmaid all the same. Well, when papa said that, I replied, there's Lucy." 'Lucy!' exclaimed papa, 'I should like to see her;' and he called you 'poor little thing,' and said you wrote him a nice letter; did you, Lucy?"

"I did write to papa in my holidays."

"Well, that's it, then; and it seems it came when Clara and I were away, and he told Marsh about it, and she said he seemed quite upset, and said something about you and Shakspeare and Cordelia somebody. I've looked in Shakspeare since and found a Cordelia in *King Lear*, but she was a Princess, so I don't know what papa meant. But one evening I began to talk to him about you again, and he said he thought you would stay with him when I was married, and I said I thought you would. Papa seemed so poorly that evening that I was uncomfortable about him, and I stayed with him later than usual; he fell asleep in his chair, and in his sleep he called you twice, or he may have meant mamma, for her name was Lucy, you know; but when he woke up and began to talk again, I said I should so like to see Lucy again, shouldn't you, papa? and he said he should, only Clara thought it would be inconvenient. Then he seemed tired, and I left him; but I went to my room and wrote to Uncle Alfred, and asked him to come and to bring you; and while I was writing, papa's bell rung, and in

a minute Marsh came up to say he wanted me; so I ran down and found papa could hardly speak—he had had a sort of seizure Lucy—and he caught my hand and whispered: 'Write—my brother—Alfred;' I then said, 'Shall I tell Uncle Alfred you want him?' and he said, 'yes,' and patted my hand; I told him I would write to Uncle Alfred, and beg him to come directly, and just then the doctor came, so I went and sent off my letter, telling Uncle Alfred all."

"You were very good and right, Amelia, in all you did, I am sure, and I am very, very much obliged to you. Do you think I may go to papa again now?"

Amelia proposed to go and see, and Lucy followed her down-stairs, and was immediately admitted to her father's room. It was dimly lighted. Lord O'Kerry was half dozing. Captain Elton placed Lucy on the sofa, and as she sat there Lord O'Kerry opened his eyes, and smiled to see his little daughter in the room again, but he did not move or speak. Soon the stillness and half darkness of the room, combined with the lateness of the hour, took their natural effect on Lucy. She fell fast asleep, when her uncle

placed a pillow under her head, and gently opening the door, he beckoned to Mrs. Marsh and showed her the recumbent figure of the little lady. Mrs. Marsh left the room, and quickly and noiselessly returned with a warm shawl which she spread over Lucy, tucking her up as if she were in bed; and then, Lord O'Kerry having also fallen asleep, Captain Elton and Mrs. Marsh left the room to get some rest, and Amelia, who had slept during the forenoon, took up her position as watcher, supported by a professional nurse, who, however, remained in the next room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAST WORDS.

THAT was a night Lucy never forgot. She had slept for about two hours when the sound of her own name aroused her. She started up at once. Amelia was then at her father's bedside supporting him, and she it was who had called Lucy in a frightened tone. Lucy sprang up, and was by her father's side in a moment, and the nurse entering at the same instant, Amelia sent her to fetch

Captain Elton. He came as quickly as possible, and saw at a glance that a great change had taken place in Lord O'Kerry. The excitement caused by the pleasure of seeing Lucy again had proved too much for his feeble frame. We are not now going to enter into the sad details of a scene too sacred to describe. Suffice it to say, that Lord O'Kerry died that night, after affectionately commending his two daughters to the protection of God and the faithful care of their uncle.

"Show them what you showed me," he whispered to his brother; "the way to peace —to God—where I am going."

Captain Elton promised to care for them as for his own children. Clara had been sent for, and came home two hours after her father's last words had been spoken. She was greatly shocked when she found out how well founded Amelia's fears had proved, for even the doctors had fancied Lord O'Kerry might recover; but they did not know him as well as Amelia did, and could not see how much he was changed.

"Did he mention me?" Clara asked her uncle; "did he send any message to me?"

"He spoke of you yesterday, and wished to see you once more."

"Oh! Uncle Alfred, I thought I should have been in time. Who was with him at the last?"

"Amelia, Lucy, and myself."

"Lucy?"

"Yes—ah, you did not know she came the day after I did."

"Did papa send for her?"

"No. Amelia being aware of his wish to see Lucy, very properly wrote to me about it, and I took upon myself to send for her. Clara, she ought to have been with your father sooner; you know best why that was not the case."

"Don't find fault with me now, Uncle Alfred. I know I have been very selfish, but I will try and make up for it. I will go now and see Lucy; I suppose she is with Amelia."

Clara went up to her sisters' room and opened the door gently. Lucy was lying on the bed crying, and Amelia, in spite of her own grief, was attempting to fill the office of comforter. As Clara entered, she heard Lucy say:

"But if I had only been here a little sooner, if I had been with papa a week or two even, I should not have minded so much."

"I'm sure I wish you had," sobbed Amelia.

"Ah, Lucy, I'm so afraid it was my fault, for not daring to tell Clara she ought to have you in the holidays. I am such a coward, I cannot bear a quarrel—but I wish I had braved it."

"Dear Amelia, I did not mean to blame you. Of course, if God had meant me to come sooner it would have been so. I must remember what Mrs. Grant's last words were to me."

"What were they?"

"'He hath done all things well.' All things are done by God in reality, though it does not seem so, does it?"

"Oh, Lucy! Lucy! it was not God's doing, it was my wickedness!"

The younger sisters started at Clara's voice. "Clara! you are come at last."

"I have been here some time, but I was with Uncle Alfred. I am come now to beg your pardon, Lucy; I might have sent for you before, but I hope you will forgive me when I tell you, that had I known what

was to happen, I would have had you here in your holidays."

"Oh, I forgive you, Clara. Of course one never can know what is going to happen." Lucy said this in all simplicity, but Clara felt the full meaning of the words. We ought not to excuse ourselves for not doing right, because we do not see how important such right-doing will hereafter prove; nor ought we to measure our present actions merely by the effect we suppose (for it can only be supposition) they will have in the future. There is no better saying than the old one, "Duties are ours, events are God's." How many a vain, life-long, regret would be spared were these things properly considered.

Clara lived many years after her father's death, but she never forgot the sound of those sad words of Lucy's, "If I had only been here a little sooner!" I do not say they made so deep an impression as to cure her of the selfishness to which she had so long been prone; but on more than one occasion the sad remembrance of the consequence of such selfishness in this case made her dread to indulge her own wishes when the happiness of other people might be

endangered. Clara's repentance, too, made her at this time treat Lucy with a gentleness and consideration which Amelia declared to be quite unusual; and though it was towards Amelia only that Lucy could feel anything of a sister's love, she was by no means insensible to Clara's kindness.

On the day after Lord O'Kerry's funeral, Captain Elton assembled his nieces, their father's lawyer being also present, and said he must beg them to listen to a few words concerning the arrangement of their future course in life. Captain Elton was now Earl of O'Kerry, having succeeded to the title, as his brother left no son, but until this day he had not assumed the title.

"In the first place, I must tell you," said he, addressing the three sisters, "that by your dear father's will, which he had placed about eight years ago in Mr. Wakefield's safe-keeping, I was appointed to be guardian to you all." Clara looked up rather proudly. "Of course as far as you are concerned, Clara, I have now no such responsibility, but before we consider the legal tie, I will just revert to what passed between your father and myself on the night previous to his death. He

told me then, that he had named me guardian to his children, and he besought me to fulfil that charge as I would answer for it before God. I promised to do so, and I gave him my word that as long as any child of his should desire to have a home under my roof she should be there by as good a claim and as hearty a welcome as if she were indeed a child of my own. Now, as I said before, you, Clara, are of an age to decide on your own plans, and if you do not choose to make my house your home, I trust you will judge well for your own happiness in fixing your abode elsewhere. For Amelia I know that another home is already provided; and I trust the day is not far distant when she will enter upon the life of honour and happiness which I hope and believe will be hers there; in the meanwhile, I trust, my dear," and he looked at Amelia as he spoke, "I trust you will come home with me and with Lucy, who must from this day forth be, indeed, under my guardianship, and who will be received, as she well knows, as her Aunt Lilla's dear eldest child. What do you say, Clara?"

"Uncle Alfred, I thank you for your offer of a home; but I had rather live abroad, so I

mean to accept my cousin's invitation and go with her to Berlin."

"And you, Amelia?"

"Oh, Uncle Alfred, to go home with you is my choice. I have no other wish."

"Then no more need be said now on this subject. Clara, you and I will have some more conversation by-and-by. Mr. Wakefield has a few papers for which he will require your signature; but we need not keep Amelia and Lucy any longer.

They left the room accordingly; and Clara remained, and with perfect self-possession went through sundry details of business that were placed before her. Afterwards she and her uncle had a long conversation, in the course of which he found that she had quite made up her mind to reside with her cousin, the wife of a foreign minister; but her uncle again assured her that his house should be her home if she should at any future time wish to claim it.

About a week after these arrangements had been agreed upon, Lord O'Kerry, with his two younger nieces, left Paris. They were met in London by their aunt, who had come thither for the purpose of receiving them.

Lord and Lady O'Kerry took a house in London for six months, at the end of which time Amelia's marriage was to take place. Lucy did not now return to school, but both the sisters took lessons from masters, and found real pleasure in pursuing their studies together. Lucy was charmed to see her little cousins again, and though she did not carry out her design of teaching Gertrude, who, with Alfred, now had a daily governess, many happy half-hours were spent in the nursery with them and her pet Marian, who in the ensuing year was deprived of her "baby" privileges by the arrival of another claimant for them. Amelia was invited to stand godmother to the baby brother, who was named Reginald, after Mr. Falconer, the kindest brother-in-law that sister ever had, according to Lucy's account. And, indeed, throughout her life it does not seem probable that she will ever change her opinion of him.

Lucy paid a visit every year to Mr. and Lady Amelia Falconer, and a room in their house was always at her disposal, but her home was with her uncle and aunt, and a very happy home it was. The Castle of the

O'Kerrys was now again inhabited, and the warm-hearted Irish people welcomed the young lady who had been born among them, and was so pleased to return, with even more enthusiastic feeling than they showed for the new Lord of the Castle and his young and blooming heir.

Lucy never forgot the Hammonds and all the kindness they had shown her. Her uncle took her into Cornwall the year after her father's death, and she remained at Trewynden for three weeks, nor did she leave without obtaining a promise that Eleanor and Florence should pay her a visit at O'Kerry Castle; this promise was kept, and as they sat one evening round the fire, Lord O'Kerry heard for the first time the full account of Lucy's journey with Eleanor and the lady and little children in the train.

THE END.

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