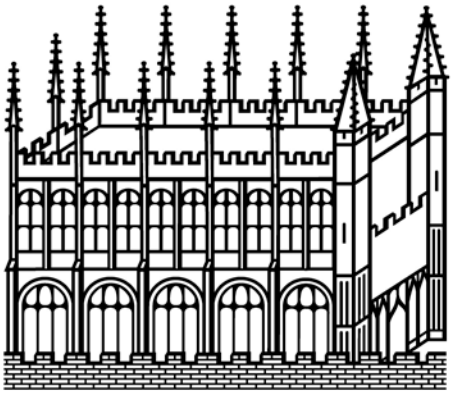

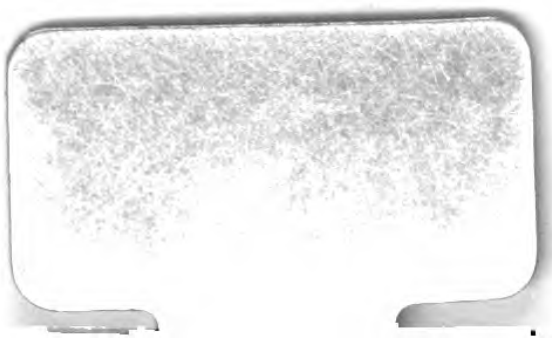

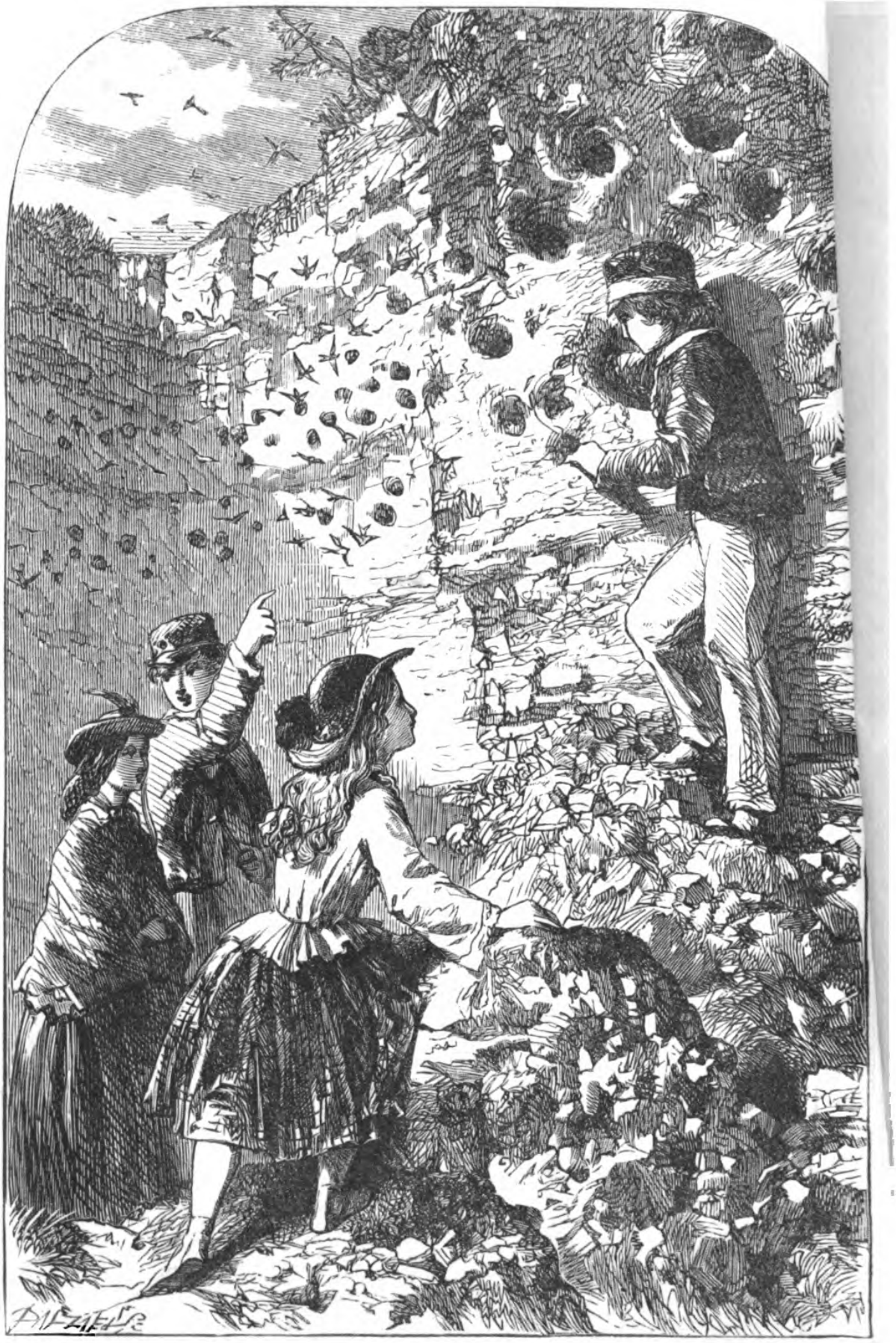

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RAINBOWS IN SPRINGTIDE:

Tales.

BY SADIE.

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TO

BERTIE,

FROM

SADIE.

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RAINBOWS IN SPRINGTIDE.

LITTLE GWEN.

Little Gwen stood by the window, thinking.

"How dull it is! I always am dull, or else naughty. It must be nice to make snow-houses, like the boys do. Girls can't do anything but knit, and I hate knitting: only it is better than nothing. Oh, dear!"

Gwen's forehead drooped, till it rested on the window-frame, and she looked out. A beautiful view: first, the round white lawn, with a snowy cone in its centre, where the great aloe stood under its tent of matting; then the shrubbery, where the fir and holly contended which should wear their burden most gracefully; then the Carnarvonshire mountains, grand and white and still. The sight of them soothed the troubled little heart, the tears went back from Gwen's eyes, and it was with a sigh of relief that she said, "I suppose the mountains do something, though they only stay still."

"Eh, my dear?" said her mother.

Not one of the least of Gwen's troubles was this: that her mother generally answered her with "Eh, my dear?" It seemed such a conclusive reply that she never felt inclined to add anything farther; so now, her eyes and thoughts went back to the snow-house which her brothers had made in the paddock.

"How clever of Owen to think of putting slabs of ice for windows! he always does think of clever things. So would I, perhaps, if I was a boy. Griffith doesn't, though; but then he keeps on so steady: he finishes everything. Why, there's father!" she cried eagerly. "It is not dinner-time. I wonder what he's coming for?"

Gwen's father was a wealthy busy farmer, who so seldom came home between meal-times that her wonder was not unnatural; as he came nearer she saw that his hand was tied up in a handkerchief, and her heart gave a quick leap of alarm. "Oh, poor father!" she exclaimed; "they've been pulling down those old hedges—perhaps an adder has bitten him." She ran to the door, and went forward quickly to meet him, saying: "Are you hurt, father?"

"No, little keen eyes—not more than water and rag will cure; I struck my hand against the sharp point of a hedge-stake in getting over a stile."

These Welsh "hedges" are, in fact, low walls, made

of large rough stones, piled one upon another; in time, grass and weeds cover them, but here and there a bare stone will stand out with sharp edges, and it was against one of these that Gwen's father had cut himself. The cut was not deep, and, when bathed and tied up, was pronounced to be already quite well; but the farmer noticed that his little daughter was still trembling, so he took her in his arms and said, "You did not like father to be hurt, eh?"

"I was afraid it was an adder-bite; I had been feeling discontented just before, so it seemed like a real trouble come to punish me."

"They do, sometimes; but what was the matter? you're a contented little woman generally." Gwen's head went down, in a fit of shame.

"I wanted to be a boy."

"What for? there's boys enough already."

"Girls can't do anything."

"Can't they, though? Owen is tender-hearted enough, and Griffith is careful, but I shouldn't like to trust them with my hand, even now; and as to tying it up, they would have made me howl like a pussy-cat."

Gwen's answer to this was to kiss the rough, tender hand, and her father went on, "Why, when I'm

out on the farm, with the men all wanting one fifty ways at once; or in the market, driving bargains with people who would almost steal one's eyelashes, you can't think what a rest it is to remember the little girl at home."

"I was grumbling because I couldn't get out," said Gwen; as though determined to make a clean breast of it.

"Well, why can't you?"

"Mother said the snow was too deep."

"Hum—we don't want to plant you in the garden, certainly; and I'm afraid, once there, you would stick—it's over my boot-tops."

"The boys have made a sort of path to their snow-house."

"A sort of path, yes; suppose we go and see what they are about—you're not too big to be carried, are you?"

"Oh, I should like it so." With a very bright face Gwen ran to wrap herself up. The air had that pleasant softness which comes in the lull between two snow-storms, and the farmer and his little daughter pronounced it warmer out of doors than in.

"Isn't it all pretty?" said Gwen. "Just look at the points of those holly-leaves in the sunshine; it's

like diamonds hung to them. Do let's go to the waterfall."

The waterfall was made by the sudden descent of a brook which ran through the farmer's grounds; it was not far, so there they went, and the sight was, as Gwen said, lovely. The little stream was nearly frozen into stillness, but some drops, trickling over the mossy rock, had formed long icicles, which, catching the sunbeams at every possible angle, gave the steep rugged rock a prismatic glory.

"One must love the great Creator who made this world," said Gwen's father, raising his hat in half unconscious reverence as they turned back. Just as they came to the snow-house, Owen rushed out and said, "Oh, father! this is capital! we wanted you to come and see; haven't we got a splendid house? And Gwen too, we were wishing for her—the toffee won't come right."

"We've made thuch a meth of it," said little Evan.

"It wants girls to manage cookery," said Griffith, with a half-contemptuous admission of his failure. Happily they had not used all their materials, so Gwen, who was great at toffee-making, set to work with glee.

"I must go, though," said the father.

"Oh, do let Gwen stay," sang a chorus of voices.

"How will you get her back to the house?"

"We'll manage, somehow," said Owen.

"Make a lady's chair of our arms," said steady Griffith.

"It'th twith ath muth fun with Gwen," chimed in little Evan.

"I thought girls were no good," said the farmer, giving Gwen a merry parting look.

"What did father mean by that?" asked Owen.

"Why, I was just thinking so when he came in, so I told him."

"What do you think, boys? Gwen says sisters are no good."

"Oh, you silly one!" said Griffith. "Don't the boys that haven't got any look small when we're talking about ours?"

"I should think so," said Owen; "sisters are a capital invention."

"Of courth they are," said little Evan, and that settled the matter.

Gwen and her brothers grew very busy, over their toffee, and snow-cake, and the various messy manufactures in which children delight. They were thoroughly happy, until a bit of homely tragedy suddenly dropped down into their midst; literally dropped down upon them, for it came tumbling

through the roof of their snow-house, in the shape of a little peasant boy, who seemed at least as much discomfited by his involuntary intrusion as were his astonished young hosts.

"Clumsy fellow! look what a hole you have made," said Owen, pointing upwards, where now could be seen the rock against which the little house was built.

"Why couldn't you come to the door, if you must come?" said Griffith.

But the small invader was silent. He was very small, not more than six years old apparently, but clad, man's fashion, in a suit of corduroy. Like most of the Welsh peasants, he wore his hair brushed down over the forehead, as the Germans do; and, from under the pent house of dark hair and bushy black eyebrows, his eyes shone in sombre depth—genuine Welsh eyes, stern and sad.

"What do you want?" said Owen; but no reply came.

"Try him with Welsh," said Gwen. This elicited a grave "I can speak Englees."

"What is your name?" asked Griffith.

"Ellis Pritchard."

"Why don't you go home?"

"Father said I must not, till I find our sheep, and

I cannot find her!" The last words came with a kind of despairing impatience.

"What sheep?"

"Ours—she's all the sheep we've got: the rest died, and this one's mother was lost, just like this, last winter; we found her skull in the summer, by Aber: it was white and clean—I knew it by the teeth."

Ellis shivered a little, as though he realized that death of the lost one, upon the mountains.

"Where is your father?" said Owen.

"He is in bed."

"What is the matter with him?"

"He is dying."

The grave little voice had, in itself, the sound of a lament, but the boy gave no other sign of sorrow till Gwen, laying her hand on his shoulder, said, "Poor little Ellis!" Then, the flicker of the flames, dancing in his eyes, showed tears in them.

"How did you lose your sheep?" said Griffith, the practical one.

"I went to fetch her in, and she saw me too soon and she thought I was a fox, the silly thing! so she ran, and I ran, and in the worst places she went quickest; she did not fall—I did."

"Ah! you want a stick with a metal point, like

these," said Griffith, pointing to the alpenstocks that his father had given to Owen and himself.

"Yes," said Ellis, quietly, as though he was used to wanting a great many things.

"How did you get round here?"

"The sheep came along the rock there, and I followed her; it was all snow together. When I fell through here I thought it was a bog."

"Then didn't you think you would be killed?" said Evan, with wide-open eyes of awe.

"I thought I was dead, for a minute."

"Oh! weren't you sorry?"

"No—I should not be cold any more."

"Come close to the fire, and get warm," said Gwen, trying to draw him near; but Ellis resisted, saying, with the same benumbed quiet as before, "I must find our sheep."

"I tell you what," said Owen: "we will come and help you, Griffith and I; we are big and strong, you know, and we've got sticks. I should like to see old Mother Sheep outrun us! she can't have got very far, and she must follow the path just above here, because there's no other way. Come along, Griff." With a spring and a flourish, Owen was preparing to set off, triumphantly, but Griffith stopped him with "What would father say?"

"He would say, 'Go,' I know; don't you remember what he read to us the other day—that if our neighbour's ox fell into a pit, we should help him out? well, a sheep is the same, I should think, only easier for us boys. What do you say, Gwen?"

"I think it is right," said Gwen, thoughtfully, "if you keep as clear as you can of the dangerous places; and if—would you mind?—if we were to ask God to take care of you."

"You say it, Gwen."

So, while the boys stood reverently silent, Gwen said, very simply and humbly, "Pray God take care of us, and show us what to do, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Then, steadied and calmed, the three young searchers set off. They needed both strength and wisdom; for their task was difficult and perilous—perilous because of the deep snow-drifts, and the slippery places, leading to awful chasms, down which no one could fall and live.

They went along cautiously; watching the huge boulders that, here and there, hung over the path, and might come crashing down upon it, loosened by the frost.

"Steady!" said Griffith, as Ellis, catching sight of the sheep, prepared to run; "if you startle her now,

she'll turn wild, very likely, and leap over somewhere, and be killed: we must keep her in sight, for a bit, till she gets quieter and tired."

Ellis obeyed, silently. He had scarcely spoken all along; being, as he would have said, "rhynu" (starved) with cold. But there was a curious strength of persistence in him; though he fell sometimes, waist deep in the snow, he was up again directly, saying only, "I must get the sheep," as though that feeling of mingled duty and necessity would carry him through all.

"All right, old fellow," said Owen, cheerily, patting him on the back, "we'll have her yet; there are three of us, you know, and we'll keep together."

"Thank you," said Ellis, soberly and dryly; but, as he looked up, they saw the tell-tale moisture in his great dark eyes.

"She's down!" cried Griffith, pointing a little a head; the sheep had suddenly disappeared.

"What—where?" said Owen.

"Over there; she must have slipped down a bank, to a river, I expect."

The boys ran. Owen, getting first, found that Griffith was right; there, on a little frozen stream, lay the sheep; trying in vain to regain her footing on the glassy surface.

"I don't think she is much hurt," said Owen; but Griffith said, "One leg is broken," and so it proved to be—snapped in her fall.

Ellis slid down, and half raised the panting animal in his arms, while, in his eloquent Welsh, he poured forth his love, and pity, and tender reproach. "How could you fear me, my lamb, my little one? Have I not cherished you always? Did I not feed you before myself in the terrible cold of the morning? And now, my foolish one, my darling, how can I carry you home?"

It was not an easy question to solve. Griffith had some bits of wood in his pocket, and, by tearing up his handkerchief into strips, contrived to bind up the injured leg in very tolerable splinters; but when raised to her feet, the poor trembling sheep fell down again instantly, and no one of the boys could even lift her. She lay, looking up at them with a curiously expressive glance of appeal and confidence, as though she recognized, at length, that these dreaded pursuers were, indeed, her friends.

After some consultation, they decided to make a kind of hammock of an extra plaid that Gwen had persuaded them .to bring in case of snow; it was, fortunately, very thick and strong, and they managed

to roll the sheep on to it; then, slinging the four corners over their shoulders, Owen taking the two in front, the boys set off.

"If anybody did come along," said Owen, "I wonder whether they would take us for a funeral, or for sheep-stealers, or a triumphal procession."

"Well," said Griffith, "I feel rather triumphant; we have done what we set out to do—found the lost sheep; and it wasn't our fault that she tumbled down. If only we can get her safe back again. I wonder how far it is?"

"That is our house," said Ellis, pointing down the valley at the side to where a curl of smoke went up from a poor little cottage.

"We might cut across: do you know a path, Ellis?"

"Yes—this little one leads all the way; it is safe, only it is so slippery, being all down the mountain."

They turned, and followed this, and found the way, as Ellis had said, safe, but slippery; very decidedly the latter, so that they were obliged sometimes to fairly sit down and let themselves slide, dragging the sheep after them; but all got down safely, and they soon reached the cottage.

"Please come in, and have some bread-and-butter," said Ellis, as Owen and Griffith wished him good-bye.

The boys went in, but instantly decided to take

nothing in that house: it was absolutely bare. They had been in many of the cottages before, and thought them very comfortable, with their diamond-paned window sunk in their thick walls; their bright oaken dressers and tall clocks; their wide, open fire-places, where the hams hung to smoke. But this habitation was empty and cheerless. The small turf fire made the only piece of brightness, and by that sat Ellis's mother, nursing a young baby. "Oh, such a pitiful little thing!" Owen said, afterwards.

This room, which was, as usual, "kitchen and parlour and hall," had a ladder in one corner, leading up to a loft, where the family slept; and from here came that most grievous of all sounds, a moan—not desperate, nor complaining, but patient, perhaps unconscious.

"Let us go, Griff," whispered Owen; and the two stole away, while Ellis was gone somewhere for a draught of buttermilk.

"I felt rather sheepish, sliding off like that," said Owen, presently.

"Yes, but what could we do? If Gwen had been with us, now, she could have talked to the poor woman and the baby."

Meanwhile, Gwen had come near renewing her

old wish to be a boy. Griffith and Owen could do something, while she could only sit still. Very still she sat, looking out through the doorway of the snow-house, and feeling somewhat dreary. The ground was so uneven that she could not see her home, though not far from it, and the air had the strange quietness of a snowy atmosphere.

"How long the boys are!" she thought. "What if they are lost, and calling for help? I do think I heard something—oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Wringing her little hands, Gwen paced up and down the snow-house—feeling as if it were a cage; as indeed it was, for her—she could not get out, because of the snow. All sorts of terrible visions presented themselves—Owen falling over a precipice, Griffith choked in the snow, and poor Ellis dead, beside his sheep.

Happily, just here little Evan crept up to her, saying, "I'm frightened, and I'm sleepy."

"Mustn't be frightened, Evan bach (dear), and I don't think you must go to sleep."

"Tell me a tale, then."

"What shall it be?"

"That about Spotty the Cat; only, mind you put in all the big words like father does; it isn't half the fun without."

"Well, I will try," said Gwen; and, unconsciously imitating her father's comical gravity, she began the history of

SPOTTY THE CAT.

Spot was, emphatically, a nice cat, of a bold handsome pattern in black and white. As to his beauty, opinions varied, and yet more so as to his cleverness; but everybody agreed that he was "nice." He never stole nor scratched, though strict candour must admit that, when irritated, he would swear; but it was only in a kind of military growl, and his friends regarded it as more the evidence of his high Conservative principles than of any natural depravity. Once, Spot's outspoken habits did good service. He had a very long tail, which was apt to get trodden on; and whenever this occurred he was wont to relieve his feelings, and, at the same time, punish the aggressor, by a long and ear-piercing "yowl," peculiarly his own.

One winter morning, before daybreak, Spot's young master heard the well-known sound, and, knowing that none of the servants were down, rose to ascertain the cause. Outside his door was puss, with a swollen tail, and, in the passage below, a burglar's

light. He called out—robbers are as easily scared as rats: these made off, having, happily, done no harm beyond taking out a square of glass from a pantry window, and treading on puss in the dark.

Of course, for a while after this event, Spot was as distinguished as the geese that saved Rome, and, probably, not more grateful for his honours, as these involved a dramatic entertainment of tail-pulling and "yowling," for the benefit of any visitor who could be got to attend, and "see how it happened." Doubtless, many of his mews meant "Save me from my friends." He certainly could take care of his enemies. There was one old tabby, who, until Spot's maturity, had been the absolute sovereign of the district; helping himself to the dinners of the other cats, and requiting them with a scratch, if they came near enough. Like most tyrants, tabby did some good; for, if a party of pussies squabbled too loudly, he would descend into the midst of them, and send all the combatants to the rightabout.

Spot, however, objected, on principle, to the existence of any tyrant but himself: he gave battle, and utterly routed the enemy, of whom nothing was seen for some weeks, save a few ragged tufts of tabby fur which he left behind him.

Warlike abroad, Spot was gentle at home; almost

lackadaisically so, lying before the kitchen fire, as cook said, "as lazy as a Turk;" and, perhaps, simile could no farther go. He was dainty, too, in his social tastes, had a decided preference for ladies in silk dresses, and liked these to be very long and full, so that he might repose upon them comfortably.

He was fond of flowers, both to smell and to nibble at, and was once caught—the epicure!—comfortably munching a damask rose.

"Spot, I am astonished at you," his little mistress would say, judicially, and Spot would look off from his enjoyment, and lazily wink, as much as to say, "Of course you are." But if she said, plaintively, "Puss, I'm going to cry," he would leave whatever he was about, to creep into her arms, and rub his soft furry head against her cheek, as though to wipe the tears off.

Once, his young master and mistress were both ill at the same time, and Spot wore himself quite thin with constantly trotting from one room to the other to visit them. When, at length, they were well enough to come down into their little town garden, he brought and laid at their feet—what do you think? a little heap of bones, which he had buried, not having, perhaps, had time to pick them properly while acting as visiting physician.

As poor Spot grew old and blind, he became more reserved and exclusive in his preferences, but, to the last he knew and followed the voice and footfall of the two he loved, and would take from them the food he refused from every one else.

One day he was unusually restless, continually seeking, in his pathetic blind way, the little hand of his mistress. At last, with that resting on his head, he fell over and died.

They buried him in the garden, in the nook where he used to lie basking in the sun.

Over his grave was written on wood, "Here lies Spot, a good cat."

"You did tell that like father, every word, Gwen," said Evan, when she had finished. "I am so glad you stayed behind."

Gwen began to think she was good for something after all, and she was rewarded for unselfishly putting away her anxieties to cheer her brother. While she told the story, the time had, insensibly, slipped away, and now, to her great delight, the rosy faces of Owen and Griffith appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, I am so glad," she cried, springing forward.

"So am I glad to get back to you, dear old Gwen," said Owen. Somehow, the sight of Ellis's

baby sister, so feeble and, small, had made him feel very tenderly towards Gwen.

"Did you get the sheep?" she asked.

"Yes, poor thing—with a broken leg, though; but I think she will be all right. I was so glad we went to look for her—they seem so poor, Ellis's father and mother; we went home with him, you know, to carry the sheep. Oh, such a place, Gwen! they call it a farm; they have got two or three fields of that poor land down by Rhoslan, and that is what they try to live upon."

"Let us tell father," said Gwen. She usually did so, in all emergencies; accordingly, that evening, the children recited all their adventure.

"We cannot do anything," said Gwen's mother. "I know the place: it is on Morris Edwards's land, and he might not like our interference; besides, I should not choose to interfere."

"But the poor little baby," pleaded Gwen, under her breath.

Her father heard, and said, "Well, certainly, I feel as though my true neighbour is the one who needs me most. But we will wait a bit, and see—some opportunity of helping them may turn up; meanwhile, there is five shillings, Owen—you are most likely to see Ellis; give it to him, if you meet him anywhere."

"Suppose he won't take it, father?"

"Oh, tell him his mother is to knit me a pair of stockings; she must charge the wool to me, though, or she won't get much profit out of the transaction."

"I suppose I must not take it to them?"

"No, I think not; as your mother says, we must not be meddlers. I know I can trust you to obey."

He was right. Gwen and her brothers never disobeyed; so now, though they were harassed by terrible fears concerning the little sickly baby, they waited as patiently as they could. Wated patiently, but not long; for, to their pleased surprise, the boys saw Ellis next morning—while they were busy repairing their snow-house, he appeared in the doorway.

"Father is dead," he said, with the abruptness of heart-breaking grief.

"Dear! I'm very sorry," said Owen; "what did he die of?"

But Ellis had no conception of various disorders; he said, simply, "It was his cough, like my uncle, and Cadwallader Hughes."

"You are too miserable for anything, aren't you, Ellis?" said Griffith.

"Father said he was glad; he said we should get on better without him."

"What did he mean?"

"I don't know."

The Welsh tendency to despondency is often puzzling to the children.

"Was he not a good father?" asked Owen.

"Yes."

It was a most emphatic "yes;" the dark little face was all ablaze in a moment. "He worked too hard to send me to the school to learn English, and he made me this." Ellis brought out of his pocket a rude little top, and stood, tenderly patting with his hand this, the only toy he had ever had; continuing, presently "He did not know how well it spun, and now, I can never tell him. If he would only come back for a minute, I would not mind so much; there are so many things I want to talk to him about, and I *should* like to kiss him, just once—father!"

The last word came with a tightly drawn sob.

"What did you want to tell him?" asked Griffith. Owen was busy with something that, he said, gruffly, had "got into his eyes"—according to his own acknowledgment, Owen never cried.

"Why," said Ellis, "he gave me my little hen, and she never would lay, and he said, 'I am so sorry, Ellis, bach;' and now, this morning, she laid an egg. I brought it for the lady, your sister, because she spoke so kind."

"Look here," said Griffith, "father wants your mother to make him a pair of stockings; he will pay her for the wool, but you are to give her this five shillings for the knitting."

"She does not charge so much as that," said Ellis, looking longingly at the two half-crowns.

"It is all right," said Owen; "father meant her to have more than usual—she may want a little extra money, just now, you know."

"Yes, thank you. We have got to leave the farm."

"How is that?"

"Father was the last in the lease: he did ask Mr. Edwards to take mother for a tenant, but he said 'No.' Mother says people do not like widows."

"What shall you do?" asked Griffith.

"I don't know." It was spoken, not with a child's innocent carelessness, but with a grave look out of the eyes that seemed to be gazing into darkness. "I must go now," he said, in conclusion; "mother will want me."

"Come here again to-morrow will you?" said Owen. He had thought of a cottage which his father had vacant; but, like a wise boy, would not say what might give rise to groundless hopes.

"Father," he said, that evening, "little Ellis's father is dead!"

"Poor little fellow! What will the widow do, I wonder?"

"He says they must give up their house. Suppose —might they have that little cottage in the lane?"

"Well, it might do; only, I should not like Morris Edwards to think we were trying to get his people away from him; if you will engage that he does not feel aggrieved, I am willing."

Gwen's father was in a hurry, and did not speak quite in earnest; but the children received it all seriously, and agreed that the best way would be to go to Mr. Edwards next morning, and, as Owen said, "Tell him just the truth."

"Let us take Gwen," said Griffith; "the road is very good this morning, and she beats us all at talking."

Accordingly, Gwen found herself, a trembling little bundle of shawls, standing in Mr. Edwards's office, her brothers having sent her in, saying, "You tell him, Gwen."

Perhaps, she was a well chosen ambassadress; for Mr. Edwards, like many stern men, had a tenderness for little girls. He said, encouragingly, "What is it, Gweni?"

"It is about little Ellis Pritchard, of Rhoslan, sir; Owen and Griffith helped him to find his sheep, and his mother wants a house, and she might have

one of ours, only father did not like you to think that he was not open—fair, you know, sir—with you."

"Your father is an honourable man, Gwen; you may tell him I said so, though we are not friends."

"And may he let Mrs. Pritchard the cottage?"

"Certainly; it will rather oblige me than otherwise."

"Thank you so much. Ellis is such a nice little boy."

"I think Gwen is a nice little girl. Well, good bye; tell your father that, as far as I am concerned, the matter is settled."

When Gwen delivered her message, her father said, laughingly, that he should have to establish her in a farm of her own, soon, if she was going to turn into such a business woman, but he gave her leave to go and tell Ellis's mother; and Gwen thought it was worth while to bear being laughed at a little, when she saw the widow rouse herself from her lethargy of sorrow, and begin to brighten somewhat, at the thought of her new house.

"I wonder how Mrs. Pritchard will manage to support herself?" said Gwen's mother. "The children all want new socks—she might knit them; and if she is anything of a dressmaker, I could give her work."

The widow proved to be a skilful needlewoman, and, by degrees, found full employment. Ellis, too,

was able to do the light work which Gwen's father found for him. He was such a quaint grave little fellow that, for some time, the boys were prone to make fun of him; but Gwen had a habit of being gentle with everybody, and thus she cheered and encouraged the fatherless boy more than she knew.

He worked steadily upwards and onwards. First, an odd boy, in every sense of the word; then, an under clerk to Gwen's father; then, head clerk; next, bailiff; and, finally, he became the owner of a large farm himself.

Out of his first year's profits he bought Gwen such a beauty of a horse as had never been seen in the county before, saying, simply, that all he had he owed to her.

Gwen was a woman now, but she was the same Gwen; she said, in smiling astonishment, "Why, I never did a single thing!"

"Yes," said Ellis, reverently, "you taught me to ask God to bless me, that first day of all, when we went to look for the sheep. Then, afterwards, all along, you kept me from giving up, in despair, when the boys, being boys, would laugh at my awkward ways: as you did not seem to despise me, I could bear it."

"Ah!" said Gwen, "I think I am glad to be a woman, after all."

JOHNNY.

"ALL right, old pussy-cat,—I wouldn't hurt you."

"No, you're such a softy."

"Father, is it manly to kick cats and things?"

"No, my boy. Take a bull by the horns if you want to fight; that is to say, don't, by any means."

The father laughed at his own contradictory advice; but Johnny understood him, and looked up brightly.

"Fancy nursing a cat," said Archie.

"She don't want us to do that, only let her alone," was Johnny's reply.

"Cissy does, though."

"Oh, she's so little; and besides, girls are different—a good thing too, it wouldn't be nice if the world was all boys."

"You could act the girl's parts then, like boys used to do in the old plays."

"You had better not dispute about your manliness, boys, till you have some chance of proving it," said their father, closing the little altercation.

The chance was nearer than appeared. That night, a tired careless servant, reading in bed, fell asleep, leaving her candle burning by the bedside; an unconscious movement of the bedclothes upset the candlestick; the lighted candle fell on the bed, which began slowly to ignite, and the fire smouldered till the girl was stupefied with the smoke. At last, the flames burst out; when Archie and Johnny, who slept in the floor below, were awakened by the servant's screams, and their father calling to them.

"Archie," said Johnny, "let's get up; I wonder what's the matter?"

"Father's beating Hannah for putting too much jam in our pudding," said Archie, who generally awoke a bit at a time.

"Oh, Archie, do wake up."

The boys dressed themselves, between laughing and crying, and then their father rushed into the room, and, taking one big heavy boy under each arm, ran down with them into the garden. The house stood alone, and there was no chance of help coming in time to save it, so its inmates and furniture were gathered together on the lawn; when, suddenly, a cry was raised, "Where's Cissy?" Every one had supposed that the pet of the house had been secured by some one else, and the child had been left behind,

up the fast-burning staircase. The mother fainted; but, unobserved, at the first cry, Johnny had stolen away, and his father met him with his little sister, not even awake, safe in his arms. He said, simply, "The stairs bore me, father, because I wasn't heavy, you know;" and then resigned his treasure as quietly as though he had been on an ordinary errand. "My brave boy!" was all the father could say, in the exquisite joy of relief; but Johnny said, "I don't think I was brave—I forgot everything but Cissy;" and his calm innocent face, lit by the strange glow of the fire, looked, to the happy father, like that of the child St. John in the church window.

In a few weeks the fright and danger were forgotten by the children, in their delight at their new house, which stood near a sand-pit, a never-failing playground for the boys, and for the sandmartins, who just then were busy nest-building. Archie was a great birdsnester, but Johnny, though he admitted that there was some fun in it, held that there was not pleasure enough to make up for the birds' suffering; so he generally devoted himself to making embankments and bridges, for the benefit of Cissy, who, despite all nursery laws, toddled after her favourite brother wherever he went. Archie, who had been used to nests hidden in leafy trees and hedges, thought

it would be almost too easy to get at the sandmartins, when he saw their holes standing bare and unsheltered, on the face of the bank; but they were never less than six feet from the ground, and climbing up a sand wall is not so easy as it looks. Besides, the holes were only the mouths of little tunnels, at the farther end of which would be a nest, or no nest—more often the latter; whether because the empty tunnel was of last year, or because Archie went too soon, he could not tell. Sometimes he declared that the martins made empty tunnels on purpose to trick him. In rather unreasonable anger at this, he, one morning, drew out a little fledgling, the sole occupant of the nest, and impatiently dropped it down to Cissy.

"Oh, Archie! the poor little thing! Put it back," she said; while Johnny added, "Martins won't sing, you know, Archie, nor tame; it will only pine and die." But the nest-hole had been high, and in reaching it, Archie had grazed his hands and knees; and, though he would never have acknowledged such a thing, the smarting made him cross. So he stood sullenly, while Johnny said, "I would put it back, if I was bigger," and Cissy fairly stamped with the passion of her pain, as the little shivering nestling fluttered about on the sand. "Oh, Johnny! it will die, the little thing!"

Johnny could endure it no longer; so, putting birdie carefully in the lining of his cap, he pulled that over his forehead, and began to climb. The ascent had been difficult for Archie, with his two years' eldership; but Johnny, after much slipping and scrambling, managed to reach the hole, and put the bird back into its home, where it nestled down, none the worse, apparently, for its fright. "Won't it have a tale to tell its mother, when she comes home?" he said, cheerily to Cissy. But, in looking down, Johnny lost his balance—his cap fell off—the noon sun striking on his head made it more giddy—he fell down, on to where the sand, undisturbed for ages, had hardened almost into rock, and lay there stunned.

Archie took him up, feeling like a Cain who had not meant to kill his brother, and carried him home; but, at the sound of his mother's voice, Johnny opened his eyes, and said, "It's all right; I was only stupid a bit!" And, to every one's joy, it proved to be so.

The mother was surprised to hear that Johnny had been birdsnesting, but Archie "could not stand that," so he explained the matter, adding, that he meant to let the martins alone for the future; and his mother wisely accepted the unspoken penitence, seeing that, as Archie said, he "never could say what he wanted to."

After the sandmartin adventure, life went on very quietly, till the two boys were entered as midshipmen on board H.M.S. Virgo. Johnny still kept his old name—partly from his elder brother being in the same ship; partly because, as all agreed, he was "such a nice little fellow!" Even the captain had been known to descend from his customary dignity, and speak of "our Johnny."

One day, one of the men, who, from his unvarying surliness, had gained the name of "Sulky Dick," sprained his wrist, and was making vain attempts to tie it up.

"Let me do it," said Johnny.

"It's against all rules, sir," answered Dick, sullenly.

"Well," said Johnny, not a whit repelled, "I suppose it's against rules for people to twist their wrists, but, if they will do it, they must be seen to."

The cheery kindliness, even more than the easing of the pain, softened the seaman's hard nature. For the first time, Dick showed that he could smile; an honest grateful smile it was, too, which gave a pleasant emphasis to his short "I shan't forget."

Not long after this, a fellow midshipman, who, like Johnny, was making his first voyage, was ordered to the mast-head; he had suffered much from sea-sickness, which had left him dizzy and sick, and, as

Johnny said, "taken the pluck out of him;" and he said, in a low shuddering whisper, "I shall go over, that's certain."

"Nonsense, old fellow!" said Johnny; "see, that's all!" and he sprang up. But the ship gave a sudden lurch, and the startled cry rang through the air, "Our Johnny overboard!" Dick had seen this, before he heard the cry, and he plunged in. The vessel was driving before the wind, and it seemed impossible to stop her; but, as one of the men said afterwards, "Every man, through his shut teeth, said 'We must,' and we did." Dick managed to catch one of the many ropes thrown out to him, and both he and the boy were drawn up. Johnny was not much the worse, but poor Dick had long been ill of a chronic disorder, which, perhaps, lay at the root of his surliness. The sudden plunge into the water, and, the terror of seeing the only creature he cared for drowned before his eyes, had hastened the termination of his malady. Poor Dick was dying. Every man on board would have done anything for Johnny's preserver, but the habit of a lifetime was not easily changed, and he was "Sulky Dick" still, to all but Johnny.

One night, when the two were together, and the end was very near, he said, suddenly, "Do you know, Mr. Johnny, I was going straight to hell, when you

stopped me, and turned me right round the other way?"

"I?" said Johnny, in honest amazement.

"Yes; I hadn't seen no good in the world, and so didn't believe in God, but you showed them to me, both; I'm all right now."

Like a veil, the sullenness had fallen from his face, and through his fast-closing eyes shone the radiance of a ransomed soul.

Johnny lived to be a famous commander, but his first, best victory was over "Sulky Dick."

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

THREE little girls were coming home from school, talking, after the fashion of little girls, very busily; especially the youngest, Effie Drayton, who had got upon the topic of the governesses, and was saying, "I can't bear Miss Webb; I can't bear her to speak to me, I can't bear her to look at me, I can't bear to be in the same world with her; I wish she would go to the planet Jupiter."

"So do I," said Emma Wrightson, who had somehow, acquired the name of toady in the school, and whose acquiescence, therefore, fell rather flat; so Effie turned impatiently to her elder companion, and said, "Do you like Miss Webb, Millicent?"

"No; but mamma says it isn't good to be thinking of the things one doesn't like in people, because it makes us dislike them, and there is no need, she says, for that."

"Well, my papa says he likes me to be a good hater; he hates plenty of people, and none of them

come to any good; that last man he had the lawsuit with was a bankrupt afterwards. I was so glad."

"Oh, Effie, how cruel!"

"He had no business to fight against papa."

"You will make me afraid to love you, if you are so hard."

"*Don't* you love me?" said Effie, with such a winning change of tone and look, that, even in the street, Millicent stooped to kiss her, forgetting all about Emma Wrightson, who, somehow, was the sort of child that generally is forgotten—against her own will, of course; so now, she reminded her schoolfellows of her presence by saying, "I don't care much about Miss Maurice either, do you, Effie?" But Effie's reply was annihilating. "I care just this much, that if she wanted a sausage, I would chop myself into little bits for her. I was ready to choke the other day, because I was too little to comfort her, when that letter came, and made her sorry: did you see, Millicent, how her beautiful eyes grew so large, and so bright, with the tears in them?"

"Yes," said Millicent, "I shouldn't wonder at any one being ready to die for Miss Maurice; she makes me forget all about Miss Webb."

"Ah! that is like you, Millicent; you can forget hateful people—I can't."

Here, their roads divided, and the children separated; Emma, to play tyranness over her younger sisters, as a sort of compensation for the snubbing she was continually receiving; Effie, to the luxurious home which wanted but one thing—that greatest want of all—a mother, who would, perhaps, have kept the father from regaling his little pet daughter with anecdotes of "those rascally lawyers," on the other side of the suit now pending. Even he was a little shocked, when Effie, clenching her tiny fist, said, "They ought to be shot, papa, like mad dogs!" After which speech he, prudently, sent her to bed.

Millicent, meanwhile, had gone home, and roused her mamma's uneasiness by her pale heavy looks.

"Was anything wrong in school to-day?" she asked.

"No, mamma; only Miss Webb teazed—rather 'nagging,' Effie Drayton calls it—and Effie was in a passion, but that's nothing new. I think that Miss Webb and Effie are the two sorts of people that can't help provoking one another."

"And Millicent tries to come between?"

"No; not since you said it was dangerous to get fond of being a go-between."

"My little daughter, I am not much afraid of your doing harm to any one but yourself."

"It does tire one, I suppose, to see people angry; my head aches, rather."

"Rather" seemed a mild statement, when Millicent's mamma felt her burning forehead, and noted the glazed eyes shining beneath it.

"I think you must go to bed, Milly."

"Very well, mamma—I feel so stupid."

This was the beginning of a long illness, in which gentle patient Millicent murmured continually, "I'm so ill, mamma, can't you make me better? If Miss Webb and Effie would only leave off talking! It's very cruel of them, isn't it, mamma?" But the talking was only in the little sufferer's sick fancy. At length, after many sorrowful days, the confusion cleared away, and she was able to recognize and thank Effie, who came, almost daily, with a little nosegay of flowers. Much talk was forbidden, but both pairs of eyes had a good power of language, and were used to saying "I love you" to each other. Effie was very gentle now, and looked so sad that Millicent said one day, "You mustn't be sorry, now I am getting better, Effie." But Effie's strange reply to this was to run away; and it happened that the two friends did not meet again before Millicent was taken to the seaside, to gain strength. That delicious getting well by the sea! How she enjoyed it—

the new feeling of healthy hunger and peaceful freshness. Every long, rolling wave seemed to bring a treasure of strength to her feet; it was quite a puzzle of delights whether to lie on the sand, and dream a child's exquisite dreams; or to ride on "Sandboy," a clever old donkey, who made riding pure fun, by his varied attempts at getting his dinner as he went along, through the shady lanes, with tempting thistles and sorrel in the green hedges. But, in spite of all pleasures, Millicent was glad to get home, and see Effie again.

"I think you want to go to the sea, now, Effie; you don't look half so well as I do."

"Don't I?" said Effie, and she sighed a little.

"Thank you, so much, for the flowers."

"I couldn't bring anything else."

"Why, what better thing could there be?"

"I mean, I hadn't any money.—Oh, Milly! are you quite strong now? I have so longed to tell you."

"Tell me, darling, what is it?"

"That lawsuit, papa lost it, and all his enemies came down upon him and ate him up, like it says in the Bible, and we are quite ruined."

"Oh, my darling! and I have been enjoying myself so!"

"You couldn't help it, Milly dear; and Miss

Maurice was so kind—she had me at her house, while that dreadful sale was on."

"Can't anybody do anything?"

"I don't know; papa could get an appointment, if he had any one to speak for him, but he hasn't; he says he has been so busy always with his enemies that he hasn't had time to make friends."

That evening, Millicent said to her father, "Papa, may I use you for something I want?"

"I suppose so; what is it?"

"Do you know Mr. Drayton?"

"A little, poor fellow; his hot head has got him into a mess."

"Effie Drayton is my great friend, and she says, her papa could get some appointment, if he had any one to speak for him, and he hasn't."

"And you want me to do this?"

"Please, papa."

"Well, I'll see about it. I know nothing against him but his hasty temper; and he has, probably, had a sufficient lesson to correct that fault."

Millicent's papa did "see about it," and, with him, that generally meant accomplishing a thing; so Mr. Drayton was, as he said gratefully, "started afresh, with a wiser head." Effie came to thank her friend, saying, "I would rather you should have done it than

any one." Then she added—and penitence was not easy to Effie—"I've given up hating people; the only ones I loved, besides papa, were Miss Maurice and you, and if it had not been for you two, I really think I should have gone mad."

"Yes," said Millicent, thoughtfully, "friends are better than enemies."

On the first day that Millicent went back to school a little girl stood at the street corner, crying: she was ragged, and might well be cold; she was very thin, and looked hungry; but these would have been old troubles to Katie, and, from the quick passionate sound of her sobs, it appeared that they were stirred by some new sorrow.

"What is the matter?" asked Millicent.

"Robbie," was the reply.

"What has he done?"

"He won't be friends! There's only him and me, and oh! he won't be friends."

Millicent went up to Robbie, who was busy poking a puddle about with a stick—not a very engrossing amusement, one would think—but he did not leave off nor look up when she asked, "Is that little girl your sister?"

"Yes."

"Why won't you be friendly with her?"

"She knows," was the reply, given with a kind of surly honour.

"What is it?" Millicent asked Katie.

"I gave his marble to Freddy Leigh."

"Your brother's marble? How did you get it?"

"He gave it to me."

"Who?"

"Robbie."

"To do what you liked with?"

"No, to keep for myself."

"And I told her," burst in Robbie, "that, if she gave that away, I'd never be friends with her again. And I won't, neither; she's always giving things away." To look at little ragged Katie, it seemed as though her powers of sinning in that respect must of necessity be limited.

"Well, I think you ought to forgive," said Millicent, who was in a hurry, and could not stay for more. When she was out of hearing, Robbie said, "Katie—did you ask her to interfere?"

"No," said Katie.

"If you had, I never would have been friends."

"Will you now?"

"No." It was a "no" that Katie knew and hated —when Robbie spoke like that, neither love nor fear could move him.

"Then I don't care," she sobbed, turning bitter in her despair. "I'll go home." She turned to cross the road, and, blinded by tears and anger, did not see, till too late, that a cab-horse was close upon her. The driver called, and tried to pull up, but poor little Katie lay under the horse's feet, insensible. She was picked up, and was being carried off, when Robbie, whom the moment's work had half stunned, ran over, saying fiercely, "Put her down: she's my sister."

"You can't carry her to the hospital, my boy."

"I can, though." But the rough kindly labourer who had picked her up knew that he could not, so he carried Katie, while Robbie came behind, and some startled children made a sorrowful, funeral-like procession. Robbie wondered whether Katie was really dead, and, if so, why people let him live; and why they spoke to him so kindly. He felt a wild desire to cry out, "I as good as killed her!" and then to die—"if only people didn't remember after they were dead."

"She will soon be all right," said the hospital surgeon; "she's only stunned and shaken a bit."

"Eh?" said Robbie, looking up, blankly; the news was too good for him to comprehend.

"She will soon be all right."

"Do you mean quite well, sir?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Katie! Katie!" But it was Katie's turn to be unresponsive now—not the flicker of an eyelash answered him.

"Oh, sir! can't you make her speak? It won't seem real that she can be well again, till she speaks."

"You must wait a bit for that, my boy, and be still; or I shall have to send you away."

"I will—but don't send me away, sir—don't." So the children's mother, a widow, was fetched by some one else. Just as she entered the ward, Katie revived, and, her waking brain taking up its thread of thought where it had been broken off, she began repeating the pitiful "Do let's be friends, Robbie," which sounded doubly pitiful now.

"Have you been unkind to your sister?" said his mother, turning to Robbie with such a look as she had never given him before. She was usually very quiet and gentle; but now her eyes seemed to blaze out of her white face.

"Oh, mother, don't," he cried, in an agony.

The keen sharp tones penetrated through the mist Katie's consciousness.

"Robbie, dear," she said, in her natural voice; then, as he knelt down beside her, she drew his head

to her bosom, and they wept together healthy childish tears.

"What was the matter?" she said, presently; "we weren't friends; but we are now, aren't we, Robbie?"

"Always, darling, just as long as ever we live."

"Robbie never breaks his promises," said Katie then, in a little low murmur of content; and she fell back into a soft restful sleep.

"She will wake all right," said the surgeon. He had grown interested in the children, and asked the widow how she managed to support them.

"Well, sir," she said, "it is rather hard work; in the summer I manage pretty well, with selling fire-papers and fly-cages; but in the winter there's nothing but night-caps and cabbage-nets, and they seem both going out of fashion together."

"Well, my wife has a happy knack of helping folks; come and see if she can't turn you into a prosperous woman."

The surgeon's wife was as good as his word; in a little while the widow was established in a flourishing business; you would never guess what—making bandboxes out of broad shavings.

Robbie and Katie help, and are always friends now.

TEAZING.

"Oh, Martin, don't make me laugh so!" gasped Gertrude Harvey.

"What is it?" asked Emily, an elder sister, who had just come in.

"Why," said Martin, "you know Letitia always scolds, if all we children run out of the room when Mr. Wood comes; so, this afternoon, I went on painting my Richard Cœur-de-Lion—he's coming out such a splendid fellow, Nem—well, when it came to his mailed gloves, I was bothered rather; so I looked up, and there was Mr. Wood on one knee, holding her hands and saying, 'Le-ti-tia,' just as if he was at the bottom of a well, and wanted her to pull him up. Well, you know, she has a dreadful cold, and I could see that, just then, she couldn't speak for wanting to sneeze; and she couldn't rub her nose to stop herself, because Mr. Wood had both her hands, so she turned away her head, and up went her shoulders with a jerk. Of course, he thought she was sobbing, so he said, 'Do I grieve you?' and still she couldn't

do anything but turn away her head and jerk out little smothered sneezes. At last he said, 'You must speak,' and she was desperate: I suppose, she gave the most tremendous 'chew-rew-ew' you ever heard —it must have knocked him backwards, but I couldn't stop to see, for fear of bursting out; so Gertrude found me choking on the stairs."

"I am glad you came away," said Emily, gravely.

"Now, Nem! what do you mean?"

"It is not like you to be eavesdropping."

"Our house hasn't got any eaves, and I didn't drop anything."

Martin was rather surly; it is not pleasant to have a good story spoiled, simply because it is not good in another sense; so, as Gertrude said, he went about the house chin-chin-ing like a Chinaman; and received the news of his sister's engagement with a dry "Well, I didn't think Mr. Wood was a man to be sneezed at."

Schoolboys generally kill their jokes, by riding them to death; and Martin's was no exception. Long before Letitia knew that she herself formed the point of the story, she was tired of the endless rhymes on pleasing, wheezing, sneezing, which the children seemed to bring into every sentence. Of course, when the truth came to her ears, it did not mend

matters. Unfortunately, although one of a large family, she was peculiarly sensitive to teazing, and fell into such a passion as made all the younger children partizans of Martin. The elder brother, Thorold, supported her; but the little ones knew well, though no one had told them, that Thorold was in disgrace with their father because his extravagant college bills had lessened his sister's portion, so that his championship was not very effective. No one but his mother had ever really been able to manage Martin, and she was dead. Poor Emily's grief for her loss was renewed at finding such anarchy in her little kingdom; and she thought, what many others have thought, that if children knew what sorrow springs from being unkind in fun, thry would cease to indulge in it.

The feud between the elder and younger portions of the family grew, as evil things will grow, in monstrous disproportion to its first cause. Thorold and Martin ceased to speak to each other; little Ada piped continually, "When is mamma coming back? it isn't nice now;" and Letitia was always in such a state of nervous irritation, that Emily was seriously afraid of its causing a breach between her and her lover. Happily, however, Mr. Wood was singularly sensible and unselfish; and, at length, in the ex-

tremity of her perplexity, Emily took her difficulty to him, saying, "Martin is unmanageable. I don't like to trouble papa, just now; and, besides, he is so severe with the boys that, some how, he makes them rebellious."

"I thought there seemed to be rather stormy weather in the school-room regions; tell me all about it."

"All about it" would include Mr. Wood's own share in the story, and Emily hesitated; then, reassured by his kind strong face, she plunged boldly into her narrative.

"I see," he said, when it was ended. "Suppose Martin and I go for a walk; Letitia says she is busy this morning."

Accordingly, Martin was astounded by receiving an invitation to that effect; he felt rather honoured, and came, accordingly, in the best of humours. The walk was extended to a choice collection of naval models, to which Mr. Wood had access. It was in an old-fashioned house with deep window-sills; and on one of these, after a while, the two sat down to rest, Mr. Wood looking out at the busy street below, and Martin contemplating Mr. Wood, and thinking that when he was a man, he would let his whiskers grow just like that. Perhaps the owner of the

whiskers became somehow conscious of the attentive gaze, for he said, suddenly,—

"Do you like me, Martin?"

"Yes." It was such a pleasant "yes," in its sincerity and warmth, that, for a moment, Mr. Wood forgot his purpose, and said only, "Thank you." Presently, however, he went on, "Do I seem ridiculous to you?"

"No," indignantly.

"You would not enjoy it, if one of those gentlemen, standing there, was to begin laughing at me?"

"I should like to catch them at it!" At the mere thought, Martin half rose, and struck out his fist.

"You may sit down, Marty: there is no visible danger at present; but suppose your sisters were here, and our imaginary enemies were to begin making fun of them?"

Martin looked at the two inoffensive gentlemen who were, unconsciously, pointing a moral; then, turning with a puzzled air to Mr. Wood, he said, "Why, they couldn't do it; they wouldn't be bad enough."

"Would it make it better, or worse, if they were friends of ours, intimate enough to know our secrets, and tender places?"

"Why, worse, a thousand times."

"Suppose one was our brother, Marty?"

"Oh, Mr. Wood!"

Martin understood now, not only what Mr. Wood meant, but what he himself had been doing, all these unquiet days, while he had been imagining himself witty and spirited. He was naturally clear-sighted and honest, and, now that his eyes were opened, saw at once how his conduct must have looked to others—saw it even more repulsively. "Coarse, selfish, stupid—oh, my mother!" he said, turning his burning cheeks to the window. He was just at that age when a boy would rather be tortured than cry, but it cost him actual physical pain to keep his tears from falling. He was, kindly and wisely, left to recover himself; then, as they rose to go, Mr. Wood, holding out a friendly hand, said, "You won't do it again, will you, my brother that is to be?"

Martin's "No" was choked; but hand and eyes spoke for him, and they were used to being truthful, and so spoke eloquently.

"All right, old fellow," said Mr. Wood, dismissing the subject; "we'll forget all about it now."

But Martin never forgot. Long after, one of his schoolfellow's sisters said of him, "Of all the boys I ever knew, Martin Harvey was the least fond of teazing."

THE LITTLE HEIRESS.

"My head does ache so, Miss Prince; please may I not do any more sums?"

"Nonsense! Fifty Thousand Pounds musn't have the headache: it will have to do sums all day long, when it grows up."

The child thus strangely addressed, had been called so, in fun at first, when her baby orphanhood had given her this sum; and the habit had taken root, as habits will. She scarcely noticed her uncle's speech, nor looked up, when the governess said, "I think, sir, Maud is not well."

"Not well? Nonsense; it is you who have sickly fancies! Not well, indeed! Yes, of course, that's it, the child has caught your meagrims. I heard of an excellent situation for you, yesterday—plenty of children—shake you up. Get ready by next week."

"But ——" began Miss Prince.

"My dear young lady, don't you know a business man has no time for discussions? Of course, I shall take care that you do not lose by the change."

The speaker was gone in a moment, and Miss Prince, knowing that the matter was settled, and not altogether displeased at the idea of a change, began to write to her friends; but she was, not unnaturally, vexed to see no sign of interest in her little pupil's face, and said, "Don't you care for my going, Maud?"

The child looked up, with a strange, old smile of sorrowful self-mockery, and answered, "Fifty Thousand Pounds can't feel, you know."

"You are not going to be proud of your money?"

"Oh no, no more than of my bones;" and she held out her little thin hand. "They are mine, and I should not know how to do without them; but they are not pretty enough to be proud of. There's a whole drawer-full of half-crowns, you might have, if you would; uncle always gives me some, when he can't think of anything to say."

"You are so fond of pretty things, why not buy some?"

"Uncle says it's silly to buy flowers in London, because they won't grow; and he says a bird would die here—I dare say it would, too."

"But there are toys."

"I don't care for them, I'm too old."

"Six years old!" exclaimed the governess. But she was full of her own concerns just then, so she

sat still; and Maud went to the window and looked out, thinking—that was evident from her face; but who shall give words to the thoughts of a little child? —bright, unreal, intangible; as though one were to bring down a bit of dazzling blue sky, to find it turn to colourless vapour in one's grasp. Such thoughts lay hidden in the depths of Maud's dreamy eyes.

She was not a pretty child—she was too pale and grave; but the sadness and fragility suited the quaint, flower-like dignity of her unconscious air of command, so that, more than once, in her dreary walks, passers-by had remarked, "I wonder what that child does in Bloomsbury? she looks likes a stray princess!"

Something like this passed through the mind of Miss Herrick, the new governess, as, about a week after, she entered the study, and Maud, rising courteously, said, "I am very happy to see you; I hope nurse was attentive." Then, looking down to a big book, "Will you excuse me? I want so much to see if Cromwell's daughter died." She spoke with the delicate articulation which precocious children generally substitute for the usual child's lisp, adding, after a while, "Yes, she died, poor Cromwell's daughter! and he loved her so. If she had lived, he never would have killed King Charles, who got all the punishment for that stpuid, conceited Jamie."

"Haven't you any children's books, my dear?" said Miss Herrick.

"No, uncle says they are not real, so I make my own, out of histories, you know; it's very nice. I can fancy all about Cromwell's daughter, when she was a little girl, living down in the fens, and going about the marshy fields on her father's shoulder, and how they loved one another so; and then, when the battles began, and she was so afraid he would be killed; and then, when he came to be the greatest man in all England, because he was so clever and so good—for he was good, you know, though the people that were beaten said he wasn't true, because he seemed queer to them."

Maud's face was all alight now; but the governess, whose gentle look of intelligence had, thus early, won her little pupil's confidence, wished, for a moment, for some of the dull heavy children she had left, who required simply to be taught—not cared for in all ways, as her present charge evidently did. All she said, however, was, "You ought to name your dolly after Cromwell's daughter."

"I haven't got one."

"No?—your pussy-cat, then."

"I haven't a pussy, either. There was one in the square one day—a lost one, so pretty, and so thin,

and it purred so when I took it up, and brought it home. But uncle said he wouldn't have me a rich old maid, nursing cats, so they shut it out; and it mewed and mewed on the door-step, and I heard it all night long. Do you know," she continued, her large eyes dilating with awe, "I hear it now, sometimes; and it was so long ago."

"But," said Miss Herrick, "unless some one took it in, it must be dead by now, and out of all pain."

"Yes, but it's dreadful never to feel any more; for her to lose the only life she had, when she needn't—there isn't any other life for pussies, is there?"

The child's intense interest in the question made it more than speculation; and, perhaps for the first time in her life, Miss Herrick hesitated, and said, "I don't know."

Just then, Maud's uncle came in, with the doctor, to whom he was saying, rather loudly—he generally talked loudly—"Me not understand the child, indeed! Why, absolutely, when she first came, I put myself through a course of novels; I thought all women read them, and it was women's work to bring up children, so I would find out whether there was any connection."

"Did you?" said the doctor, smiling.

"All I found as to my charge was, that heiresses always had red faces, and stiff curls, and a most unaccountable desire to throw themselves away on young gentlemen of undecided, not to say objectionable, characters. Fancy that child with a red face and stiff curls!" He pointed, with an air of whimsical sadness, to where Maud sat, with her dark wavy hair thrown back, making her delicate little face look still paler.

"Well," said the doctor, "sea-breezes would improve the colour, at any rate."

At the mention of the sea, Maud, who had not paid attention before, started into new life, and, springing forward, she said, "May I really see the sea? May Miss Herrick take me?"

"Of course, if you wish it, child; why didn't you say so before? That's settled, then. Miss Herrick, I will make all arrangements." And the rapid gentleman was gone, followed by the doctor, to whom he was saying, "That child's father, sir, was the youngest of us all, and made fifty thousand pounds in ten years! Our Willie! I always said he was a fine fellow, and I can more than double it for his child; you must make a strong woman of her, doctor."

That night, when Miss Herrick gave a good-night kiss to her little pupil, the child looked up so eagerly,

that she asked, "Don't you like to be kissed, my dear?"

"Oh, yes; only nobody ever does, except uncle, sometimes."

"Poor little lonely heart! You are more desolate than I am—I was loved, once."

The next week found Maud and her governess at that paradise of London children, Ramsgate—finding treasures of flints in the chalk cliffs; pink, feathery sea-weed on the slippery green rocks, where Maud averred that it was "nice to tumble;" and, in the still pools left by the tide, wonderful pink and lilac shells; and, prettiest of all, tiny, ribbed white ones, which, Miss Herrick said, were called cowries, and used as money in some parts of India.

"Oh, what nice money!" said Maud; "I wish all ours was pretty shells."

"But how could you buy that shady hat we were talking about?"

"Well, I do want one, certainly; doesn't it seem deliciously funny to have too much sunshine?"

The hat was found in an unexpected place. Driving out in the evening, beyond St. Peter's, they saw a window full of hats and bonnets, in a pleasant-looking country house. "Oh," said Maud, "do let's buy my hat there; it's such a pretty place to remember."

Anything rural was pretty to the little Londoner, but this house had some special charms: it was very old, partly covered with the white-edged ivy, and approached through a dazzling little flower-garden. As they entered this, a voice came through one of the open windows, saying, "If you can have the heart to cut that ribbon, Miss Smith, all I can say is, I'm sorry for you." Anybody might have been sorry for the receiver of that rebuke; it was not angry, but whimsically earnest. Presently they heard, "There, child, don't cry—there are tears enough in the world always; only, remember another time." Then the speaker came to ask what she could get for them. "A shady hat for this little girl," said Miss Herrick, with even more than her usual courtesy, for the Napoleonic little old lady seemed not to require but to compel a certain peculiar respect. The hat was found, and fitted in a moment; but Maud's roving eyes had gone through a glass door to a garden behind the house. "I *should* like to see that garden," she said, half unconsciously.

"Then you shall, my dear." "My dear" came naturally from the kindly old lips; they might have said it to a queen without offending her. The three went out.

"Oh, what a nice place!" said Maud, with a sigh

of delight. The garden, like the house, was very old, as was shown by a magnificent cedar, that kept guard on the lawn, making a fairy ring of moss under its branches; in another corner a graceful mulberry-tree dipped its long boughs down into the grass; and, all round, a bewildering plentitude of flowers and fruit spread their fragrance. "Oh!" said Maud again.

"Do you see that square green bed, near the mulberry-tree?" said the garden's owner.

"Yes, ma'am—what pretty leaves!"

"Lift one up." Maud did so, and found a big crimson strawberry.

"Eat it, my dear, and as many more as you can find."

What child ever required to be invited twice to a strawberry-bed? Maud was down on her knees instantly; Miss Herrick began a remonstrance, which was stopped with, "Nonsense, my dear; fresh ripe fruit never hurt any but a greedy child yet, and that isn't one."

"No," said Miss Herrick, quietly, with a half-sigh, as the two walked to a seat at a little distance from Maud; "she is a delicate little thing! It is a pity, too; she is clever, and will have a large fortune."

"A beauty, a genius, and an heiress? Poor little thing!"

"How?"

"So many avenues for sorrow to come to her by. Not that I speak from experience, I never was the least bit of either."

Just then Maud came up, to share a leaf-full of strawberries, and said, "Please go on talking, ma'am."

"About myself, eh? My father was a clergyman in this county, and died some years after my mother, leaving five portionless daughters."

"What did you do then?" asked Maud, who had a fancy for finding out how people did without money.

"My sisters went out as governesses; but I knew nothing to teach, and an old aunt left me this house: so I came here, and turned bonnet-woman."

"A milliner do you mean, ma'am?"

"I suppose so. My eldest sister said, 'Berenice, you will never be a gentlewoman;' so I said, 'Very well; then I'll be a bonnet-woman.'"

"Berenice?" said Maud, inquiringly.

"Yes; it was an old name in my mother's family, long before she became a Mrs. Brown; but I found that Berenice Brown sounded dreadful, and fell into

the habit of dropping my surname. If the hat wants altering, you must send for Miss Berenice."

"Do you like to be a bonnet-woman?"

"Very much. I am quite a famous one. Rich, too—on an improved 'George Herbert' principle: 'I something have, and nothing want.'"

"I think you have a great deal," said Maud, with longing eyes resting on the garden.

"So do I, when my tired sisters come down here to recruit; or when a little girl enjoys my strawberries."

"Thank you, ma'am. May I come again?—to see you, I mean."

"I know you mean that, my child, and I shall always be happy to see you."

With a merry, friendly "Good bye," they parted, Maud saying to Miss Herrick as they drove away, "I wonder what makes her so happy?"

"I suppose it is because she is brave, and kind, and sensible."

"Brave, and kind, and sensible. But children can't be brave. I couldn't."

"Not by having a sea-bath?"

"I daren't," began Maude; but she finished with, "I would, if I could."

"'Could'? You little goosey, splash about in that

delicious fresh sea, when the sun shines. I feel inclined to walk in off the sands with my clothes on."

"Why don't you have a bath?"

"And leave a poor little girl alone? I couldn't do that."

"Miss Herrick, my queen, we will have a bath, both of us, to-morrow."

"Why, that is being brave, and kind too."

"How nice!" Maud's eyes were gaining a childish sparkle, and she looked, as the old lady had said, very pretty; a rosy brown colour tinting her little face, as she said, "Could I do something sensible too?"

"I think the bathing will be that also."

"Why, how? It seems to be a wonderful thing."

"We came here to get strong; and bathing makes people strong; and to take the best means to an end is sensible."

"What fun," said Maud, who always enjoyed a speech a little above her head.

The next morning, however, she looked so pale, though determined, that Miss Herrick refrained from giving her the 'dip,' so dreaded by most children; and only danced her about in the soft yielding water, which, safely held in kind arms, Maud found surprisingly pleasant, as she said afterwards; adding,

"I was so silly, I thought you would put my head under water, and I should die."

"Always tell such dark thoughts at once, little one."

"I never could; but to you I can."

"Why?"

"Because I *love* you so."

It was spoken almost solemnly: the little heart, pent up so long, had gained a power of loving almost beyond a child. She said presently, "How much good you do me, Queenie!"

"The sea, not I."

"Yes, you. I didn't know there was any one in the world so pretty."

"What a craze you have for pretty things, pussy!"

"I suppose it's because they're the only ones I haven't had plenty of."

In a hollow of the cliff Maud had made a couch of sand, where Miss Herrick and herself could sit in the shade. It was above the tide-mark, and in rather an out-of-the-way place; so they generally found it as they had left it. But, one morning, they discovered a little boy, about three years old, in possession.

"Who's this?" said Miss Herrick.

"Me," was the concise reply.

"Is 'me' going to stay?"

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose we must resign our claim." Miss Herrick and Maud turned to go, but a very determined little voice cried, "Stop," and "Mustn't go!"

"Who says so?"

"Auntie Brenechy."

"Why," exclaimed Maud, "that must be my Miss Berenice."

"Glad to hear it, my dear, if you mean me," said the same cheery voice they had heard at Saint Peter's, only a little out of breath, adding, "Oh, Willie, Willie, what a man you are for a message!"

"Did you give him one?" said Miss Herrick.

"Yes; I wanted to catch you, so sent him on first. I am on a round of visits, to invite my child friends to share—as they always do—my Indian parcel."

"Indian parcel?" said Maud inquiringly.

"Yes, my dear; I have had one, from an old friend in India, who sends to me, about once a year, all kinds of good things."

"How kind of her!"

"It is a gentleman."

"Are you going to be married to him?"

"My child, we are about a hundred years old, between us."

"Oh, what things are in the parcel?"

"I was going to ask Miss Herrick to let you come and see."

Permission was granted, with thanks, and the four moved on, Maud trying to get a little conversation out of Willie; but this was not easy. He informed her that he lived "up there," pointing to the sky; and when Maud, rather awe-struck, asked, "Do you mean in heaven?" he said, "No; the Crescent on the Cliff."

"But your auntie doesn't live there?"

"Aunt Jane does—not my own auntie."

"What does he mean by his 'own auntie'?" asked Maud of Miss Berenice.

"No relation at all, if he means me. The aunt he lives with is rather of the severe order of 'infant's guide;' so I swoop down upon him now and then, like a well-meaning vulture, and carry him off. Willie likes it."

"I should think so," said Maud. She thought so still more in the evening—while enjoying guava jelly and preserved ginger—which last, she said, would have been perfect if it had not been so hot; whereupon Miss Berenice told her she might as well say that strawberries would be better not so sweet.

"May I ask you something, ma'am?"

"Of course, little one."

"What dog is that, under the glass case?"

"Alive, he was a present from the very same friend whose jelly you are eating. He died of old age, my little King Charlie; so I kept what I could of him, by having him stuffed."

"Didn't you miss him very much?"

"Very much. I have never had the heart to get another in his place."

That night, Maud said to Miss Herrick, "I should so like to buy a dog!"

"What for?"

"For Miss Berenice. Hers died, and I think she would like one—a King Charles."

"They are not very easy to get, but perhaps my brother could manage it. We must ask your uncle's permission, though. You had better write a note to go with mine."

"But I write so badly."

"So do most people, before they are seven years old."

"Will you tell me what I ought to say?"

"I think not."

So Maud's was entirely her own letter. It looked rather like a certificate that she could not write one; but, years after, when her uncle died, an old man, the little yellow sheet was found among his most

valued papers, neatly labelled "Maud's first letter." This was all she said :—

"DEAR UNCLE,

"May I buy a dog? It is for Miss Berenice. She is nice, and she wants one, I think. Miss Herrick says I may, if you say, 'Yes.' Please do, because I am always

"Your own little MAUD."

The answer was characteristic.

"DEAR £50,000,

"Buy an elephant, if you like, and send me in the bill, because I am always

"Your own big UNCLE."

The King Charlie arrived safely, and with him a little Maltese dog, that Maud fell enthusiastically in love with.

"Oh, Queenie, isn't it a beauty? Even prettier than the other. I wonder to whom it belongs?"

"Do you like him?"

"Who wouldn't, I wonder?"

"Then he is yours, from me. I had your uncle's permission."

"Oh, do you really mean it?"

"Even so."

"Well, I can't love you any more, that's one thing. But oh, doggie, you shall be a happy dog!"

Both canine presents gave unqualified pleasure, and Maud was learning to laugh and be happy, unconsciously, as a flower grows. The sea did part of the work, and it seemed a pity to leave it; but Miss Herrick was the chief agent, after all, and it was a happy party of three that met in the big house in Bloomsbury on their return.

When they were settled at home Miss Herrick began to revise Maud's studies.

"What poetry have you been learning?" she asked.

"None; uncle said it was silly."

"Well, what then?"

"Eh?" Maud looked puzzled.

"Suppose it is so; one must be silly sometimes. I should think there never was any one so unhappy as to be wise every moment of her life."

"Then you like poetry?" said Maud.

"My child, it has been the joy of my life. I have even written it; at least what passed for poetry with me."

"Oh! I should like to learn what you wrote, Queenie. Is there some in your note-book? May I look?"

Miss Herrick was not quite prepared for this: however, she gave permission, and Maud speedily found some lines, and said, "Please, read them to me."

Miss Herrick had called the poem "The Return Emigrant Ship," but it was, in fact, a lament over a baby brother of hers, who had died at sea.

As she read, the feeling of the words came back to her, and she gave them the expressiveness they might otherwise have lacked.

Maud listened, softly repeating.

BABY BORN AT SEA.

JOHNNIE, little tender Johnnie,
With the silky curves of sunny hair
Waving like the ripe corn, golden, rich and bonnie,
Round his baby brow so dear and fair.

Mother's pet, and father's, saucy little treasure,
Laughing over leaping waves and foam;
Tyrannizing o'er us at your baby pleasure,
Johnnie, they'll be proud of you at home.

What, my baby Johnnie! have you got a will, then,
In your month-old nature, of a man?
Well, we must control it when you're older—till then
Take it, and be happy while you can.

Such a spendthrift laddie! thrown away his penny!
Well, no matter, since the deed is done;
Though we are not rich folk, pennies we have many,
While of baby Johnnies we've just one.

Never lean so seawards !
  Penny sank deep down
Far away to leewards—
  Johnnie mustn't drown !

Did I hold too tight, then ?
  Poor little arm !
Never weep for fright, then—
  There's no fear of harm !

Mother will keep baby—
  See, the land is come ;
Sleep now, and it may be
  You may wake at home.

Lullaby, my baby ; rock him, waves, to slumber !
  Gentle spirits, close my baby's eyes ;
Shower on my darling blessings without number :
  Ah ! not one too many can arise !

Clinging soft and warm, oh, loving little fingers,
  Tinted like a shell I used to see ;
Like the rosy cloud there, where the daylight lingers—
  Lingers o'er the calm yet shifting sea !

Baby must to bed now, tuck'd in warm and cosy,
  Laid upon the pillow like a flower ;
Sweeter than the flowers cull'd for any posy—
  Mother will watch by him for an hour.

BABY DIED AT SEA.

Oh, my baby angel—little tender Johnnie—
  Thou hast waked at home, at home by now !
Is it very far there—is it, baby Johnnie ?
  Can I sometimes come and kiss your brow ?

Surely, so it seems when I am bending o'er thee ;
  Heaven must be somewhere very near,
Since my tiny Johnnie went alone before me,
  Leaving mother all astonish'd here.

Hush, ye breezes, hush! nor touch him e'en so lightly !
  Pitying, pass on, and leave my pain !
Ah, ye dusty sunbeams ! wherefore come so brightly ?
  Johnnie will not catch at ye again.

Dimpled marble fingers, cold and solemn lying ;
  Never lifted now to press my cheek,
As they did last even, while the hours were flying—
  Ah, last hours, why did ye never speak ?

Father is so sad, his eyes look dark and sunken—
  Johnnie never grieved him so before ;
Wearily he stagger'd, like a man grief-drunken,
  As he went just now to look for shore.

In the English harbour we are landing Johnnie—
  Such a quiet baby, calm and cold ;
Oh, we never thought the first of land for Johnnie
  Would be underneath the churchyard mould !

Just as they had finished, Maud's uncle came in, and said, "What are you doing now?"

"Learning to be silly," said Miss Herrick.

The gentleman was rather an original himself, and liked the courage of the reply ; so it was with a smile that he said,—

"What kind of silliness?"

"Love of poetry, and little children."

"Yes," said Maud, "verses about a baby Johnnie. Do you know, uncle, I used to think there weren't any children in the world but me, and I never dreamt of growing up to be a woman; I suppose I meant to die a child. It's a pity, isn't it, when people don't live to grow up?"

"Pity, indeed! Miss Herrick, you have done wonders for this child of mine, but she is rather queer still. I commit her to you; only, mind you keep up her arithmetic."

Miss Herrick was not so pliant to Maud's uncle as Miss Prince had been, in the matter of lessons. She resolutely put away all the calculations of interest and percentage, up to which the child had been unnaturally forced; and led her along such gently rising paths that Maud made the discovery, as astounding to herself as to every one else, that 'sums were such fun!' There was another improvement, too; she now had dancing lessons, wherein, besides the merry exercise, she gained little girl friends, with whom she exchanged hospitalities with a child's whimsical formality.

Miss Herrick would sometimes see, with a smile of unselfish joy, herself forgotten for a whole evening, in the interest of a discussion of dolls' business; for Maud had a doll now. But when the guests were

gone, and the quiet night was descending, Maud's head would seek its old resting-place on her wise friend's shoulder, and she would say, "Thank you for another happy day, my Queen."

Maud grew up into that best of things, a womanly woman, and her uncle would sometimes point to her triumphantly, as "a fair specimen of bachelor bringing-up;" but he forgot the sea and Miss Herrick.

AT THE SEASIDE.

EDGAR MARMADUKE had lost his degree, through idling away the first part of the term, and his health, through overwork in the second; so now, broken in spirit, he was spending the long vacation in a quiet seaside place, with the sole companionship of his little sister, having begged for her, and her only, on the ground that she was neither clever nor pretty, but "just a good little soul." Jessie's goodness was mostly unconscious, but it was none the less potent for that; her little pure face, innocent even of self-knowledge, was a source of infinite refreshment to her brother, worn, as he was, in body and mind. They sat, one morning, on the sands, watching the waves, whose soft monotonous murmur soothed Jessie like a lullaby; not so Edgar. He said, presently,—

"Swish, splash! how incessant it is; unrest would seem to be the law of the universe."

"Perhaps they rest in working," said Jessie.

"Like the angels? That is rather a deep thought for you."

"Only half of it was mine. You said about the angels."

"How old are you, Jessie?"

"Seven, next birthday."

"And I was seventeen at my last. What a contrast; your little life, perfect of its kind, and mine a broken circle! You never wished that you had not been born, I suppose, did you, Jess?"

"Oh, no."

"Why not?"

"Why—why should I?"

"Why, indeed? You are in tune with all creation; no failure in you, no passions."

"I get into dreadful passions sometimes," said Jessie.

"What about?"

"Oh, different things. The last time was before we came here. Some one told a story about me."

"To whom?"

"To Sophie Lumsden, my great friend; that was what made it so bad, you know. She didn't believe it, of course; but it was so dreadful of any one to try and separate us."

"What did you do?"

"I stormed, and then I was ashamed."

"Why?"

"I don't quite know: I felt as though I had been so wicked."

"What came of the falsehood?"

"Oh, it did'nt do any harm; mamma said spiteful stories seldom do, because people see through them: careless ones are often more mischievous, she says."

"How do you feel when the passion is over?"

"Miserable; till I ask God to forgive me, and help me against it next time."

"Does He?"

"Yes, always; only sometimes I'm too wicked to want to be helped. I feel as though I *must* be in a passion, and punish people."

"So you have your struggles, too?"

"Yes, I suppose everybody has." Jessie was growing pale and tired, with all this introspection; so her brother ended it with, "Look at this crab, Jessie."

"How puzzled he looks!" as Edgar poked him about with a stick. "Let's see, Edgar, what he'll do if we let him alone."

"You're afraid I may hurt him, eh?"

"You wouldn't mean to!" But Jessie looked relieved as the stick was put by; and, as she said, it really was fun to see Mr. Crab left to his own devices. First, he seemed to take a general survey, to make sure that the harassing stick was really gone; then,

he began to house himself, by burrowing under the stones. But the large ones were too heavy, and the small ones would not cover him, so his first attempts were failures; at last, however, one flat piece of chalk rock, partly bedded in the sand, seemed to be just the thing; it was two or three times his own size, yet not too heavy, so Crabby's two front claws went busily to work, throwing up the sand from under it. "One would think he would blind himself," said Jessie. But there was no fear of that; a few minutes more, and Mr. Crab was an established householder.

"He ought to have a vote for the county," said Edgar; "his tenement is freehold, I'm sure."

"'Tisn't a good tenure, though," said Jessie, whose other brother was articled to a conveyancer.

"Not exactly—let's unroof him," said Edgar, skilfully tilting over the chalk stone. The crab looked so astounded that Jessie could not help laughing, though, as she said, "It was too bad." But Crabby did not stay long to be laughed at; very soon, he had established himself under a rock too heavy to be tilted off him.

"How those creatures always manage to succeed in what they undertake!" said Edgar.

"Because they keep at it, I suppose," said Jessie.

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"Persevere, as my tutor was always dunning into me—but he had a speciality for the humdrum virtues."

Just then; the sound of loud cries rent the air.

"That poor woman with the crying child, again," said Jessie.

"I wonder where she comes from?" said Edgar.

"I've seen her working at the upholsterer's in High Street."

"Ask her what's the matter with the child."

Jessie obeyed, rather timidly; but the woman readily told her troubles.

"It's my boy, sir; Rupert his name is. His joints is so weak the doctor says he'll never walk, unless he paddles about in the sea water; so I bring him down, in my dinner hour, and this is how he serves me—fights and cries, and won't go near the water. He knows I can't stay past my time, and so he conquers every day."

The woman was crying, with worry and exhaustion, and the child, who seemed to be about four years old, stood looking at her, sullenly.

"When shall you be here again?" asked Edgar.

"A little after four, sir."

"Well, we shall stay here until then—you can leave him with us if you like; take his shoes and socks

with you, and perhaps the hot sand will drive him into the water."

"Nothing 'll drive him, sir, nor yet lead him; but the air 'll maybe do him good, and I'll leave him, thankfully."

"Is he to stay with us?" said Jessie, as the woman disappeared.

"Yes," said Edgar.

"What for?"

"An experiment. I want to see if perseverance will answer with the human animal."

"Who is to persevere?"

"You. If you can succeed in getting that young urchin into the water I will have another try at my degree."

Jessie could not see the least connection between the two subjects, but she knew that Edgar's degree lay very near her mother's heart, so she determined to do her best with this unpromising little touchstone of principle.

"If I was clever," she thought, "I might talk him into it; or strong, I would put him in—the naughty boy!—but he would be out again directly. If Edgar had but chosen something else!"

During her musings she had, of course, done nothing; perhaps the best thing possible, for Rupert,

being prepared only for active warfare, began to find his freedom rather dull. There were no other children near, so he sidled up to Jessie, making questionable overtures of friendship by throwing small handfuls of sand over her clean dress; but this was of holland, and would wash, so Jessie quietly waited to see what would come next. Presently, he came nearer, and taking a good look at her, said, as though the remark was the result of mature deliberation, "You're ugly."

"She's not!" began Edgar; but he did not want to remind the children of his presence, so silenced himself. Jessie was a thorough little lady—she never answered rude speeches; so now she only said, gently,—

"Are you afraid of the sea, little boy?"

"No," angrily.

"I thought perhaps you were." She spoke truthfully and simply; but Rupert, young as he was, had a boy's dread of being suspected of cowardice, and went on indignantly, "I'm not afraid a bit; I'd walk in this minute." He began to move towards the water's edge; Jessie smiled at what seemed likely to be her easy victory, but he caught sight of her face, and, with a look of mingled keenness and obstinacy, turned back, saying, "I won't, neither."

"I'm glad you are not my brother," thought Jessie; but then she remembered Edgar, and how quietly

grieved her mother had been about his degree. She determined to persevere.

"Do you like shells?" she said to Rupert, turning out her little pocketful into her lap.

"Yes—I'll have 'em!" And, unceremoniously snatching up a handfull, he ran off.

"Oh, Rupert, naughty boy! give me my shells!" But Rupert ran on, till, stepping on a sharp rock, he fell, crying piteously.

"Poor little thing!" said Jessie, forgetting all about the shells, as she took the culprit on her knee, and began bathing the wounded foot in a little pool near. The wound was only a scratch, after all; but the little clear pool grew sandy as she stirred it about, so she said, "Will you let me carry you down to the clean sea, Rupert?"

"Yes."

It was as much as she could do, but she managed, somehow, to stagger down to the water's edge; then, as she put him down, Rupert, to her astonishment, kissed her, looking away directly after, as if to see who had done it. Jessie kissed him again, and Rupert, having tried the water with one foot, found it so pleasant that he walked in with both. Probably, in spite of his boasting, he had been afraid of that mighty mass of water, and was now

reassured by finding it nothing so very terrible, after all; or, perhaps, Jessie's patience had conquered his wilfulness. He said, good-temperedly, "I'll stay in, till mother comes," and, with intervals of merry play with Jessie, he did so.

The poor woman was tearfully grateful to Edgar, but he said that it was all his little sister's doing. Jessie thought the being thanked was the most uncomfortable part of the business; but it was with a light heart that she said, as they went home, "You will try for your degree now, Edgar?"

"Who said so?"

"Why"—tears of disappointment began to rise in Jessie's eyes—"I thought you said that, if Rupert, went into the water, you would try again; and he did, you know."

"Well, one—no—reason is as good as another; I will see what I can do."

That time next year, Edgar Marmaduke wrote B.A. after his name. He said patience and perseverance had conquered, and should be regarded as humdrum no longer.

WEAK LITTLE GEOFFREY.

"MAMMA," said Alfred Stourton, "Reginald Vane says, may I spend the evening with him; he can't come here, because all the others are going out, so that he must stay with Geoffrey."

"What a nuisance a sickly child must be!" said Mrs. Stourton, complacently.

"He wouldn't have much chance here, that's certain," said Alfred.

"And you would be the last, Al, to put yourself out of the way for him," sneered his sister Esther.

"Yes," said Adolphus; "Al can always see everybody's faults but his own."

"Well, I can't stand here squabbling—Reginald is waiting outside; can I go, or not, mamma?"

"Oh, yes, go, and have done with it!" with which ungracious permission Mrs. Stourton's children had long learnt to be content; still, Alfred drew a long breath of relief as he left the house, and said to Reginald, "I can't think how it is you never seem to have any rows—we're always at it."

"Well," said Reginald, "I think if we are better off than you in that, it's Geoffrey's doing. He was always the little weakly one; and when he was a baby, it set him crying if any one spoke sharply, and so I suppose that got us out of the way of it."

"Didn't that make him rather soft, for a boy?"

"Soft? not a bit. Dr. Cairnes says his spirit has half kept him alive. Why, once when he was a mere mite of a child, he fell from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and when we went to pick him up, there he sat, laughing, with the tears running down his cheeks, and saying, in his old-fashioned way, "Wasn't it droll?"

"Our children howl enough to deafen one, if they get a scratched finger."

"If anything happened to Geoffrey's fingers it would be a general loss; you never saw such a set for handiwork—they'll do anything. He makes all my cricket-balls, in some wonderful way of his own, out of twine, and they've twice the spring in them that the others have."

"Does he draw?"

"I should think so. Give him some black and red chalks, and he'll make you such a hobgoblin you'll hardly dare to look at it." Here Reginald broke off, saying, laughingly, "Mamma says, talking about

one's own family shows almost as much egotism as talking about one's-self."

"But I like it," said Alfred; "I'd talk about our children, if they said or did anything worth it; but they don't."

By this time the boys had reached Reginald's home. Geoffrey established himself out of the way, in a corner of the sofa, with cardboard and scissors, to employ him; while Alfred was entertained in some wonderful fashion with pyrites of copper, and an electric battery, of Reginald's making. It would not act, but then, as he said, triumphantly, you could tell what it was meant for, and that was a great thing.

Geoffrey's tastes were not scientific; so, in the midst of the experiments, he fell fast asleep. When the other two discovered this, they drew their chairs together, and told ghost stories in the orthodox ghostly whisper. Alfred's was, that his grandfather, when he was a boy, was out late one night, and saw, on the path before him, a tall figure, ghastly white. It came walking, walking, till he could hear his own blood rushing through his veins. Nearer and nearer it drew; then, all at once, it was upon him, with such force as to make his nose bleed. In the fascination of fright he had run against the sign-post, to which a new coat of white paint had been given that

day without his knowledge. The laugh over this story awoke Geoffrey, who said, innocently, "I haven't been to sleep, have I?"

"Haven't you, though?" said Reginald; "you must tell us a story, for a fine."

"Very well," said Geoffrey, who had the knack of waking with all his faculties in working order; "what shall it be?"

"Something about the sea."

"Will a river do?"

The boys deliberated, then said, "Yes, a river would do, if there was swimming." Geoffrey settled himself into a Turk's attitude, and began:—

"One day, a boy was standing by a river-side, fishing. It was a hot day, and the boy was getting sleepy, when he saw two eyes looking at him out of the water—not fish's eyes, by any means—large brown ones, with a wishing look in them. The boy roused himself, and saw that they were in a head—a dog's head—a dog with his feet tied together, and a lump of wood fastened to the string. Perhaps the piece of wood was meant to sink him, but it didn't; and there he was, floating down to his death; and he knew it—anybody could have told that by his eyes. He didn't cry at all—perhaps he was too far gone, but he looked at the boy, and the boy looked at him.

At last, the boy began to choke, and said, 'I can't stand this.' So he took off his clothes, and the dog looked keener, as much as to say, 'That boy's coming into the water; can he swim? or will he drown, like me?' He didn't drown—he swam; he got the dog; he laid him down on the bank; he untied him, and then he cried over him,—he didn't know why; the dog cried, too, but that was for joy. By-and-by they finished talking, and went home together. The boy's mother didn't like dogs, but she said he had earned this one, so she let him keep it. Many dogs have loved men, but never did dog love like this one; he showed it in fifty ways, especially once. The boy, who had a silver chain hanging on his waistcoat, was watched by three rough men, who coveted it, and they followed him to a lonely place, and set on him; but the dog held one by the leg, and howled so, he fairly frightened the other off. The boy fought one, and, presently, a man who had heard the howling, came running up to see what was the matter; and this man's old mother had been knocked down by one of these men, so he was very glad to catch him: the rascal was imprisoned, and didn't get the chain after all."

"That's a good story," said Alfred; "what became of the other two men?"

"They ran away all their lives, till at last death caught them. Regy knows a good story about a dog; tell it, Regy."

So Reginald began: "Rhoda was a little dog, with brown boots and black stockings, and a funny-looking brush of a tail. She had long dark hair, fine and soft enough for a lady, and eyes that might have gone with the hair — such beautiful eyes! brown and bright, with almost as many changes as her master's face, which Rhoda studied, till you could tell, only by looking at her, whether he was gay or sad. Rhoda's master was an artist, young and poor, and alone in London. He was very clever, but as yet no one had found that out. So, sometimes the dealers did not buy his pictures, and sometimes they did not pay for them; and, very often, doggie and her master went dinnerless. One day, the artist came home very tired, having sold his sketches for so little, that, after paying some pressing debts, there was not enough left for his omnibus fare; so, a long walk added to his other depression, and made him sink despondingly into his chair, and wish aloud that he could push the smoky walls of his bare little room out of sight, even if they left him shelterless. But, catching sight of little Rhoda's wistful face, he added, 'Well, little lady, patient as usual?'

The gentle tones emboldened the dog to jump on her master's knee, when he took her face in his hands and said, 'What a pretty head you've got, Rhoda!' whereupon she wagged her tail, as though that was good news. 'I declare I'll paint it,' he continued; and, much to doggie's surprise, she found herself seated on that forbidden ground, the table, with a pencil laid across her paws, as a sign to keep still; and very still she kept, till she fell asleep. Her master, staying only to get a light and some bread and water, worked on till the morning; then he awoke her, for one more look into the soft, loving eyes; and, shortly after, the painting was done. 'It ought to be a success, my doggie,' he said; and even the dealer admitted that it was worth more than any previous picture, and, accordingly, gave more. But this was not to be the end of Rhoda's portrait. In a few days the dealer sent to say that a purchaser wished to see the painter. So he went, and found a grave, stern-looking gentleman, who asked to speak to him alone, then said, 'Can you paint those eyes into another picture?' 'I dare say I could,' he answered, wondering what any one wanted with Rhoda's eyes. 'The fact is,' the gentleman went on, 'they happen, strangely enough, to have just the charm which the artist failed to catch in the likeness

of a little daughter we have lost, who was deaf and dumb.' During this speech, the stern face had settled into such a sad look that the artist grew interested, and promised to come at once to the country-house where the picture was. The alteration was very successful; the oddity of the thing set people talking of the painter; and the success he had almost despaired of came in a flood when it did come. Quite a crowd of friends gathered round his first Academy picture, which, they said, took the town by storm; but they said also, 'How strangely sad he looks!' And it was so; for, on the day of her master's triumph, faithful, gentle little Rhoda had died."

"I wish I hadn't got to go home," said Alfred, when Reginald had finished; "it's so nice here. Well, good night, Regy; good night, little Geoff."

When Alfred's sister asked if he had not been dull, with Reginald and his sickly brother, he only laughed, and contented himself with hoping for many more such evenings.

But changes were approaching which the children knew nothing of. In a few weeks from that time, the Stourtons had sailed for Australia, and Alfred did not return to England till he was a man, past thirty; then, meeting an old schoolfellow, he asked for Reginald Vane.

"Living with his brother Geoffrey," was the reply. "They are curiously happy, quite devoted to each other."

Alfred felt a spasm of jealousy, lest his friend's life had been sacrificed to his younger brother. "Reginald was always Geoffrey's 'care-taker,'" he said.

"Yes, that's what Geoffrey says, when his brother gets restless at being dependent on him."

"Reginald dependent on Geoffrey?"

"Yes; didn't you hear the story? Regy was a practical engineer, you know. He was down in the northern counties somewhere, superintending a new line, and there was an accident with the blasting. He lost the use of his right hand, and his sight was injured in some way."

"His poor mother! She was so proud of her handsome boy," said Alfred.

"She was dead when this happened, and the others scattered, or dead; only those two left. Geoffrey took him home, nursed him into vigour enough to turn consulting engineer, and now does all his plans for him. Geoff. was always a clever little chap with his pencil and brush. It more than half keeps them both now, his paintings sell so well."

"What! Is he the Geoffrey Vane, A.R.A.?"

"Yes."

"Well, I was a dullard, never to think of that. If we haven't got an engraving from one of his pictures in our parlour at Adelaide!"

"He is the most distinguished of all our old school set."

"Ah! And I remember patronizing him, as the little weakly one!"

THE HARD CREDITOR.

LINDEN LODGE was as pretty a villa as could be seen anywhere round London; and that is saying a good deal, although the critics ridicule our suburban architecture. It was built of greystone, relieved by white round the windows, of which the frames were grained oak, as well as the supports of the overhanging eaves. It had stood long enough for the climbing rose and japonica to half cover the walls; and the lime-trees, from which it took its name, were just the right size: old enough for their blossom to fill the summer air with sweetness, and young enough not to shadow the flower-beds too much. The large green lawn was flecked with rose-leaves from May till November, and I should not like to say how many pears and peaches were grown and eaten in that sunny little garden. As to strawberries and cherries, of course nobody could count them. And yet, one bright June morning, Linden Lodge was not

a happy house. Somehow—the master of the house could not clearly tell how, and no one else could imagine; but, somehow—his affairs had become embarrassed, and on this morning, a party of his creditors had assembled in the handsome dining-room, to decide whether he should be made bankrupt at once, or whether, as he earnestly desired, time should be allowed him to recover himself. At length, they agreed to the latter course, all but one, who, finding no one willing to support him in what he called firm measures, left the room in dudgeon, declaring that nothing should alter his decision. It happened that he strayed into the back drawing-room, divided by its closed folding-doors from the front, where the children, who should have been upstairs, were enjoying the doubtful consolation which human nature seems always to fly to in seasons of disquietude, from the Plague downwards, viz. an upsetting of all established laws and customs. Marion, the eldest, was washing dolls' clothes in a rare and delicate old china bowl; Ernest, practising croquet with some Chinese ivory balls, the fine carving of which promised to disappear under the process; Annie was out of mischief, singing to her doll a little baby-song that she had learned from her mamma:—

ASLEEP.

My little queen is sleeping,
With gentle breaths of rest
Just fluttering the ringlets
That lie upon her breast.

My little queen is dreaming,
A smile is on her lips;
In sweetest revelation
A word from off them slips:

"Mamma," the little sleeper
Says, tenderly and slow.
What have I done, my darling,
That you should love me so?

Her hands are growing restless,
Her sleep is not so calm;
I lay a finger gently
Upon the dimpled palm.

The little hand folds round it
In peace so still and deep;
Unconscious, but so loving
And lovely in her sleep.

Oh, little fragile blossom,
Dropp'd down from heaven on me;
God help me to preserve thee,
And keep thee tenderly!

She ceased, presently, to listen to Arthur's account of what his mother, in sheer need of unburdening her heart to some one, had just told him.

"Papa told mamma," he said, "that all would have been well, but for that one hard creditor."

"What a horrid wretch he must be!" said Marion.

"I hope he'll be in a mess himself some day," said Ernest.

"But what makes him so hard?" said Annie.

"His nature, I suppose; but, for one thing, it seems that papa sold him some shares in something, just before they went down, and he thought papa knew they would fall; so, as they were friends in the City, he said it was shabby."

"But," said Marion, "papa didn't know, of course."

"No; and he told him so, only he wouldn't believe it."

"Not believe papa!" said Ernest; "the fellow ought to be shot!"

"But you didn't believe him the other day," said Annie.

"When?" asked Ernest, indignantly.

"Why, when he said that Walter Conolly was ill through eating bad sweets."

"Well, I thought it mightn't be quite, exactly true, you know."

"Perhaps that was what the hard creditor thought."

"You seem very fond of papa's enemy, Annie;

I don't think either of them would thank you," said Marion, scornfully.

"I can't be very fond of some one I never saw; but—don't you remember?—mamma said, the other day, we ought to play fair, even in talking."

"When was that?" asked Ernest.

"We were talking about Patrick Kean, and mamma said he really was a disagreeable boy; but that didn't make him everything that was bad."

"Well," said Marion, "I can't pick out bits of people. I like them, or I don't like them; that is trouble enough for me."

"But," persisted Annie, gently, "mamma wasn't talking about saving trouble, only about playing fair."

Marion subsided into a displeased silence, and Annie was pondering as to whether she had done wrong, when her musings were cut short by a servant opening the door and saying, "Miss Annie, you're wanted."

"I wanted! Who wants me?"

"A gentleman in the next room."

"Who is he?" But Martha, who never wasted words in tranquil times, was now as laconic as a telegraphic message. She had already disappeared.

"Perhaps it's the dentist," suggested Ernest, with a boy's appetite for horrors.

Annie did not think that, but still she went very slowly. She was not shy, naturally; but already the family troubles were clouding the sweet confidence of a happy child, and she wondered, as her hand rested on the door-handle, whether a bankrupt's little daughter ought to say "Sir," and make curtsies, as the poor children did. The stern-looking stranger did not reassure the poor little maiden; he said, abruptly, "I have been listening to your talk in the next room. Dishonourable, wasn't I?" Annie could not say "No," and would not say "Yes," so she kept silence. "I didn't think whether it was honourable or not, till I heard some one talk about 'playing fair:' that was you, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, who do you think I am?" With a child's quickness, Annie had already guessed; but how could she call him the hard creditor to his face? and her startled thoughts could frame no other name.

"Certainly, the shyest child I ever came across," muttered the gentleman; adding aloud, "I am the hard creditor."

"I am very sorry," said Annie, gravely.

"For whom? me, or yourself? or the world in general?"

"I am sorry we were talking so—and—oh, won't

you believe papa? Indeed, he didn't know about the shares: he told mamma that if you thought him such a rascal, it was no wonder you were hard. Indeed, papa never tells stories."

Annie was eloquent enough now, with her tearful eyes, and little pleading hands. "Won't you please let papa go?" she went on, with some confused idea that a creditor was a kind of gaoler. "Mamma said she wouldn't mind a bit about selling the piano, and the pretty things, and the ponies, if only papa was clear; and there's my dolls, too: Princess Alice is very handsome, and I don't care much about her. Baby Blanche is my pet. Do you think the creditors would want her?"

By this time, in her earnestness, Annie had come close up to the hard creditor, and now she ventured to lay her hand on his arm. He imprisoned the little fluttering fingers, and said, "You could not spare Baby Blanche, eh?"

"If I ought, I could," said Annie, with grave thoughtfulness. "I should miss her dreadfully, of course; we've got so used to one another. And she isn't like Princess Alice; it doesn't matter what shabby frock I put on her—she smiles just as good-temperedly, and she always likes to do what I want her to."

"Queer child, this!" said the creditor; "do you suppose your dolls are alive?"

"Well," said Annie, with weighty deliberation, "I don't know; I feel as if they were, so I suppose they are alive to me."

"Metaphysics, metempsychosis, and nobody knows what, hidden away under a doll's frock. What next, I wonder?"

Annie had no reply for this speech; the long words made her think, at first, that the gentleman was going to tease her, as her brothers sometimes did, by talking to her in Latin; but his next words were delightfully intelligible.

"Well, you may tell your papa our affair shall be settled as he wishes."

Annie's eyes danced with joy and gratitude, as she said, "Oh, thank you so much! We'll never forget it!"

"What, you and your dolls?"

"All of us. May I call mamma, to say 'Thank you' better?"

"No; I am going. Tell her I don't think that Miss Blanche ought to have shabby frocks. Here is something to buy a new one."

"Mamma doesn't let us take presents," said Annie, drawing back from the proffered note. She

would have done so still more had she known its value—£50.

"Tell mamma I made you take it. Will you pick me a rose for my button-hole?"

"Yes, a beauty." Annie was rapidly beginning to deserve Marion's charge, of being fond of papa's enemy; but then, he was not an enemy now. Her little fingers went hovering daintily among the roses, till the "beauty" was found; then, after a friendly "Good bye," she ran to her mamma with the wonderful story, which was confirmed in the evening by a note from the creditor, hard no longer, to her papa, who called her his little blessing. Arthur and Ernest agreed that it really was best to play fair, even in talking. The shrewd friendly creditor gave some valuable advice as to the arrangement of the tangled business affairs, and Baby Blanche did have a new frock.

SCRUBBY.

BY LITTLE ALICK.

YESTERDAY, my bird died; papa said, "Alick is a good boy not to cry." Once, baby died; Nurse said, "Master Alick is a cruel boy not to cry." I wonder what they meant? I did love baby dearly, but I loved my bird too—my poor bird! He wasn't pretty at first; Nurse said he was ugly, but he was such a dear old Scrubby, and I loved him so—oh, dear me! If you like, I will tell you all about him; I should like —there isn't anything else to do now.

Well, one day I was riding outside with Holmes —that's our coachman, you know—and he said, Would I like to buy a canary bird? and I said, "Yes, why?" and he said one of his boys had one to sell. "But I must ask mamma;" so I pulled down the window behind us, and mamma said, "Don't do so, Alick, you'll fall!" And I said, "Please, mamma, may I buy a bird?" And she said, "Naughty boy, Alick! you'll tumble off the seat; sit up directly!" And I said, "But, please, may I?" And she said, "Yes, yes, child." So I said, "Mamma says I may, Holmes;

when will you bring it?" And he said, "Well, I can't bear to see it, the boys scare it so; so, if you like, when I take the carriage round, I'll send Jack with it." And I said, "Please, who is Jack?" And he said, "Jack's one of my boys; the bird's his."

When we came home, there was rice-pudding, and it was hot, and I was in a hurry, and I left some on my plate, and Nurse said, "You are a naughty boy, Master Alick, to be so dainty!" And I said, "I don't like you a bit, to-day, cross thing!" And then James—that's our footman, you know—came up, and he said one of Holmes's boys wanted to speak with me in the hall. And Nurse said, "Nonsense, James!" And I said, "Oh, please, it's all right; do let me go, dear Tilly—I will love you so!" And she let me go.

Jack was a big boy, with a red face; and I said, "Don't you like your bird?" And he said, "Yes, but they tease it so." And I said, "Why don't you ask them not to?" And he said, "They'd do it double for that." And I said, "They must be very unpleasant boys!" And he said, "You'd better not say that to my face, young master!" and he got redder and redder, and he looked so big; but he showed me the bird—it was little, and yellow, and rough. And Jack said, "How much money have you got?" And I said, "A shilling, and sixpence, and a halfpenny, and two

new pennies; is that enough?" And he said, "Well, no." And then Nurse came down, and she said, "I think you had better let me settle this, Master Alick; you may take the bird upstairs, if you are sure your mamma said so." I took him up with me, but he wouldn't be friendly; he shrugged himself up in the corner, like a shy little boy at a party, as though he didn't want to know anybody. I asked Nurse, when she came up, what his name was, and she said, "Well, they call him Scrubby." So she called him, and put a piece of sugar on his perch, and by-and-by he came and ate some of it. Then it was time to walk in the Square. It's a horrid dull place, our Square, like a prison for the trees; but Nurse said I might find some chickweed there for Scrubby, and so I did—one little piece: the gardener said he couldn't afford to grow any more. So we took it home, and a beautiful horse-chestnut leaf to shade Scrubby's cage; and he liked it. He picked the little white buds out of the chickweed, and then he played with the leaves, and once he began a little bit of a song, only he changed his mind; Nurse said it was because he was moulting. When I went down after dinner, mamma was not there—she was not well; but papa said, "I think this is a good little boy, Nurse?" and Nurse said, "Yes, sir: I think the bird amuses him;" and

papa asked all about it, and let Nurse bring it down, and then—what do you think?—he said I should go with him next morning to buy a new cage; and we went, and it was such a beauty, and I do think Scrubby liked it. Then it was another week, and we were such good friends—he wasn't frightened a bit. We even used to play bo-peep; he would hide away, and then he would come out and peck my finger, and almost laugh with his little black eyes; and a funny old man used to bring him groundsel, and he used to peck off the little seeds, and eat them like filberts. But one dreadful night Nurse woke me, and she said, "You must get up, my darling;" and I knew there was something the matter, because she was so kind; and she carried me down stairs, and papa took me, and he said, "Poor little fellow!" And mamma was in bed, and said, "Good bye, precious!" and she kissed me, and they took me away, and I couldn't help it, because mamma said, "Go." So Nurse put me in bed; but, when she was gone, I knelt up and said, "Pray God make mamma better, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen!" And I said it till it was morning; and then papa came, and he said, "Alick, mamma is better;" and I was so glad I couldn't help crying when I told Scrubby; and he said, "Chirp, chirp." And then, it was another week,

and mamma was quite better, and we were all so happy, and papa bought me a beautiful white bath for Scrubby, and I took it to him. It was in the evening, and I couldn't see very well, so I called, "Sweet! sweet!" He had got to answer to that quite well; but he didn't come, so I turned his cage round to the light, and there he was, up in the corner; so I said, "You lazy sweet, to go to sleep already!" But he wasn't asleep! Little Scrubby was dead! I can't tell you any more about him! It makes me want to cry.

Perhaps you would like to hear what companion I had, after Scrubby—poor little Scrubby!—was dead. It was dreadfully dull without him; there was no one to be quiet with; and I'm not a strong boy,—I don't play well. So, one day, papa said to Nurse, "The child mopes—that's what's the matter with him; can you not get a playfellow for him?" Nurse went red and white, and her hands shook so she dropped her work, and though she opened her lips it seemed as though she couldn't speak, just because she wanted to so much. At last she said, "There's my little girl, sir, if my lady wouldn't mind; she's too young to teach Master Alick any harm." Papa opened his eyes, and said, "Your little girl?" And Nurse said, "Yes, sir; my lady knows,—my husband

left me, more than a year ago, and I had to part with my child, to support her; but it is hard only to see her sweet face now and then—my baby!" Nurse was crying down in her throat, but she kept her eyes dry, to watch papa's face I think. He said, "Very irregular!" but I touched his hand, and said, "I should like it, papa;" and then he laughed, and said, "What business had you to hear?—Very well, Nurse, we can try it for a little while." So the baby was sent for, and an old woman brought it; the funniest old woman you ever saw. She had forgotten to take her nightcap off, and the borders filled up all the front of her bonnet; and she lifted up her feet in walking, just as if she was going up stairs; and I should think she must have run all the way, she breathed so hard; and she called me "my lord," though papa is only a baronet, you know; then, when she saw that wasn't right, she said, "duckie," all the while—only fancy! I think Nurse was glad when she went; she took the little girl in her arms then, closer; and she kissed her and cried over her, almost as if she was crazy. I laughed at first, but then I wished my mamma would sometimes hold me in her arms a long while like that; but she hasn't time, because she has to go to so many parties. Then I sat down out of the way, and cried a little, because it was so lonely.

By-and-by Nurse said, "Come, Master Alick, little Winnie wants to know you." But Winnie didn't; she shook her shoulders at me, and made herself so ugly; but she got better after, and we played, only she was very stupid,—I suppose girls are. She could only play at catching things, and running round the room; but Nurse said we got on capitally, so I suppose we did.

One afternoon the sun was shining, and Winnie and I were playing at being good, and Nurse was mending my socks, and we were all so still that we quite jumped when we heard a heavy pair of man's boots coming up stairs; they made such a noise that we didn't hear James till he opened the door, and said, "Some one for you, Nurse!" Then the man with the thick boots came in, and he said, like as if he was pretending to be cross, "Wife!" His lips were trembling under his beard, and his eyes were wet; but Nurse sat looking at him, as though she couldn't see. Then he said again, "Wife—Tilly!" and her face began to break into crying: at last she said, "Oh, John!" and ran into his arms, and he held her there. I didn't like to listen to what they said then; but, by-and-by, she drew him to a chair beside her, and said, "Now tell me;" and he told her, how he came to go away and leave her. This is what he said: He was going to look for work, and she scolded him

for not having any, and he said, "I suppose you won't care to see me again, unless I get some?" and she said, "No." Then Nurse broke in, crying, "How I have hated the sound of that 'No,' ever since!" He went on, "I got none, and stayed out the night, in a fit of pride; then I was ashamed to come back, though I began to get on, and now I am doing well." Then Nurse said, "Oh, John—the baby!" "Yes," he said; "she brought me back, after all; I thought the little un would find it so hard, with no father,—and you'll forgive me, for her sake, won't you?" He spoke very rough, but even I could see it was because he was so in earnest. And Nurse laid her hand in his, and said, "I'll go with you to the world's end, John." Then he took up little Winnie, and I thought they were all going away directly, so I said, "Tilly! won't you say good bye?" And she said, "Bless the child! I had forgotten him; John, I can't leave him with no one." And her husband said, "All that's right, Tilly, I should wish to do." So he went away; but soon a new nurse came, and then Tilly took her little girl, and said, "Good bye," and I cried; but she said, "Oh, don't cry, my darling, it's like my wedding-day over again." And I said, "Are you very, very happy?" and she said, "Yes, thank God!" so I didn't cry any more till afterwards.

When my own nurse was gone, it made me remember Scrubby again; and I could not bear even to see the sparrows come to the window, because it seemed so hard for them to be alive, when my pretty bird was dead; so I told papa, and he made me a song about them. I think I can say it to you, if you like; he called it—

THE SONG OF THE CITY SPARROWS.

When the summer-time is ended,
And the winter days are near;
When the bloom hath all departed
With the childhood of the year;

When the martins and the swallows
Flutter, cowardly, away;
Then the people can remember
That the sparrows always stay;

That, although we're plain and songless,
And poor city birds are we,
Yet, before their days of darkness
We, the sparrows, never flee;

But we hover round the window,
And we peck against the pane,
While we twitteringly tell them
That the spring will come again.

And when drizzly dull Novembe
Falls so gloomily o'er all,
And the misty fog enshrouds them
In a dim and dreary pall;

When the streets all fade to dreamland,
And the people follow fast,
And it seems as though the sunshine
Was for evermore gone past,—

Then we glide among the housetops,
And we track the murky waste,
And we go about our business
With a cheerful earnest haste ;

Not as though our food were plenty,
Or no dangers we might meet ;
But as though the work of living
Was a healthy work, and sweet.

When the gentle snow descendeth,
Like a white and glistening shroud,
For the year whose life hath ended,
Floated upward like a cloud ;

Then, although the open country
Shineth very bright and fair,
And the town is overclouded,
Yet we still continue there ;

Even till the spring returneth,
Bringing with it brighter birds,
Unto whom the city people
Give their love and gentle words ;

And we, yet again descending
To become the least of all,
Take our name as "only sparrows !"
And are slighted till the fall ;

Still we're happy, happy, happy,
  Never minding what we be ;
For we have a work and do it,
  Therefore very blithe are we.

We enliven sombre winter,
  And we're loved while it doth last,
And we're not the only creatures
  Who must live upon the past.

With a chirrup, chirrup, chirrup,
  We let all the slights go by,
And we do not find they hurt us
  Or becloud the summer sky.

We are happy, happy, happy,
  Never minding what we be ;
For we know the good Creator
  Even cares for such as we.

ARTHUR'S HOLIDAY.

MR. DILROY, Arthur's father, was going to Paris for a week. His wife was to have accompanied him, but she was not very well, and feared the fatigue of the journey; so Mr. Dilroy said, "Suppose I take the boy?"

"That would be excellent," said Mrs. Dilroy.

"Oh!" said Arthur.

It was such an eloquent "Oh!" of thanks, and pleasure, and longing, that it settled the matter. Arthur was to go, and he rushed off with the news to all his chief friends.

"How do you go?" asked Donald Moray.

"By London Bridge and Boulogne."

"That is such an old-fashioned route!"

"I don't care;" and Arthur ran joyously to another companion, who said, "I am as glad as can be, old fellow. Won't you enjoy yourself, that's all!"

Arthur thought so too.

Next morning they started; steaming down the river, in a golden haze of sunshine that made St. Paul's look like some grand dome seen in a vision.

There were not many passengers, so Mr. Dilroy and Arthur soon fraternized with another father and son, French, who were returning to Paris after a visit to London. The boys exchanged names—Arthur Dilroy and Emile Gautier.

"How do you like London?" said Arthur, who found his French, as he said, "shaky," while Emile's English was fluent and good: he had been at school in England.

"I like it well," said Emile, "but it is so black."

"Isn't Paris black?"

"No, it is white; we keep our public buildings washed."

"Oh," said Arthur, "we have other things to think of, you know." But he felt rather crest-fallen; he had been hearing his father boast that the English invented cleanliness. By way of recovery, he plunged into an animated account of his school sports, leaping, running, wrestling, and so on.

"That is something like play, isn't it?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Emile; "it is what we call 'la gymnase,' in France, and have a professor for."

"What is your favourite game?" said Arthur.

"Out of doors?—l' Allumette, I think, if it is played well."

"How does that go?"

"One is called l'Allumette; and he stands, not looking——"

"Blindfold, do you mean, like this?" said Arthur, tying his handkerchief over his eyes.

"Oh, no; simply with his hands before his face: it would be insulting to bandage him."

"Well, I would not trust many of our fellows not to peep, if they could."

"C'est l'honneur, you know," said Emile, looking astonished. Arthur began to think that fair play was not the exclusive English patent he had considered it; he continued,—

"But, how do you play this game?"

"The blind one stands in the centre, and the others say, 'L'Allumette, l'Allumette, where shall we go?' Then he says, 'I will have, say Théophile, Lucien, and Jean, for my stags,' and the others fall back; then, these three dance round him, and say, 'L'Allumette, l'Allumette, where shall we go?' and, while they are dancing, he notices the footfall of each; then he says, perhaps, 'Théophile round to the wood-shed, then to the beech-tree, then to the gate,' and as many places as he can; to the others he gives each a different route. They start off. They make mistakes, sometimes by design. Perhaps Théophile

will go first to the tree, and then to the wood-shed. The blind one listens and discovers; he calls out, 'Théophile wrong!' Those not playing say, 'How wrong?' and he says, 'The tree was second, he has made it first.' Then they say, 'Théophile must be l'Allumette.' But he says, 'No, Lucien made an error before I did,' and Lucien says 'Yes,' so Théophile escapes. The blind one must detect every one's error."

"Only by listening?"

"Only by listening."

"Why, you must want ears like Indians.' What do you play at, besides?"

"Our private theatricals."

"Aren't they a horrid bore?" Arthur's tone was commiserative.

"Oh, no. I have small features, you see, so I take the woman's parts. Last time I was a jealous wife. I rave, I tear my hair, and then I fall, penitent, in the arms of my husband."

"Didn't you quarrel, awfully, with him, behind the scenes, when it was all over?"

"Oh, no. The one who took that part is my good friend. We embrace often."

"You don't mean that you kiss one another?" said Arthur, with a face of horror.

"Truly. Why not? I love him."

"Well, you are queer."

Emile thought Arthur was queer, but there was this difference,—he did not say so. Perhaps it was well that, just here, the discussion was closed. They passed the Nore, and every one fell ill at once. When the two boys met again, it was only for a brief adieu in Boulogne harbour.

Any firm land would have been welcome to Arthur, after nine hours' tossing, and the cheerful white houses, with their green blinds, had just enough of a foreign air to make them attractive.

In about an hour they left in the train for Paris, Arthur sleepily remarking that "the fields were just like market gardens, and the grass was not nice: it looked as though it had been sown a blade at a time."

Shortly after daybreak they reached Paris, and Arthur, refreshed by a good sleep in the train, was delighted with everything: the soft sweet morning air; the clumsy clattering market carts, with their fragrant loads of flowers and vegetables, and the musical jingling bells on their horses' collars. Above all, he admired the tall handsome houses, with their flower-decked windows, and, here and there, a graceful clinging vine. When they reached the hotel, they found that not one room would be disengaged until night; there was an English excursion party there.

Mr. Dilroy decided to spend the day over his business, but Arthur was evidently tired out, so madame the mistress of the hotel kindly proposed his going to sleep in her room till one could be prepared for him.

Nothing loth, Arthur agreed, and followed her, away from the grand staircase, up a narrow flight of red-brick steps, into what he thought must surely be a doll's house; the chamber was so pretty and so small; here, however, madame stayed, and merrily wished him "Bon repos!"

At first, he could see no bed, but there it was, in a little curtained alcove, and on the dainty white coverlid lay the largest cat he had ever seen, a Persian.

Arthur objected to cats, and was accustomed to see them, instinctively, fly before him; but this one just lifted its soft eyes, and looked at him with such easy well-bred insolence that he was fairly cowed, and began to feel as though he was, in truth, a very wild little islander.

"Ah, Finette!" said madame, in a tone of polite remonstrance; and puss jumped down.

Madame perceived Arthur's look of disquiet, and would fain have reassured him, but she had as little English as Arthur had French; besides, she had all the affairs of the hotel on her hands, and could not

stay to comfort a forlorn little boy; so she withdrew, only saying, "You may come to me if you like, if you awake before your papa shall return; I will be in the bureau."

"The bureau!" thought Arthur, bewildered. That was the name of a queer old-fashioned piece of furniture which they had at home; something between a chest of drawers and a cupboard. Madame could never be going to get into such a thing as that. It would be like that dreadful story of Ginevra, who shut herself up in a chest and was buried alive. He looked round the room. There, surely enough, was an ebony-coloured bureau, but such a slight fragile-looking thing, it quite cheered him.

"Anybody could get out of that," he said to himself, and then he pursued his comfort, curiously enough, by reflecting on madame's cherry-coloured ribbons; these fluttered about her head in such brilliant abundance that he drew from them a conclusion, not so illogical as it might have been, that their owner could probably take care of herself, as she would do everything else, thoroughly, and with all propriety. Lastly, his roving eyes went out of the window, down into the square court-yard, and, on the opposite wing of the hotel, he saw a small board, on which was written, "To the bureau!"

"Of course: it is madame's office. What a goose I was!" he thought, with revived energies.

Looking out of window proved to be a pleasant employment.

First, he could see the salon, a bright little room, that seemed to be made of glass and gilding, with a wonderfully smart piano in one corner, and clocks everywhere. Then, the salle-à-manger, a long grave-looking apartment; though this, too, was panelled with mirrors. Then, screened by orange-trees in tubs, was the entrance to the kitchen, where Arthur could discern the cooks, all clad in white calico, doing wonderful things, over fires that an English servant would have pronounced too small to make a round of toast by.

But it was the fourth side of the court-yard that, at length, interested Arthur most; this did not belong to the hotel, and was a curious contrast to it.

Instead of snowy lace curtains and glistening visions of mirrors and gilding, these windows, all open and bare, revealed the lives of the workers, the dark hard surroundings of those who could only eat what they earned; and yet it was to one of these rooms that Arthur's eyes were attracted, by the most beautiful flower and pot that he had ever seen. The flower was a camellia, just in bloom, with one exqui-

site white blossom gracefully uprising from its throne of dark green leaves. The pot was brown earthenware, urn-shaped, and covered with the richest, rarest tracery of raised vine tendrils and leaves; the artist seemed to have caught the very droop of the branches.

"Wouldn't it be a grand thing for mamma?" thought Arthur. "I should think that tailor fellow, squatting there, stitching, would be glad to sell it."

But, boy as he was, Arthur changed his mind presently, when he saw the wonderful radiance that came into the tailor's face, as he looked upwards, and began singing—singing to his flower, there could be no doubt about that, though all that Arthur could catch was, "Pauvre mignonne! pauvre mignonne! Ah, que tu meurs trop tôt!"

Arthur found himself getting what he called "soft," so he looked away to another window, where a flourishing blanchisseuse was folding, and ironing, and scolding, and singing, all in a breath, amid festoons of damp linen, and steam that looked scarcely less solid.

"I think I'll turn into bed," thought Arthur. "What a queer floor this room has!"

This part of the house was very old, and the room, though on the fifth story, was paved with small glazed tiles, coloured a deep brown red, that agreed

wonderfully well with a square of Turkey carpeting laid by the bedside.

Arthur fell soundly asleep, and slept till he was awakened by the sound of music in the court-yard. He looked out, and saw three men, one with a harp, another with an instrument that sounded like a guitar, but looked like a hurdy-gurdy, the third singing—"a stupid comic song, I'm sure," said Arthur, noticing the man's lively gestures.

Being awake, he thought he might as well dress, and found himself only just ready, as his father, having done a day's business, came to take him down to the table-d'hôte.

Arthur had never dined out before, and, in the glitter of the gas, the flowers and silver dishes looked imposing; but he was soon reassured. Besides his father, he had a kind companion in his next neighbour, a pleasant old gentleman, who entertained him with anecdotes of the Prince Impérial, showing his quaint graceful self-possession, and universal kindliness; also, what Arthur could thoroughly appreciate, how he had a pair of ponies, and drove them, too, when he was only seven years old.

Opposite to Arthur were some Prussians from Australia, taking holiday in Europe; next to them, on the one side, an Italian gentleman who had just

come from Ceylon; on the other, a young Norwegian, fair, and slender, and shy, not looking much older than Arthur himself; yet he was all alone in Paris, "to learn French," he said, having already been a year in Vienna to acquire German.

"I should think one could learn anything here," said Arthur; "the people are so nice—they don't make fun of a fellow when he blunders."

"No," said the Norwegian, "the French never give, and will not take, that kind of fun."

"How well you speak English!" said Arthur.

"We see a good many of your compatriots in Norway, and I learnt it first. My father says English is always useful, and it is something like Russ in one thing, that when you have learnt it, all others seem easy."

"Oh," said Arthur—he did not quite know whether to feel proud or ashamed of owning such a difficult language.

The next morning Arthur awoke in a puzzle of delights; nothing but his father's voice calling to him to get up, made it seem real that he could have gone to sleep under a gold crown and crimson hangings, with chairs even more resplendent, and a whole company of Cupids telling the wrong time of day on the mantelpiece.

"All right, thank you, papa," he called, as soon as he had wits enough; and proceeded to dress himself as quickly as possible.

They breakfasted in the salon, which did not look nearly so bright by day, and Arthur was at first disconcerted by seeing no signs of bread-and-butter, only, as he said, "long cudgels of loaves that would do to fight with, and little rolls like baked dumplings." Butter was soon brought, however, and he found the "dumplings" to be the nicest bread that he had ever tasted.

"Isn't it jolly here, papa?" he whispered; and Mr. Dilroy said, "Wait till you have seen the Louvre."

"Shall we go there to-day?"

"No, not to-day; if you were to see that first, you would not do justice to anything else."

So they went for a quiet stroll in the pleasant shade of the Tuileries Gardens, where, to Arthur's delight, he found what he called "a real English Punch and Judy" fairly established as one of the attractions of the place, with a smart canopy overhead, and a space roped in for spectators.

"I wonder whether they call it Punch here?" he said.

"You can ask that nursemaid," said Mr. Dilroy.

Arthur, blushing very red, touched the demure

little bonne, and said, "Comment appelez vous cela?" She answered smilingly enough, but all he could make of her reply was something like "La Quinquerelle."

Crossing one of the many bridges over the Seine, they entered the Corps Législatif, and saw the salon where the Duchess of Orleans stood, with her little son, the Comte de Paris, trying to induce the people to recognize him as king, when his father, Louis Philippe, had abdicated.

Near here is the tomb of Napoleon; they went in, but it was so terribly cold, after the hot glare of the sun, that they durst not stay, and Arthur only carried away a remembrance of the beautiful marble pavement, which, round the tomb, is formed into a wreath of green laurel-leaves tied with violet ribbons.

Still keeping on the south side of the river, they came to a poultry market, where Arthur fairly burst out laughing at the babble of voices: an auction sale of pigeons was just in progress, and every animal in the place seemed to be giving tongue, save some quiet little fawns that amused themselves with nibbling at Arthur's glove through the bars of their stout willow cage.

Just here the bank of the river was lined with bookstalls, where, for a franc or two, Mr. Dilroy

bought some astronomical works that would have cost as many pounds in England; certainly, they were very dirty.

Very soon they entered the Quartier Latin, the old Students' Quarter, and, for the first time, Arthur felt a little timid—the houses were so high, and the streets so narrow and apparently deserted, while across them still swung those iron chains on which, in the dark revolutionary days, men were hung instead of lamps. It was a relief to come out into the broad space at the new fountain of St. Michel, whose bronze figure, standing in calm triumph over the Satan at his feet, seemed curiously reassuring.

The Pont St. Michel brought them to Nôtre Dame, the grand delicate towers of which seemed to have drawn them as they came along.

The outside was so perfect that Arthur expected more than perfection within, and so of course was disappointed.

He turned critical, and objected to the coloured stripes round the stone pillars as being "just like the Egyptian Court in the Crystal Palace at home."

Mr. Dilroy threatened to show him the "Morgue," by way of effectually sobering him; but, of course, did not keep his word.

Arthur was looking tired, so, turning into the Rue

de Rivoli, they entered a confectioner's, and refreshed themselves with ices and wonderful cakes; then they sauntered into the Palais Royale, where, to Arthur's gratification, the fountains were playing in the shape of Prince of Wales's feathers, and the jewellers' shops had a grand display of mulberries made of garnets, and lilies made of pearls.

After a rest here, they went home, just in time to dress for dinner; finding, among the fresh arrivals, a Russian lady and gentleman, who were travelling half over Europe, with a retinue of ten servants, two parrots, a monkey, and two huge wolf-hounds. Arthur met one of the hounds on the staircase, and gave it plenty of room.

The next morning he was up very early, and heard a strange scuffling noise in the lobby outside his door. He went out to see what it was.

François, one of the male "housemaids," seemed to be skating up and down the polished floor.

"Que faites-vous ici?" said Arthur, in his "shaky" French.

François held up his foot, and showed a brush fastened thereon: he was cleaning the oak flooring.

"Why, that is capital fun!" said Arthur. "It's a kind of indoor sliding on the ice. Let me try, will you?"

François understood Arthur's gestures, and transferred the brushes to his feet, which, forthwith, ran away with him, and from each other. He slid about in a staggering fashion, lost his balance, and, finally, came down with a crash that sounded terrific in the echoing corridor.

"I won't try any more, thank you," he said, as François deftly relieved him of the brushes, and helped him to rise.

"What a silly I looked!" he reflected, in his own room. "How that chamberman must be laughing at me!"

But it happened that François was thinking, "I like these English; they are so honest and so good-tempered. They have their own bravery, too; that was a painful fall, and this little monsieur did not quiver an eyelash."

After breakfast, Mr. Dilroy took Arthur to the Louvre, where he was arrested at once by the dark beauty of the little antechamber leading to the grand room.

"Did you ever see such oak carving, papa?" he said. "Only look up there, in the roof, at that old man's face grinning down upon us, with two of his front teeth knocked out."

Looking upwards, Arthur was moving along, when

he came suddenly against a boy about his own size, who, though not at all in the wrong, raised his cap, and said, "Pardon!"

Arthur did the same: he had already acquired the habit of politeness, and meant to retain it, though he expected to be laughed at by his school-fellows for so doing. Turning to see who it was that he had so nearly knocked down, he exclaimed, "Why, it is Emile! Don't you remember me? On board the Boulogne boat, you know. I *am* glad to see you, old fellow!"

Emile had been long enough in England to know that "Old fellow" was rather more than equal to "Cher ami;" so his pale face brightened also, as he said, "I am here with my sister."

"Where is she?"

Arthur spoke rather loudly, and Emile instinctively lowered his voice as a corrective, so that it seemed like a confidential disclosure, when he said, "She paints."

"Dear me!" said Arthur; "how shocking!"

"Shocking?" repeated Emile.

"I should like to catch one of my sisters at it."

"Why?"

"Why? Why, no respectable woman in England does it."

"What?" said Emile, drawing back, so as to give full force to his note of interrogation; "do you mean that there are no lady artists in England?"

"Well, I was stupid!" cried Arthur; "I thought you meant she painted her face."

Emile smiled good-naturedly; but Arthur went on, very seriously, "Do you know, I never was such a goose in all my life as I seem to be these three days. I thought the mistress of our hotel meant to smother herself, when she talked of going into the bureau, and, this morning, I made such a spectacle of myself, trying to imitate the man polishing the lobby. I used to think I was rather a sensible fellow."

"It is the change," said Emile; "I felt so, when I first went to England. My school-bag was torn, so I asked some of the boys where I could get a new sac. They took me to a miller, and told him I wanted to buy a sack to carry my books in. He laughed too much."

"What a shame!" said Arthur, who was gaining a keen perception of the rights pertaining to "the stranger in the land." He continued, "You, in Paris, would have too good manners for that. Yesterday, at the omnibus office, the clerk gave us some preference,

and an old woman in the crowd grumbled; but she was silenced directly by two or three saying, "Do you not see?—they are English; it is right."

"That is not all courtesy," said Emile; "in Paris, the English are much liked: the Emperor encourages this. In the provinces, though, it is not so. I think, in the provinces everywhere, they like only their own people. In London, the boys were much kinder to me."

While Emile and Arthur were talking, Mr. Dilroy had met a gentleman who had come to seek him. He now came up, saying, "I must leave you here, Arthur; you will be well amused,—only take care to get into no mischief. I trust you, mind; I have to go with Monsieur Langlot."

"Very well, papa. I shall be all right. Emile is here."

Mr. Dilroy looked as though he thought two boys were rather more dangerous than twice one; he seemed to see them already smashing the costly vase of lapis lazuli which towered above their heads. However, the mention of Emile's sister consoled him somewhat, and he departed.

"It is such a nuisance, that bothering business," said Arthur; "it is one of papa's clients,—at least, it isn't him: he is dead; but he had some property

over here, and now, it is to be sold, and papa has to see to it."

Emile did not encourage any revelations, and his silence reminded Arthur of his father's dictum, that clients' affairs were, doubly, secrets; so, by way of change, he said, "Suppose we go to your sister, Emile?" and they went.

Emile's sister, Mademoiselle Pauline, was copying the portrait of Napoleon the First, out of the large painting representing his retreat from Moscow. She seemed to have studied her subject till her own face had, insensibly, acquired a likeness to his, so resolute and sad; on both there was the same pallid brightness —the look of a marble statue seen by moonlight.

Arthur stood silently gazing at the picture. The "Little Corporal," invincible hitherto, conquered now; with the awful mutineer, Death, busy among his army, stealing away his men, crippling his power, chilling the warmest hearts that ever beat for a leader. Fighting Death, even Napoleon succumbed: though still with that strange calm upon his face. The sweet flexile mouth, that, even in the picture, seemed to quiver with every groan that went up at his feet, was yet controlled, stilled, by the wonderful far-gazing eyes—the eyes of one who, while enduring anguish, looks beyond.

Arthur, recognizing something of this, turned, and saw the same expression reflected on the face of the artist.

"She is lovelier, and sadder looking, than any one I ever saw," he said, at length, drawing Emile away.

"Yes," said Emile, "she has much sorrow."

"Tell me," said Arthur, his voice trembling, in sympathy with Emile's.

Instinctively, the boys left behind them the brilliant Salon d'Apollon, and went out to the little balcony overlooking the quiet Seine.

"Tell me," said Arthur again, with a sympathy that had no taint of curiosity.

"I think I must tell some one, or my heart will break," said Emile, "and none of our own friends may know. Will you forgive me, if I weary you?"

"You won't do that," said Arthur; and his English heartiness came pleasantly now.

"Well, it is thus. The first thing I can remember is, we live, papa, mamma, Pauline, and I, on our own terre,—how do you call it?—heritage. It is quite small, not like your English estates, but it is charming, and we are as happy as the birds. That is when I can first remember, ah! so long ago. Then mamma, ma bien aimée, she fell ill, and in quite a little time she

was dead: that was when Pauline first had those shadows in her eyes. Then, I do not know how it was, but my father became embarrassed; an English gentleman lent him money. In some time, our home, everything, is not ours—it is his. But he is not cruel; he suffers us to remain there, and no one knows. Then Pauline paints, paints, all the day, and she sends me with the pictures to the shops, because I am little, and no one notices a boy. Ah! that was hard at first, even for me; but Pauline kisses my forehead and says, 'It is for papa, dear love,' and I am silent. Then, in time, she tells him, and gives him the money, and he begins to pay the debt: we hope to have our land again our own; in one year more we look to be free, and Pauline smiles more every day. And now, the year is not come, and we are not ready, but the Englishman is dead, and papa goes to London (that was when we met on the boat), to ask the heirs to wait; but they say 'No, it must be sold at once.' And now, every one will know, and our friends will be angry that we have kept the secret all these years, and Pauline and my father have been working in vain."

"But," said Arthur, indignantly, "you have paid for part; how can they sell it?"

"I do not know," said Emile, wearily; "but papa

says they do not behave unjustly: it is only that they do not know him, and so do not care for him, but just pursue their way."

"I wish my papa could help; he is a solicitor."

But Emile's little spring of hope seemed to be dry. He stood still, his hands clasping the balcony, and his eyes resting, drearily, on the misty dome of the Panthéon. "There is nothing to be done," he said, presently, with the quietness of despair; "we must bear it, I suppose, as other people bear things: but, for Pauline, it is hard, very hard."

"I am so sorry," said Arthur, and his eyes spoke more eloquently. He could not care any more for the Louvre treasures, though Emile, with gentle courtesy, put off his grief, and began pointing out divers notable things: swords, and bronzes, and marbles; and some priceless drawings, first rough drafts by Cuyp, Paul Potter, and greater names. Arthur sympathized with a little stray swallow, that had flown in at one of the open windows, and was wheeling round under the grand painted ceiling, seeming to wonder, pitifully, what had made the sky turn all at once so hard. As to the souvenirs of modern royalty —the bijou cot of the little King of Rome; the study table of the unhappy Dauphin, Louis the Seventeenth; and Marie Antoinette's pathetic last letter—

they seemed, not without reason, to present French monarchy as only a succession of tragedies.

When Mr. Dilroy appeared, Arthur introduced him to Mademoiselle Pauline, and then, watching the favourable impression she could not but make, he hurried his father away, up to the quiet chamber of naval models, where he could tell Emile's story, uninterruptedly. Mr. Dilroy listened with singular attention; at the close he said, "That is the very property that I came over here concerning."

"Oh, papa"—the change in Arthur's face was wonderful—"then you can arrange it for them, and it will all come right, like one of Cis's fairy tales?"

"Not exactly—the fairy is lacking."

"Couldn't you——?" began Arthur.

"Be a fairy? No. You see those little people had no responsibilities, nor any particular sense of honour, apparently. I have to act for my clients."

"But would they not do as well by Emile's father buying it, as by any one else?"

"Yes, if he could complete the purchase at once, not otherwise; they want the money for other things—everybody does want money, as a general rule."

Arthur wrinkled his forehead, in deep thought; presently he said, "Could not somebody lend Monsieur Gautier the money?"

Mr. Dilroy smiled at him.

"That means me, of course; just now, I was to be a fairy—now, a somebody. But I could not do this, for many reasons—chiefly, that same one, lawyer's honour. But, happily for the Gautiers, your thought has occurred to some one who can aid them; that was the gentleman who called me away this morning. He is an old friend of theirs, has only just learnt their embarrassment, and offers to undertake the purchase for them."

"Then will you agree, papa?"

"I have written to my clients, and advised them to do so—honestly; this gentleman, in Monsieur Gautier's name, offers a fair price for the estate, and a few hundred francs in addition if it can be arranged by private sale."

"Oh, I hope it can be managed. Wasn't it queer, papa, for Monsieur Gautier to come over with us?"

"Yes; but I had never seen him before. The foolish fellow, instead of coming straight to us, went first to the heirs themselves. They knew almost nothing of his transactions with their uncle, and sent him to us, with private instructions not to accept his terms; and, then, it was my partner who received him."

"I shall be longing for their reply," said Arthur.

"We cannot have it till the day after to-morrow; they would not be likely to telegraph; but I can't have your holiday spoilt, you know, so to-morrow we will go to Versailles."

Arthur was willing enough, since there was nothing else to be done, and they started early next morning.

An hour's railway journey through a pretty open country brought them to Versailles, and, once in the palace gardens, Arthur's discourse resolved itself into a long "Oh" of wonder and delight. After the white dusty glare of Paris this gorgeous park of flowers seemed a paradise; it was delightfully still, too: not being a fête-day, they were almost alone.

In the palace, Arthur took to studying French history, beginning with the portraits of the kings, and the Crusade pictures, in the upper apartments; but, as he and his father descended, and room after room grew more brilliant and grand, he gave the matter up, and at length posed himself in Marie Antoinette's chamber, before a recumbent figure of Rest that supported the mantelpiece, and declared that this was the natural end of all things,—that repose was the logical result of so much beauty.

"I suppose that was what Marie Antoinette thought till the mob appeared at those windows," said Mr.

Dilroy; and then he showed Arthur the corridor along which the unhappy queen escaped.

"Don't you think French history is very sorrowful, papa?" said Arthur.

"Pathetic?—yes, just there. The beautiful queen and her innocent little son, and the brutalized, downtrodden people."

"Afterwards, too, papa. The little King of Rome, you know—we saw some of his hair in the Louvre: it is near the handkerchief that lay on his father's death-bed in St. Helena."

"Yes, Napoleon's life was a great tragedy. But look at that clock there: according to the guide-books it should do wonderful things, but I never saw it even tell the time correctly."

"One could live here for a week, couldn't one?"

"Yes, and then miss something worth seeing; we may have another day here, but we must go home now."

After dinner they went for a walk, and Arthur found that the lamps in the Rue de Rivoli looked like a string of pearls, seen from the dark shade of the Tuileries. They went into the private palace gardens and fed the tame gold-fish, which came to them as readily as to imperial benefactors. In the Place de la Concorde they found an old man with

a telescope, through which Arthur looked, and saw Jupiter's moons and Saturn's rings.

Then they went into the Champs Elysées, and, in passing the open-air theatres, heard some very screechy singing; but the lamps in the trees, and the general gala brightness over everything, drew them on, even to the boundary of the city westwards, the grand marble Arc de Triomphe.

They were glad to ride home, and Arthur was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

The next morning's post brought the wished-for letter from Mr. Dilroy's clients. They consented to the proposed arrangement, and were quite willing to dispense with the public sale.

"Then no one need know! Won't Emile be glad?" cried Arthur.

Mr. Dilroy said, "Yes; but, from these other letters, I find that we must leave for London to-night."

Arthur looked rather blank, and his father added, "Poor old Arthur! you will not have had much of a holiday, after all; and, even now, I must leave you for an hour or two, while I go and settle this affair with Monsieur Gautier and his friend."

"Never mind, papa," said Arthur, bravely putting away his disappointment. "I am glad poor Emile

will be happy again, and we have seen a good deal, have we not?"

"That is the way to take it, my boy. See, you will want to take home some things: there are some knick-knack shops round here; here is something to spend in them."

"Oh, thank you, papa."

Arthur went off, happily, with some bright gold pieces, and found, as he said, that "Shopping in dumb motions was very good fun."

Mr. Dilroy came home much pleased with all the family of the Gautiers, and said, "I have promised to take you there this evening, to say good-bye. They have taken up a notion that you have brought them good fortune—only French sentiment, of course; but that is very pretty in its way, like those china flowers you have got for mamma."

When Mademoiselle Pauline bent her beautiful face to his, Arthur was ready to pronounce himself a Frenchman on the spot; he and Emile promised to correspond, and "be friends always," and the evening passed all too quickly. Mademoiselle sang them a song by Monsieur Gounod—such a quaint charming barcarolle that the air lingered in everybody's ear; and the first thing Mr. Dilroy said to Arthur,

as they left Calais harbour, was a quotation from the song:—

"La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler."

Arthur smiled intelligently, and took up the refrain, "Où voulez-vous aller?"

Very pleasant was the journey through the still summer night, and the coming into London while it was yet graced by the freshness of early morning; and, most of all, Mrs. Dilroy's rosy English face.

"Frenchwomen don't have pink roses in their cheeks," said Arthur.

Mr. Dilroy laughed, and asked if that was all he meant to give them of his travelled experiences.

Arthur thought, "I have only been a goose again."

He did not hear his father say, "Do you know, wife, I was half proud of our boy. He came out such an unselfish straightforward little fellow, every-body liked him."

So Arthur was, as he would have said, "Not such a bad sort of boy, after all."

LONELY AGNES.

AGNES was an only child, orphaned in her babyhood; but love can cover all deficiencies, and this had been lavished on her, from the day when her grandmother had taken her to her bosom, saying, "My daughter, come back to me again;" and her grandfather declared, "Nothing shall be too good for Isabel's child." He was a wealthy merchant, retired from business, and living in a remote and very lovely nook in North Wales. Here Agnes had lived all her life, till she was twelve years old, except for three months at a boarding-school; an experiment which had broken down too completely to be repeated. Now, however, her governess, who was going to be married, strongly advised that she should be sent to college in London.

"How long for?" asked Agnes.

"Four years completes the college course; but you are advanced enough to enter in the second year, and, if you chose to use that busy head of yours, you might do the work of the other three in two."

"Two years!" Agnes looked rather blank. "What do you say, grandmamma?"

"If it is for your good, my child, I say nothing against it."

"And you, grandpapa?"

"It shall be just as you like, Pussykin."

"Well, I certainly should like to be turned into a clever woman, and they can do that, by all accounts; but it would be doleful, only to see you three times a year."

"I could run up to London in the Long Term, and bring you a fresh photograph of granny."

"But where should I live?" said Agnes, half hoping that she had found an insuperable objection. Miss Lennox, her governess, had, however, inquired about that, and found that a lady, living near, took college boarders, though she would not have a vacancy for two terms.

"Too long to wait, if we mean to do it at all," said Mr. Russell.

Agnes laughed. "You are impatient, grandpapa, like people at a dentist's."

"Well, I think you may as well go to where I always stay. Mrs. Tibbles is a thoroughly respectable woman, and I should feel comfortable about you if you were with her."

"Is Tibbles her real name, grandpapa?"

"Real enough; she answers to it. Her husband was a Greek, and those modern Greek names are unpronounceable."

"But a person like that would have no authority," said Mrs. Russell; "a child all alone, with no one to see after her."

"See after her, indeed! I should like to catch her at it; I can trust our Agnes."

So the matter was settled; a few weeks after Agnes was a pupil of Queen's College, and a lodger of Mrs. Tibbles's.

Mr. Russell was right so far. Agnes was thoroughly to be trusted. She had been accustomed to liberty all her life, and knew how to use it. Under a system of indulgence, she had grown up a little self-willed and fanciful; but as true, and pure, and brave as a Christian knight—more of knight than lady, it must be admitted. What she lacked was girlishness. This her grandfather always affirmed was his fault, for giving her a pony before she had a doll; but there was a certain charm about her frank careless dignity, and it protected her through the London streets better than any gossiping maid would have done. She was a veritable "Faire Una" for walking scathless through the crowd; no one even looked

at her rudely, and admiring looks she never saw—she was too busy, thinking.

Mr. Russell had overwhelmed Mrs. Tibbles with instructions as to her young lodger's comfort, and given Agnes more pocket-money for one term than she expected to use in a year; but he said, "Nonsense, child! you will have to buy fruit here, you know; and cakes and things, when you have your schoolfellows to tea."

"May I ask them here?"

"Of course, whenever you like. I have made arrangements with Mrs. Tibbles."

This sounded pleasant, but, at present, Agnes only wondered whether she should ever care to use the privilege. To her Welsh enthusiasm her fellow-students seemed terribly cool and business-like. Still, she hoped they would thaw by-and-by, and their reserve was preferable to the impertinent curiosity which had annoyed her during her brief boarding-school experience.

"If only I wasn't so lonely," she said, with a longing, amounting to heart-sickness, for the gorse-bloom on the mountain; for her grandmother's gentle rambling talk; for her grandfather's hearty "Well, my blessing?" "If only I wasn't so lonely," she repeated one evening; when, having come home from

college, dressed, and dined, she found that, as usual, it was too late to carry out her pet plan of going to the National Gallery and British Museum.

"I can't fill my heart up with lessons. Well, they must be done, all the same—that is a kind of comfort. Which shall I do first? 'Principles of Composition'—say what you have got to say, and have done with it, I should think. 'Probable Watersheds of Central Africa'—I'm sure I don't know. 'Events in the Reign of Richard the Second: their Causes and Results.' That looks tempting; I think I'll do that—but who could write, with that abominable child crying down-stairs?"

Agnes rang the bell, very sharply for her, and the servant came, panting.

"What child is that, Margaret? What is the matter with it?"

"It's missus's little nephew, miss; sickly, he is, and a bad temper, too, I think; three year old, but you'd never think it, to look at him. His mother died last week, and missus has got him to mind, while his father looks about him a bit—hope he'll be quick, that's all."

"Perhaps he would be good with me for a little while. Bring him up."

Agnes rather wondered at her own speech, and

Margaret looked yet more astounded; but she was only too happy to obey, and, accordingly, the little fellow presently appeared, crying yet louder from the irritation of a freshly washed face, and a clean pinafore.

"What is his name?" asked Agnes.

"Georgy, miss."

"I want to go home—oh! I want to go home!" wailed Georgy.

"You ain't got no home, stupid!" said Margaret, with energy; and Agnes did not wonder that her consolations had been found ineffectual.

"Georgy," she said,gently, "will you be very still, if I let you stay here, and by-and-by have tea with me?"

"Es," said Georgy, making a tremendous effort to silence his sobs.

"You may leave him, then, Margaret;" and Margaret went.

Agnes had never been used to children, and did not in the least know what to do with Georgy; but he was quiet now, and anything was better than hearing his pitiful cry; so she gave him an apple, and saying to herself, with smiling gravity, "He that is down can fall no lower," seated him on the carpet, bidding him be good, while she settled Richard the Second. The ill-fated king took so

long to "settle," and Agnes grew so interested in his faults and sorrows, that she forgot all about Georgy, till the paper was finished; then, she looked down, and found that he had crawled to the hem of her dress, and, with his face laid confidingly upon it, had fallen asleep.

"Poor little fellow!" said Agnes, a sudden rush of tenderness flooding her heart, and filling her eyes with tears. She took him up, and, half wakened, he said, pleadingly, "Mammy, kiss Georgy." Not the mother he had lost could have kissed him more softly than Agnes did then; he nestled down in her arms, and, wearied with crying, fell fast asleep again. Agnes could not return to study at once: the motherless child in her lap set her thinking of the unhappy Dauphin of France, Louis XVII., whose history she had read lately. In genuine Welsh fashion, she fell to poetizing it, softly reading aloud:—

THE DAUPHIN IN THE TEMPLE PRISON.

TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"O thou, my mother! dead so long ago,
Who never to my childish joy or woe
Didst say, 'That's trifling;' mother, hear me now;
Allay the throbbing of my burning brow,
And help me in the problem of my life,
That I may conquer in this vital strife—
A passive strife, to learn no evil thing,
An active strife, to hear no songs they sing!

They beat me for my fingers in my ears,
They beat me for my shock'd, indignant tears ;
O mother, keep me till I come to thee,
Until I from this darkened world shall flee :
So darken'd, for so long a time it seems,
That I can scarcely picture in my dreams
The life we led, before the shadows fell
Which blotted out the face we loved so well !
That face and thine seem never now apart.

"Sweet sister mine, I know not where thou art ;
I sit alone, and through the weary hours
Remember how the years were mark'd with flowers.
It comes across me sometimes with a sting
That I, the captive Louis, am the king.
Poor king ! poor Louis ! poorest orphan ! reft
Of all life's joys at once, and lonely left !
But 'twill not be for long—a streak of light
Which falls, celestially serene and bright,
Upon the darkness of my prison floor,
Comes like a promise that 'twill soon be o'er ;
A passing breeze, like thy sweet breath, comes in,
Refines this leaden atmosphere of sin,
And bears my soul upon its wings to thee !
O mother mine, at last thy son is free !"

The lips kept mute so long for her dear sake *
Unclosed at length ; it was her name they spake :
Then, closed in sculptured beauty, were at rest ;
The captive king was crown'd among the blest.

* From the time he was told that some admissions of his had been used to condemn his mother to death, the child never spoke until shortly before he died, eighteen months after, in the eleventh year of his age.

Georgy lay still, in smiling slumber, till Margaret, bustling in with the tea-things, awoke him. He clung to Agnes, in such a frightened manner, that she was afraid it might offend Margaret. Luckily, however, that young person was not troubled with keen sensibilities, and she acceded graciously to Agnes's request that she might keep him for the evening.

Georgy enjoyed his tea; there could be no doubt about that. Agnes fed him like a bird, with bits of water-cress and bread-and-butter, and still Georgy said "Nice" and "More." He had been feeding on tears all day; and now, refreshed by happiness and sleep, was ready for more satisfying diet. Agnes had, emphatically, the gift of doing effectively whatever she chose to do; and, having made it her business this evening to cheer the little desolate boy, he found himself better entertained than perhaps he had ever been in his life before. She sang to him, she told him stories, improvised for the occasion, much to her own amazement, until, at last, some comical play made the weakly, hysterical child laugh so that she was frightened, and, taking him on her knee, she talked him into sober sense, enough to be willing to go to bed, with a cake for the present, and a promise for the future.

The next evening, Agnes heard, outside her door, Georgy's thin little voice, saying, "Me come, lady want me."

"Not she, indeed; one dose of you is enough for anybody," said Margaret's sharp tones.

Then Georgy's rose, pitiful and angry, "Me did be a good boy all the long day, me did; it is evening now."

"Let him come in, Margaret," said Agnes; and Georgy sprang to her. Then, taking his old seat on the floor, he said, with the gravity of a court usher, "No noise."

Stillness reigned for the next hour, while Agnes wrote, and Georgy seemed to be resting from his day's fatigue of "being good." Mrs. Tibbles was old and dull, and Margaret cross; doubtless, he had found it rather hard work. Now and then he would give a little bird-like chirp of content, but that was all; till Agnes, laying down her pen, said "There, that ought to get 'highly satisfactory' on it; we've earned our tea now, Georgy, pet."

"Es," said Georgy, decisively, "we very good."

"I think I am going to spoil you, little one."

Georgy's answer to this was, to put up his face to be kissed—such a pale thin face; with the large bright eyes so humid with constant crying, that Agnes said, lovingly, "If petting is the medicine

Georgy wants, he shall soon get stronger." It seemed that it was so. A week of happy evenings made such a difference, that Agnes grew confident, and persevered. Sometimes they went to the park close by, and struck up a biscuit friendship with the ducks; sometimes they stayed at home, enjoying long, one-sided talks, when Georgy generally answered with kisses. But out or at home, silent or merry, they were happy; and, while the motherless boy grew round and rosy, a subtler deeper change was taking place in Agnes: all unconsciously, the womanliness she had lacked was coming to her now, with the charge of a little child. It was for Georgy's sake that she conquered her shyness at last, to ask a fellow pupil if she could tell her of a toy-shop near.

"Yes," was the reply, "I pass one in going home; we can go together."

"It is for a little boy in the house where I lodge; such a fragile loving little fellow!"

"Aren't you rather lonely?" said Mildred Hamilton, the class-mate Agnes had spoken to, as they went together to the toy-shop.

"I was, till I found this child—yet more so; and we cheered each other."

"Perhaps that's how you came to be praised so for your essay on the 'Lives of the Poets.'"

"Mr. Talbot only wrote 'Satisfactory' on it.

"But he said, after class, that you had, more than any of us, the grace of tenderness."

"That must be Georgy, then," said Agnes, laughing. "I was awfully hard when I first came; it seemed the only way to keep down my home-woe, as the Germans call it."

"Is it far away—your home?" said Mildred, her voice dropping to a gentle accent of sympathy, that set free one of Agnes's torrents of words, such as she had not poured forth for weeks.

"Right up amongst the Welsh mountains," she said; "oh, such a lovely place! overlooking Cardigan Bay. Our grounds run down to the beach, Crigan beach, where the water is so clear and so deep, it is like looking into an angel's soul. You look down, down, and still it seems to get clearer and clearer. They say there's a buried city under the bay; and if you go out far enough—in a boat, you know—you can see something very like walls down in the depths."

Mildred smiled—a pleasant smile of understanding, broadening into fun, as she said,—

"Do you know, I am beginning to believe in you; some of the professors have been raving about you as the probable star of the college, but I said I did not believe in geniuses that could not talk."

"I have talked enough now—this is Mrs. Tibbles's; come in and see Georgy." Mildred went in and stayed for a chat—one of those deep talks which are a sound foundation for a friendship. This began one that was to last for years. Mildred was rather younger than Agnes, and so brought to her for solution what she called one of her puzzles.

"I think grown-up people are very puzzling," said Mildred. She was rather given to making what are called old-fashioned speeches.

"Why?" said Agnes.

"Why, I should have thought, if I had been thinking about it before I was born, you know, that grown-up people would be to us what the angels are to them—something we should long to be."

"As our perfect development? But we are all a long way from the angels."

"I didn't mean goodness, I meant in knowledge: now, they don't seem to understand even us children."

"Not so very simple a matter is it to understand us children, I fancy. But what set you thinking so?"

"Well, for one thing, there's a girl at college—a perfectly horrid girl; she nearly blinded the house-kitten with squeezing orange-juice into its eyes; and she made such mischief between one of the masters and the English assistant that now they don't speak;

and yet, every visitor that comes says, 'What a gentle graceful girl! quite charming!'"

"Is it only grown-up people that like her?"

"Yes, the little ones won't go near her; and once, when Nurse came for me with baby, he quite screamed when she tried to take him."

"Shall I guess who this unhappy girl is?"

"You never can."

"Clara Bates."

"However did you find out?"

"I heard her name the other day, and noticed that she had a hard little mouth, and that her eyes were rather too much like straight slits."

"Yes, one of the drawing pupils said she would take Clara's eyes as studies for horizontal lines; but, for all that, she certainly is pretty."

"And I suppose the grown-up people you speak of regarded her something as Georgy did some kittens the other day. He said, 'We must keep the prettiest'—though, perhaps, its fellow-kits might have given a very unsatisfactory account of it; it may have been greedy, or given to biting and scratching."

Mildred laughed a little, but soon added, gravely, "We are not kittens, though."

"No indeed; we have souls in our bodies—that people can see, if they only look steadily enough;

and, perhaps, those on the same level, fellow-children, can see clearer, with this great drawback, that we are likely to be blind to the good qualities of those we don't like."

"I don't think Clara has any—cruel and false, how can she?"

"Not one? Poor girl! she does not look ill-tempered."

"Well," said Mildred, making a great effort at just judgment, "I don't really think she is ill-tempered."

"Then, as they say that ill-temper makes half the misery in the world, she has one very good quality."

"Only one, though."

"Is she proud?"

"She is vain, but, no, she isn't proud; she will always speak after a quarrel."

"Then that is excellence number two. She is neat, too, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"That makes her pleasant to look at; better than being unpleasant, at any rate."

"Well, you have found out some justification for the elders, there—but they are queer in other things, too. They never seem to love one another."

"Not love one another?"

"No, not like we do—not even married people. Now, when I promised to marry Herbert Willis, I loved him dreadfully."

"Where is the promise now?"

"Oh, he grew so freckled when he went to Harrow, I gave him up."

"Suppose your papa comes home freckled, this autumn, from the moors: do you think your mamma will give him up?"

"Oh, she couldn't! I see what you mean; theirs is more serious—that would partly explain away another grievance of mine."

"What is that?" said Agnes.

"Why, that grown-up people never hardly talk to us in earnest. When we come into the room, if they have been talking ever so serious, they break off to say something in fun, just as if we hadn't any sense."

Mildred's rosy lips curled; she greatly resented being thought silly.

Agnes answered, "I remember complaining of that very thing to grandmamma."

"What did she say?"

"She said, 'Ah, child, if you only knew the relief it is to leave off talking "in earnest," as you call it, you would not be so anxious to begin; things in reality are very hard and unsatisfactory.'

"'But it makes us seem as though we weren't equal,' I said; and she said,—

"'Not being equal, you must be content not to seem so. Do you think Frank could go "on change" like grandpapa? or that you could manage the house?'

"'Oh, no,' I said; 'why, even Agatha'—they are my two cousins, she and Frank—'even Agatha blundered dreadfully when you were ill, and she is sixteen.' So grandmamma ended with, 'Then, suppose you stay contented, both to be little at present, and to grow up by-and-by, if it be God's will.'"

"Do you think," said Mildred, "it is wrong to puzzle over things?"

"No, indeed," answered Agnes, emphatically; "life is full of puzzles, it seems to me: some of them can be reasoned out; but, for others, I suppose we must have faith, even till the end."

When Mildred reached home, she began describing her new friend to her mamma, saying, "She is dreadfully sensible."

Mrs. Hamilton suggested that, perhaps, some of Mildred's class-fellows might find the same fault with herself.

"No," said Mildred, quaintly, "I'm not sensible, I am only queer; but Agnes really is. I should have

been half afraid of her, only, all the while that she was talking like an 'Encyclopædic' oracle, as Charley says, she was petting a little, pale boy there is there, smoothing his hair, and letting him climb into her lap; it was quite a pretty picture."

Meanwhile, Georgy had placed himself in an attitude a little too picturesque.

With clenched fists and frowning brows, he stood in a corner of the room, successfully resisting all the servant's attempts to dislodge him.

For the first time since she had begun to notice him, Agnes saw Georgy in one of his naughty fits—passionate, sullen, defiant. As often happens in these sudden storms of temper, no one knew what had caused it; probably, least of all, Georgy himself. Margaret had snatched him up, unceremoniously, to change his pinafore, but her sharp movements were nothing uncommon. Perhaps both she and her mistress had strained rather too tightly the influence which Agnes had over him. All day long he had heard, *à propos* of everything, "If you are not good, the lady will not love you," till now, when the threat was brought out again, he received it with a resentful "I don't care."

"You want a good punishing, and you shall

have it too," said Margaret, preparing to carry him off.

Agnes, however, rather dreaded the grim domestic's notion of punishment, so she said, "I would rather you left him here, Margaret," and the little culprit remained behind.

When the two were alone, Agnes said gently, "Georgy!" His angry sobs had ceased, but he did not show any signs of hearing. "Georgy, won't you come to me?"

He stirred a little, and jerked out a choked "Don't."

"Don't what?"

"Don't pretend to love me."

Georgy had grown wonderfully older, in his intercourse with Agnes; he spoke now with a quaint decision and seriousness. Agnes answered him in the same fashion.

"I never pretended anything in my life, Georgy. I can't leave off loving you, because you are unhappy."

"I isn't unhappy—I'se bad."

"Well, that is the worst kind of misery; it makes me sorry, too."

"Don't be sorry."

Georgy had stealthily drawn near, and now

touched her hand pleadingly; but, as she would have taken him in her arms, he drew back, saying, "You won't want me now; you've got her."

"Who?"

"The girl."

"What, Miss Hamilton? She is very nice, but I dare say she has forgotten all about me by now. Nobody, in all this big London, belongs to me, only Georgy, and he says he does not care for me any more."

Agnes was tired and depressed, and her face did not belie her sorrowful words. Georgy's heart broke; with a great sob, he drew down her cheek to his lips, and said, "I do care." Words failed him, poor little fellow! as they do most of us, when we keenly feel to want them; but his tones were eloquent enough, and brought tears to the eyes of Agnes. On Georgy's neck she wept out the heartache that was not all for him.

That evening seemed to be the happiest the two had ever spent together.

While Agnes wrote, Georgy, tired and still, lay on the couch, nestled close against her, only stirring now and then, to press the little penitent kisses on her soft hands. Then, when her work was done,

she told him the story of an agate pebble. How it had lain, fast asleep, on a mountain-top, with couch and coverlid of earth. Then, how a great storm had washed it down into a little sparkling river, where, through the clear water, Agate had first seen the light of day, and said, "This is life, it is glorious," and the brook and the pebble danced down the mountain-side together.

Then, when the river grew old and still, some strong men came, and tore away the agate, who never saw his first friend again.

"What became of the river?" said Georgy.

"It slowly crept on to the great deep sea; that is the death and the heaven of rivers."

"And the agate?"

"It was beaten and broken; and the hard iron pressed down upon its heart, and its old outer self was all torn away."

"And then?"

"And then, it came out beautiful and precious; and it lay, as a jewel, on a fair lady's neck."

"That is good," said Georgy, with a bright smile; "I should like to be beaten and broken, and come out a jewel at last."

"I should not like to have to stand by and see it done, though," said Agnes, softly kissing the flush

from his face. "The agate slept when it was young, you know; Georgy must rest now."

"Sing, please!" said Georgy. So she sang,—

Oh, the bonnie, bonnie heather,
And the bluebells, waving free;
Oh, the bracing sunny weather,
On the mountain by the sea;

Where my Willy's cheeks grow rosy,
And his little voice grows strong;
Where, beside the peat-fire cozy,
He and I sing evensong!

Little Willy loves the mountain,
And the bramble and the fern—
Loves the ever-trickling fountain,
And the salmon in the burn.

Little Willy sat a-twining
Wreaths of ivy in the wood;
When he said, with bright eyes shining,
"I love God, He is so good."

Georgy's eyelids drooped, in a quiet repose, that was not sleep, only because it was sweeter.

When Margaret came in with supper, she said, "Well, you do manage him, miss!"

"No," said Agnes, gravely, "it is not managing—it is only that we understand each other."

Georgy was not naughty any more. In a week or two, his father came for him, and astonished

Agnes by the warmth of his gratitude, saying, "It is easy to see what you have done for my child; he would just have pined to death without you, and he is all I have got in the world now."

"I did nothing, really," said Agnes, "only we were good friends."

"It was just everything. These are the kindnesses that the poor can take from the rich without degradation. Again, I thank you."

"After all," said Agnes, to herself, that night, —"after all, I am glad I was lonely."

MATTIE'S FLOWER.

"GRANNY, wouldn't you like to have a garden in a flower-pot? We may, if you like. Somebody's given some money, teacher says, and we're all to choose. And there's to be prizes for flowers—and I chose one to grow all over the window; and oh, Granny! it will be so beautiful, just like living in a tree! Do say 'Yes.'"

Granny generally said "Yes" to impulsive Mattie, so she assented now, though rather dubious as to the advantages of beginning in her old age to live in a tree.

Mattie disappeared, returning in a little while with her treasure; nothing very formidable as yet, except the long name, "Convolvulus Major," written on a stick stuck up in the earth. Mattie enjoyed repeating the words: they seemed to give dignity to her little pot of mould—mould and nothing else, apparently. Granny began making a complicated arrangement

of strings to secure the flower-pot on the window-sill.

"Does it want all them?" asked Mattie.

"Why, child, I've heard tell of a flower-pot as fell out of a two-pair winder, and it broke a gentleman's 'ead right in two; and he had 'em up, and they had to pay a hundred pounds—them as owned the pot."

"But how could he, if his head was broke in two?—and we haven't got any money, have we, Granny?"

Mattie's two-edged logic was rather puzzling, so Granny could only repeat that she had "heard tell of it."

"I wish I could go to sleep for a fortnight!" said Mattie.

"Bless the child! What next?"

"Why, the seeds won't even show before then, and I don't think I ever can wait."

"Yes, you can, child, if you must."

Mattie waited, growing a fine crop of patience and hope and faith meanwhile, but all unconsciously; she thought she never could have waited another day, when at last she found something appearing above the mould.

"Such a dear little green thing, Granny, with a funny brown night cap on; what's that, I wonder?"

By dint of looking, Mattie found out that the little brown nightcap was the seed, which had served as a helmet to the young plant, pushing its way up through the earth. It fell off next day, and the green shoot opened into two round leaves.

"Oh, do come and look!" said Mattie; "they're cut all round so smooth, with a dent in the middle, just as if it was done with the scissors, only better. Isn't it beautiful to see anything grow?"

"Ay, that it is," said Granny, looking at Mattie's straight lithe little figure, and thinking of the wailing orphan baby she had been eight years before.

The little plant grew uneventfully, till Mattie discovered, one day, that the mould was sinking.

"Where can it have gone to, Granny? My greedy convolvulus can't eat it, like I do bread-and-butter?"

"Maybe it does, child. I think, though, it's the watering."

"But it must be watered!"

"Yes, surely; you had better ask about it at school."

So the difficulty was taken there. Mattie's teacher looked at the little girl's pale cheeks, and suggested that she should go and get a small bag of mould from the fields.

"The fields?" said Mattie, in much the same tone as she would have said "heaven."

"Yes; you can go in the omnibus. I will come and talk to Granny about it."

"Talking" meant giving the money for the two to ride—very little, but so much to them; for Mattie had never seen a real field in all her life.

"Oh, Granny, will you go to-morrow?"

"How shall I earn our dinner?"

Mattie was puzzled.

"It's all right, child: your teacher's given me enough for that."

"Oh, isn't she good? May we go to-morrow?"

"The day after we will; I can't get ready before."

Getting ready meant washing and mending everything, in Mattie's clothes and her grandmother's, that would wash and mend; then the room had to have a grand cleaning, so as "to look beautiful" when they came back. It was well that a night's sound sleep came after this, and refreshed them for the great day's pleasure. Next morning they found an omnibus waiting at the stand, to Mattie's joy. She said, "The fields, please," in answer to the conductor's question, "Where to?" And he, who had a little Mattie at home, only laughed pleasantly to the

driver, and when they came to the end of the ride, took pains to show the old lady the way.

Soon, they saw the fields, and Mattie began running, and could not stop; she ran back half the time, to keep near her grandmother, but it seemed that run she must, till she was fairly in the middle of a field, with other fields around her; then, the exquisite still beauty of the place overpowered the little Londoner, and, drawing a long breath of pleasure, she stood with folded hands, as though she were in church. In a minute or two, a lark's song broke the soft sweet hush, and then, in a wood close by, a cuckoo began his calm soliloquy.

"Oh, Granny, I do love you so!" said Mattie, with a vehement kiss. She could not have told how she came to make this funny speech, as she would have called it in St. Giles's; her little soul was being played upon by nature's sweet influences, till, harp-like, it gave forth music unconsciously.

"I feel as if I was young again," said Granny. She looked like it, with half the tired wrinkles smoothed out of her face, and a soft moist light in her kind eyes. Soon, Mattie began flower-picking—daisies and buttercups to begin with; then she found crimson sorrel, and little white wind-flowers, and, grandest of all, real wild hyacinths.

"Oh, Granny, look, and just smell—the scent is just like them!"

"Yes, lovey; but hadn't you better get the mould now?"

Mattie scrambled into a dry ditch, where she could dig "without hurting the beautiful flowers;" and then they sat down to dinner. Granny had brought everything, it seemed to Mattie, that they could possibly want, and surely, they had never had such a dinner.

"It's almost a pity you can't have tea, Granny."

"What, directly after dinner, child?"

"No; but I mean so that we needn't go home till it is quite late."

"Well, we won't: we're going to have tea over there, by the pond; that's the place, I know, that your teacher told me of."

"Oh, how nice;" and Mattie lay down, and looked at the green, green grass, and the dancing water in the distance, and then up at the sky.

"Granny, is the sky always blue like that, in the country?"

"I don't know; there's clouds sometimes, of course, but they're cleaner than ours."

"Like those beautiful white ones?" said Mattie.

By and by, they set out to walk to "the pond."

The walk took them an hour or two, it was so full of diversions; and then they had tea. The woman at the cottage had a little baby boy, who quite appreciated the bright-eyed little girl who had come so suddenly into his life; so he laughed and crowed, and poked his curly head into Mattie's neck, and stroked her hair and her cheeks, and tried to say "Pretty," and failed, in such a bewitching manner, that she covered him with kisses, and lingered with him till Granny said that they must make haste, as it was getting dark; and, by the time they had reached home, it really was dark in St. Giles's.

The next day Mattie gathered into a bunch the choicest of her flowers, saying, "I'll take these up to Willie." Willie was a fellow lodger, who had been a constant playfellow, till one sad day, when a runaway horse knocked him down; only his knee was hurt, but it had not healed—never would heal; and between the pain and the confinement, little Willie was wearing away. But Mattie did not know this. She ran lightly up stairs, and when she entered the room Willie's blue eyes brightened as they did brighten for no one but Mattie; but when with a merry "Look, Willie!" she brought out the flowers from behind her, he fairly screamed with joy. Grasp-

ing them with careful eagerness, he breathed light kisses on the brilliant sweet things, till, "for fear they should die," he gave them up to be put in water; then he held Mattie's hand instead, and gave the kisses to it. He was a knightly little fellow, this St. Giles's boy, and had kissed Mattie's hands more often than her face. "I should like to see a flower growing," said he.

"So you shall, Willie darling. Granny means to ask you to tea, the very first blossom my convolvulus has."

"Oh, I hope father can carry me down!"

"Yes, I am sure he can—don't you remember he said the other day that you got lighter and lighter?" And then, in spite of her happy ignorance, Mattie wished that she had not said that, and hurried into an account of yesterday's trip; she told it well, and, when they parted, Willie said it would do to dream about.

The days went on, but the convolvulus had no blossom; buds had come and withered, and Mattie feared that the cruel smoke would not let her have a flower: the show was to be next week, and there would be no chance for a prize. One happy morning, however, she found a real blossom, just a day before the show. "Nothing could have been better,"

Granny said; and it really seemed as though the little plant had reserved all its strength to do its young mistress honour; for this was a magnificent bloom, large, and coloured a deep crimson, with purple streaks, and a pure white centre. How Mattie loved it, and gloried in it, and with what tender triumph the flower-pot was carried up to show Willie,—who, alas! was too ill to keep his engagement to come down to tea. He looked earnestly at the bright bloom, and said, "It's like you, Mattie;" but then he turned away, so she went down again, fearing that even the faint perfume of the flower was too much for him. But when she went to say good night, he said, "Mattie, *don't* let the flower go to the show— *don't!*"

"What do you mean, Willie darling?"

"It will never be the same flower again—it will be hot and dusty there, and there will be a crowd of people, and they will tell you you are pretty. Oh, Mattie, don't!"

It was difficult for Mattie to follow Willie's thoughts, as he mingled her and the flower together; so she waited silently, while he covered his face with his hands. Suddenly, he let them fall, and, looking up at her with touching humility, said,—

"Oh, Mattie! I'm wicked! It's for myself I want

it—to have it for my very own—may I, Mattie—Mattie?"

She hesitated. Besides being its own precious self, this flower represented to its little owner fame and honour, and riches and pleasure; all these she would gain in the prize—and the bloom was so lovely, it was sure of one. But, then, Willie wanted it—unselfish Willie—who must be very ill to ask such a strange, hard thing! Mattie's quick thought went back to the beginning of their friendship, when he had rescued her from some rude girls who called her "Shiny-eyes," and she had promised always to do what he wanted; and this was the first thing he had ever asked for—and she had been such a little girl then! So swiftly the thought had run on, that while the thin, burning hands still held hers, and the pleading, tender, pathetic tones still repeated, "Mattie—Mattie!" she decided. Running quickly down stairs, she plucked the flower—rudely, cruelly, it seemed to herself; in reality most gently. She laid it in one of its own green leaves, and returned to Willie. His eager fingers closed round the stalk. "Oh, Mattie! how I love you, Mat-tie!" He raised his face to kiss her, but fell back suddenly. With the flower in his hand, and the smile on his lips, little Willie had died.

"Oh, Granny," sobbed Mattie that night, "if I

had not given it to him, whatever should I have done? I am so glad—so glad!"

The day dawned to which the little flower-grower had looked forward so long, as that of her floral triumph; but the blossom lay safe in the dead child's hand; and, through all her tears, Mattie could say, "I am so glad—so glad!"

TROUBLES IN BIRD-LAND.

It was summer in the greenwood.

All day long, such a glorious sunshine poured down, that the shadiest little brook was decked with its garland of flowers—red, white, and blue; and the delicate rose-campion made a pink veil for the dark, green ditch.

All day long, the tall, blossoming lime-trees breathed out fragrance; while the leaves and the sunbeams kissed each other, and danced fantastic dances across the pathway.

All day long the bees sang their murmurous slumber-song:—

"Sweet, sweet,
Honey is sweet;
Gather'd for housing,
Or gather'd to eat.
Roses and pimpernel,
Jasmine and clover,
'Sweets to the sweet,'
All the world over."

As to the birds—ah, nobody could tell what they

sang; but it seemed no wonder that they soared upwards, even to heaven.

A merry little party of them was gathered in a grove of rustling poplars.

"How happy we are!" chirped a blackbird.

"Don't see it!" said a chaffinch.

He prided himself on being an original, poor bird! As if anybody could be originally ill-tempered! All the varieties of that mania were used up long ago.

He could not make night lovely, like the nightingale; nor gladden the day, like the thrush; nor woo the echoes with a soft "Coo—coo;" nor begin the processes of reasoning by asking "How?" like the jackdaw; and so, as he could not be superlatively pleasant, he determined to be superlatively unpleasant.

He began by declining to admire anything. Not a bad idea for a beginner—one can do a good deal of disagreeableness that way!

"What a charming spot this is!" said the linnet.

And the swallow answered,—

"Yes; to me, after the awful blank sea, it seems perfect,"

"Hum!" said the chaffinch; "it is not my style at all."

But nobody disputed the point, so this speech was not so effective as it might have been.

Presently, a hoarse brown corncrake alighted in their midst.

"What a voice!" said Chaffinch, loud enough to be heard, and low enough to seem as though he did not wish it. But the corncrake had no emptiness in his heart for resentment; it was full of another's sorrow. "O my brothers," he said, "the lark, our choir-master, is in terrible grief! He had, you know, a nest in the meadow, and little ones five, just learning to chirp 'Father!' and look up to heaven; and now, only this moment, there came an army of mowers to cut down the hay, and, behold, the cruel terrible scythe, it came upon the nest, and the little ones and the mother are dead. Ah, me!"

The corncrake could say no more; his head drooped upon his breast, and he covered his face with his wing.

"Alas, our brother!" cried the other birds; "let us go and lament with him."

They flew off, but Chaffinch stayed behind, muttering, "I am not going to follow the crowd. Such a ridiculous fuss! the lark should have taken care of his family. I dare say he is only pretending to be sorry, like this moaner here.—I say, Crake," he said

aloud, "the others are all gone to condole with the lark."

"Ah," said the other, rousing himself, "perhaps even I might be of use!"

"What nonsense! amuse yourself."

"This fellow is dangerous," thought the corn-crake, and he flew away.

"How refreshing it is to be by one's self," mused Chaffinch.

But it is in the essence of recreation not to be permanent, so he soon began to look about him for amusement.

Near by, a fly was busy washing his feet.

"Disgusting creature!" said Chaffinch, and made a snap at it; but his aim was not so good as when he was working for his dinner. He missed; the fly escaped, and his empty beak clashed against itself, with a concussion that was unpleasant.

"That is how one is rewarded for trying to clear the world of nuisances," he murmured.

By and by he came to a beautiful garden, where a little child was gathering flowers.

"Poor blossoms!" said he; "they might have lived and been happy a little longer; but the tyrant, Man, thinks that everything is made for himself." Thus moralizing, he flew into a cherry-tree, and had such

a feast of ripe "white-hearts" that he ought to have been good-tempered. But he was not.

There came a heavy shower of rain.

"Of course, just as I had made up my mind for a promenade!" said Chaffinch. And, when the flowers exclaimed, "How delightful!—we were dying of thirst!" he was shocked at their bad taste in differing from him.

He took shelter under the eaves of a tool-house, where a little grey mouse lived, and brought up her family.

"How I should like to be a bird, and fly!" said a young mousie.

But the mother answered, "Ah, my dear, a contented mouse is happy, and a discontented bird is not."

"Stupid old woman!" said Chaffinch.

In a hollow tree an owl sat, winking and blinking, as though he would see as little of the sunshine as possible.

"That is a sensible bird," thought Chaffinch; and, drawing near, he said,—

"Sir Owl, I would learn the result of your musings."

"De-licious!" said the owl.

"What is?" asked Chaffinch, his respect diminishing.

"Everything."

"Are you not afraid of the light?"

"Well, it is against my principles; but, really, in such weather as this——" And again the owl said, "De-licious!"

It is disappointing, when we have, at length, found those we should like to resemble, to discover that they would rather not resemble us.

Chaffinch perched himself upon a fence close by, with what he meant for an air of melancholy. But it will happen, sometimes, that when people intend to look melancholy, they only succeed in looking surly.

It was thus that Chaffinch impressed the farmer's son, who came by just then with a gun.

"What a sulky-looking brute!" said he; "over-fed himself into dyspepsia, with our cherries, no doubt! Well, he shan't do that any more. Here goes!"

He fired; there was a great noise and smoke, a sudden light, and then darkness. Poor Chaffinch was not sure whether he was killed or not. He stood still to deliberate, and the farmer's son raised his gun to fire again; but a merciful impulse seized him. "No, I won't," he thought; "it is only a chaffinch—he shall have the benefit of the miss. There he goes, well frightened, I fancy."

Chaffinch was frightened—his heart beat, thumping, under his wing, so that he could scarcely fly to a covert; there, he clung to a branch, dizzy and weak, and motionless with terror; then came a sense of awful loneliness.

When a gun is fired, the birds flock together, and twitter condolence and congratulation.

"Are you hurt, dear heart?"—"No: all safe." And so, in the little buzz of chat, the alarm passes away.

But no tender questioning soothed Chaffinch—no sweet reassuring.

Penitently he cried, "Oh, my brothers! take me back; I cannot live alone."

Then he seemed to hear a distant chorus of voices, singing, "Our brother, who was lost, is found!"

With a softened heart, he rose, and took his flight homewards, speeded by fear and longing; but, as he passed a tangled hedge, he was stayed by a feeble little call for aid.

It cost him an effort to turn back: but Chaffinch had never been a coward; and now that he was gentler, he was braver too.

"Who calls for help?" he said.

"Here!" said the weak voice.

He sought, and found, a little young lark.

"What is it, maiden?" he asked, courteously.

"Ah, sir! this morning, while my father went to seek our early meal, there came a swift and terrible death upon us, and I alone escaped; and only for a little while, it seems, for I am lost. I must die—so young, and the world so beautiful!"

"Child! arise, and be comforted," said Chaffinch; "your father lives, and mourns you as one dead; let me guide you to him—it will, indeed, be joy."

So she trusted him; and he led her, first to a cool watercourse, where she could refresh her weary feet; then he fed her, as the mother-bird had done, and tenderly suited his pace to hers; and as they went together she forgot her pain and fear, and he, in the new blessedness of doing good, felt his old troubled darkness clearing away. Truly, this young thing was right—the world was beautiful.

"How shall I ever thank you?" said she.

"Don't praise me, please!" he answered; and they proceeded in silence.

At length, they reached their welcome bourne.

With a cry of wondering delight, the father-bird greeted his recovered daughter, and Chaffinch stole away.

"How did you escape the perils of the road, my child?"

"Ah, my father! I was well-nigh dead; but a noble knight came by, and rescued me."

"Who was this?" asked Queen Nightingale, who had come to rejoice with her people.

"Only Chaffinch," said one; "he is no knight."

"He should be," said the Queen; "tell him that we desire his presence."

"You are wanted!" said the magpie, coming, panting, to where Chaffinch had withdrawn himself.

"What for?" said he.

"To be knighted."

"For being an ill-tempered dolt?"

"No; not for that," the magpie answered, simply. He was not talkative on great occasions.

The Queen, with her sceptre of sword-grass, touched Chaffinch as he bowed before her, and said, "Rise, Sir Chaffinch, succourer of the helpless!"

"I don't deserve it," he said, with a quaintness that was churlish no longer.

"No true knight does, according to his own showing," said the Queen, with a sweet gladness in her voice.

"What has changed you so, Sir Chaffinch?" quietly asked his old friend Linnet.

"I came very near death, and that showed me

how solemn a thing life is—too solemn to be sneered at; and then, that innocent young bird, with her trustful reliance, somehow taught me the blessedness of life—its brightness."

"Yes," said Linnet; "it is both a burden and a joy."

THE END.

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