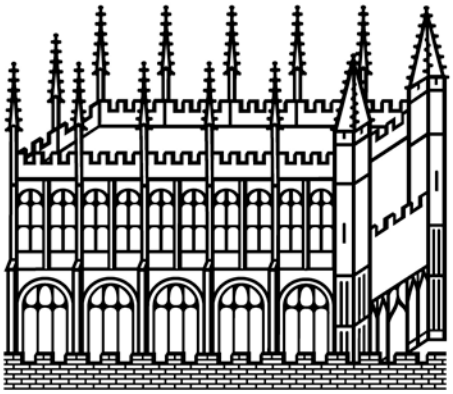

LITTLE PAUL AND HIS MOSS-WREATHS

AND

LITTLE GEORGE BELL

As the fresh Rose-bud needs the silvery shower,
The golden sunshine, and the pearly dew,
The joyous day with all its changes new,
Ere it can bloom into the perfect flower;
So with the human rose-bud; from sweet airs
Of heaven will fragrant purity be caught,
And influences benign of tender thought
Inform the soul, like angels, unawares.

MARY HOWITT.

Decoratıng the Dog. P. 49.

LITTLE PAUL

AND

HIS MOSS-WREATHS:

OR,

THE KING AND THE LITTLE BOY
WHO KEPT HIS WORD.

BY

ANGELIKA VON LAGERSTROM.

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CONTENTS.

LITTLE PAUL.

LITTLE PAUL

AND

HIS MOSS-WREATHS.

CHAPTER I.

THE THUNDERSTORM.

Paul stopped in his reading when he came to the following passage: "We are poor, but we shall be happy if we shun sin, and do that which is right."

"Are you tired, my boy?" asked his grandmother, to whom he had been reading.

"Not at all," answered Paul; "I am only so glad!"

"Glad! why are you so glad?"

"Because we are sure of being happy now; for don't you see, grandmother, you always shun sin, and do what is right, and I will try to do the same."

But at this moment Paul's ideas took a very different turn, for Fido, his favourite dog and only playfellow, jumped through the open window into the room where the two were sitting, and boy and dog were so delighted to see each other that we must excuse Paul if he forgot future happiness in the enjoyment of that which he already possessed.

The cottage of Mother Anna, the name by which Paul's grandmother was known in the neighbourhood, was situated in a little valley at some distance from other dwellings. It was certainly the smallest and poorest of all the cot-

tages around; nevertheless, the name of its owner was always pronounced with respect, and, we may say, with a feeling of gratitude; for Mother Anna had a vast knowledge of herbs and plants, by which many of her poor neighbours benefited in sickness, but no one could induce her to accept payment for her trouble. "I am glad to see you well: thank God, not me," was all she used to say. Such kindness and generosity naturally made Mother Anna respected.

Paul, her great-grandson, was an industrious boy, helping her to do the little out-door work, to gather herbs, or to peel sticks, of which he used to sell great numbers to a pedlar, who came twice a year through the valley, and bought them to make walking sticks. Paul gave all he earned to his grand-

mother, with whom he lived. Their cottage contained no other inmates but the dog Fido, which the good woman would have considered an extravagance, but he and a little cart, suited to his size, were a present to Paul from their neighbour the carpenter, whom Mother Anna had cured after a serious fall.

The day on which we were first introduced to the family was warm, and after welcoming Fido, Paul asked his grandmother to come and sit under the elm-tree, which was some twenty yards from the house, and tell him a story. Mother Anna was always ready to please Paul, and, leaning on his shoulder, she tottered to the tree, and sat down on the bench beneath it. Paul began to peel the sticks, and his grandmother commenced the story of "The Mountain Ghost,"

which happened to be a great favourite with him; but somehow she could not remember it well, hesitated once or twice, began again, and looked as if her thoughts were wandering.

"Grandmother, you do not tell it half so well to-day as you usually do; and then you have forgotten that the crown of the Mountain Ghost was not only of gold, but had rows of diamonds and rubies."

"Well, you are quite right, my boy, I do not tell it right to-day, and I would rather leave it off altogether."

There was a pause for some minutes. Mother Anna looked kindly at the boy, who was sitting on the grass at her feet, peeling his sticks, and now and then patting Fido's head.

"Paul," she began at last, "tell me,

do you really wish to grow up an honest man?"

"Of course I do," answered Paul.

"Then give me your hand, and promise me never to tell a falsehood, nor to take what is not your own."

"Grandmother, here is my hand, and I promise you that I will never tell a lie, nor take what is not my own—that would be robbing, and you don't think I could ever do such a wicked thing."

"I trust you would not: God bless you, my boy."

Here Mother Anna leaned back against the trunk of the tree, and closing her eyes, seemed to fall asleep.

It was still very warm. The air was close and hot as before a thunderstorm. Paul felt sleepy too, and clasping Fido's neck with both his arms, lay down near

him, and was very soon fast asleep. The dog would perhaps have preferred running about, or bathing in the lake which was close at hand, but out of love for his young master, he remained quiet, only now and then snapping at a fly, and lifting up his head to look after some bird.

The little group might have remained thus for half an hour, when Paul was roused by a sharp flash of lightning which seemed to pass across his eyes. There was a loud clap of thunder, followed by a second and a third. He look round, bewildered—Fido howled—but there sat Mother Anna still asleep, with her head resting against the old elm-tree. Paul looked towards the cottage, its straw-thatch was all in a blaze, for the lightning had struck it.

"Grandmother! grandmother! awake —see, our cottage is on fire—oh, the bed will be burned, and the beautiful picture over it," he cried, pulling at the old woman's arm.

But Mother Anna did not answer him, nor open her eyes. Paul seized her hand, but let it fall suddenly, shuddering with terror, for there was something strange in the touch, and her face looked ghastly pale. Poor little Paul! his grandmother was dead, and the cottage was burning. He looked first at the one, then at the other, and knew not what to do, but threw himself on the ground and cried bitterly; Fido licked the tears from his cheeks, and uttered something like a moan. At last he heard footsteps approaching; the neighbours had seen the fire, and came to

give what help they could; but it was too late the dry thatch and beams burned like tinder, and in less than an hour the cottage was a heap of smoking ruins.

The neighbours fetched a litter and carried his grandmother away. Paul had never seen death before, except in the case of a favourite bird which he found stiff and cold in its cage, and his grandmother had shown him how to dig its grave.

"Will my dear grandmother also be buried?" he asked.

"Yes," said the neighbours, "all people are buried when they die."

And Paul followed the litter, weeping as if his heart would break.

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER ANNA'S GRAVE.

THE funeral was over, and the few who had followed Mother Anna's remains left the churchyard, for they were all poor countrymen, and had no time to spare. The man who had taken Paul to his house for the last three or four days, offered to keep him longer, but he had a large family of his own and would not keep Fido. He told Paul very bluntly, that as no one in the village and neighbourhood was rich enough to provide for both, it would be best to drown the dog. The boy, who had been used to the gentle words and ways of his grandmother, was

struck with horror at hearing such a proposal; he did not like the man for speaking so, and declared his intention not to part with Fido.

"And where do you think of going?" asked the man. "Your cottage is burned down."

"I know it is; but I—I will not part with my dog."

"Well, have your own way," said the man, and left the churchyard as the others had done before; thinking, perhaps, that the little wilful fellow would change his mind before long. The grave-digger, a deaf old man, who was now the only one remaining behind, looked pitifully at the poor boy, and having nothing to offer but a part of his bread and cheese, slipped it quietly into Paul's pocket and went home.

There sat poor Paul, lonely and sad on the fresh mound of earth, under which lay buried the kind heart which had always been full of love for him. Tear after tear rolled down his cheeks as he thought of her, and of their little cottage; their bed and the beautiful picture hanging over it, all gone for ever! He did not think of the picture, the blank life before him, he would not have been a child if he had. Suddenly his eyes fell on a cross marking another humble grave. "I will make a cross for grandmother," thought he, and off he went in the direction of his old home, followed by Fido. One can imagine the sorrow of the poor boy, when he found himself for the first time after his great loss, beside the old cottage. He looked at the ruins, he clasped the elm tree, putting his

head just where Mother Anna's had rested, and, oh! how he wished to be with her.

But Paul was an energetic boy, and when he remembered that he had come to fetch some sticks out of his little cart, and some bands to tie them together, he left off weeping and began his work. Before the cross was quite finished he happened to look up at the tall elm, and saw suspended on one of its branches a wreath of moss. Paul knew it was a piece of his grandmother's handiwork, for she used to plait wreaths of many-coloured mosses, and often had he tried to do the same. He took the wreath, put it together with the cross and sticks in his cart, and returned to the churchyard. The cross was easily fastened at the head of the beloved grave; it was crowned with the wreath, and

now what more had Paul to do? He sat down and looked at Fido, who was very uneasy, for he was hungry, and his nose informed him of the bread and cheese which was in his master's pocket.

"What do you want, sir—something to eat? I have nothing for you." But Fido knew better, and wagged his tail, barked and put his nose almost into the pocket, scratching it outside with his paws. "There must be something strange in my pocket," thought Paul, and putting in his hand he discovered the bread and cheese. Like Fido he had eaten nothing the whole day, and though he had not thought of it before, now felt hungry too. Assuredly God blessed the kind old man who had given his piece of bread to the poor orphan.

CHAPTER III.

THE JOURNEY.

NEXT day Paul was on the road to Berlin. He walked like a waggoner by the side of his cart, which was drawn by Fido, and the dog always marched very majestically when he occupied the place of horse. Without thinking twice, or consulting anyone (poor boy, he had no friends whom he could consult), he had left the village where they wanted to drown Fido, and gone to a small town where he knew Mr. Elias, the man who used to buy his sticks, lived; but finding that he had left it and gone to

Berlin, Paul thought it would be best to go there too; he knew nothing about the distance; he had no idea of the difficulties of the journey; it was perhaps the restlessness so natural to a lively boy which made him go on. People liked to see the little fellow with his cart and dog, and wherever he stopped he was sure to meet with kindness, and get something to eat for himself and Fido. They used to laugh at him, however, when at the distance of some twenty German miles, almost eighty English, from the capital, he would ask—"Please can you tell me the way to Berlin?" Poor little Paul was much astonished when he was answered by a funny fellow—"Any way will take you to Berlin." An old man who stood close by was more kindly, he told him the names of all the villages and towns through

which he had to pass, and made him repeat them till Paul knew them by heart.

It was a long and a weary road; though used to walk a good deal, his feet became very sore on the fifth day. Hungry, thirsty, and unable to go a single step farther, Paul dropped down from exhaustion within sight of a small town. He never before had felt so miserable, not even on the day when they buried Mother Anna. Of what use were all his white sticks now, there was no one who would give him a glass of water for them. Fido whined and licked his master's feet; he was also very hungry, but had perhaps some notion that Paul had nothing for him. After having howled and whined for a while, the dog started up and ran into the town. It happened that one of the first

shops was a baker's, and just when Fido made his appearance, the baker was counting several loaves of bread into the basket of a person outside. One of them slipped from his hand, Fido directly seized it, and never stopped or stayed till he laid down the loaf at his master's feet. Paul's face brightened when he saw it; he patted Fido's head, and was about to divide the loaf between himself and the dog, who looked wistfully at it, when suddenly he recollected that the bread was not his own. Fido had certainly stolen it, and if so, he would rather starve than eat it. Then he tried to think that some generous person might have given the loaf to Fido, and he asked the dog very gravely—"Fido, how did you get it—speak!" Fido, who only understood the word "speak," answered,

The Loaf of Bread. P. 27.

as he always did, by barking most cheerfully. That was no answer for Paul; he therefore wrapped the loaf up in his handkerchief, and lay down on the turf, determined not to touch it. As soon as the dog saw that there was no hope of getting anything to eat, he again left his master and hastened to the town. This time he stopped before a butcher's shop, where a slaughtered calf took up his attention. He did not like it at first, but jumped from right to left, and from left to right, snapping, growling, and barking. But becoming more used to the sight, he entered the shop. The butcher was not very hospitable, and quickly turned him out. But Fido watched his opportunity, and stealing in when the butcher's back was turned, he jumped on the counter, where some

dozen sausages were lying, seized one of them, and started off to Paul.

"Oh, you naughty dog, where did you get *that?*" were the words with which he was greeted; and who could tell the poor dog's disappointment when his master, without a moment's hesitation, took the sausage and wrapped it up with his bread. He did not so much as look at the wicked thief, but rising with all the strength he could muster, fastened Fido to the cart and seated himself in it. He had never done so before, out of consideration to his pet, but Paul saw that this was the only means of getting into the town and returning the stolen goods.

Fido did not mind the load, he stepped on briskly, and the nearer he came to the town the quicker grew his march. At

the butcher's door he stopped, with a dog's good memory. "Look at the funny vehicle," said Mrs. Brawn, the butcher's wife, to her husband,—"and a boy in it; I am sure that is the very dog you turned out of the shop an hour ago—how proud he looks, quite like a little horse."

When Paul saw the good couple, he lifted his little cap, and then taking out the little sausage, said timidly—"I am afraid Fido, my dog, has robbed you of this; if so, pardon him, he is only a dog and does not know that it is wrong to steal. He has stolen this loaf of bread too, which I want to return to the baker."

Fido hearing his name, and smelling the sausage, turned round as far as he could, and a curious working of the nostrils showed that he enjoyed the smell

very much. Mr. Brawn was highly amused, and thought much of the boy's honesty; he would have admired it still more had he known how hungry and exhausted Paul was. Fortunately his wife noticed the boy's pale face and weak voice, and asked if he were well.

"Yes—no—I am so very, very hungry."

"Well, did you ever hear the like! he is hungry and returns the sausage," cried Mrs. Brawn,—"you shall not be hungry any longer, if I can help it."

With these words she lifted Paul out of the cart and carried him in, where in no time a tray with many good things was set before him, and with kind words he was invited to help himself. But Paul could not go on.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Brawn.

"Fido is hungry too."

"Do not trouble yourself about the dog—look;" she opened the door, and Paul saw Fido rejoicing over a meal of tripe. This was all he wished, now Paul dined comfortably, and thankfully rested for the night at the butcher's house, as Mr. Brawn offered to take him and his dog in the cart to Berlin next morning, which happened to be the market-day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KIND BASKET MAKER.

Paul wandered about in the streets of Berlin without finding Mr. Elias, as might have been expected. He would have fared ill but for Mr. Brawn's kindness. The butcher was a quiet man, not given to ask questions, and therefore knew little of Paul's business; only understanding that he was in search of some friend, from whose assistance he hoped much. Mr. Brawn introduced him to Mr. Gerber, his brother-in-law, and asked him to take care of the poor boy till he found his friends. Mr. Gerber

wished to take Paul into the house, but his daughter was a selfish old maid, who would not agree to it till Mr. Brawn had placed in her hand payment for a month or two's board and lodging. Having arranged this, the liberal butcher shook hands with Paul, and returned home, thinking by the way whether it would not have been better for the boy to stop with him and learn his trade. Could Paul have known these thoughts, they would very likely have dried his tears, which flowed abundantly after Mr. Brawn's departure, for though he felt strongly attached to the kind-hearted man who had been his friend in need, he felt no inclination whatever to become a butcher.

Paul was, as we have stated, not successful in his search for Mr. Elias.

There were many persons of the same name in Berlin, but none of those to whom Paul applied knew *his* Mr. Elias. However, he sold his sticks, that was one good thing; and he often wished he had more of them to peel and sell. But what the poor boy wanted most of all was kind treatment; he was so used to it, and Miss Gerber was so harsh and rude. Though the money which she had received for board and lodging was not half spent, and though it was increased by all that Paul got for his sticks, she always thought of the time it would be spent, and treated him accordingly. And how she hated Fido, and how she grudged him every mouthful of the broken victuals which were thrown to him. But Fido did not care much for her opinion; he was not over sensitive.

Paul alone dreaded the time when he was summoned to his scanty meal called dinner, and during which the dog's voraciousness was the usual topic of conversation. However, Fido had gained the affections of a little girl, whose father, a basket-maker, was Mr. Gerber's next door neighbour. Charlotte, his new little friend, had never before seen such a carriage and such "a dear, clever dog," and she used to watch him and Paul when they went out to sell the sticks, and when they returned home. She looked at first from behind the shutter of her father's workshop, then from the half open door, but becoming more familiar, she took courage and waited for Fido on the steps with a bit of bread in her hand. Fido understood directly for whom the bread was meant, and

after having been several times fed by Charlotte, he quickened his pace so much in coming home, that he twice overthrew his little carriage. It was in vain that Paul called out and tried to keep him back—there was Charlotte at her door. Fido saw her, and scampered off, never stopping till he got the bread. Paul and Charlotte soon became friends too. He was invited into the workshop; he told his history; he came again and again, and before long felt quite at home with these kind people. "If I could make baskets like Charlotte's father," thought Paul, "I might earn my own living, and be able to feed Fido without Miss Gerber's grumbling."

One day he ventured to ask Mr. Rambach (that was the basket-maker's name), if he would teach him. "That I will,"

said the good man, and the lessons commenced. Paul learned with all his might, day after day, and Mr. Rambach was so pleased with his industry and cleverness that he used to say, "Go on, my fine fellow—you learn more in an hour than my other apprentices would in a week." This was great encouragement; and Paul did go on, till at length he completed two little baskets, all made by his own little hands, and Mr. Rambach sold them in his shop. How glad he was when the kind basket-maker put into his hand their price, ten silbergroschen (about one shilling English money), and told him he might spend it as he pleased; saying at the same time—"I am going down to Schönthal next Saturday, to buy some osiers, would you like to go with me?"

Paul's eyes brightened at the idea of going to spend a few hours in the country. He had been so long in the heat and dust of the large town; but then he thought of Miss Gerber, would she mind his going?

"Go and ask at once," said Mr. Rambach; "I dare say Charlotte will take care of Fido while we are away. Will you, Charlotte?"

It was just what Charlotte wanted; she intended to knit the dog a worsted collar, and hoped Paul would see it when he returned. Miss Gerber's leave was not difficult to get. Indeed, she went so far as to wish Mr. Rambach would keep the boy altogether; and Paul heartily agreed with her in that wish.

When he and the basket-maker passed through a little wood, on their way to

Schönthal, next Saturday, with the birds singing around them, and the blue sky above, Paul kissed Mr. Rambach's hands and clapped his own, exclaiming, "How pretty the country is, oh, how pretty!"

Mr. Rambach, who knew that the country near Berlin was not famous for beauty, asked him, "Do you think it as pretty here as in your country?"

"No," said Paul, colouring; "but then there is no place so pretty as that. There are mountains, you know; the woods go up to the skies, and the meadows slope down to the rivers."

The village to which Mr. Rambach went was close to the wood, and had, with its large ponds, its orchards, and kitchen gardens, a very cheerful appearance. Paul shouted aloud when he was told that they were to stop there. As

soon as the dinner was over, he left the inn where they put up, and rambled into the wood. How tall and stately were the old trees, their branches entwined above, and formed an arched canopy like the roof of a church. But what was it that glittered between the nut-trees and the beeches? It was a cross with gilded points; and on Paul's drawing nearer, he saw that there was a churchyard on the other side of the road. As the gate was open, he entered; the place was well kept, and looked something like a garden, with its beautiful old trees, and the flowers which adorned the graves. Paul stopped before many a tombstone to read the inscriptions, or to pluck away the weeds. There was one little mound all covered with nettles; he knelt down and began to root them out, when a very old woman

came in. She was leaning on a staff, and walked with great difficulty. She nodded to Paul as if to approve what he was doing, and sat down under a tree near the little grave. Paul remarked that it was an elm-tree, and thought of his grandmother, of whom the old woman reminded him, and was so deeply engaged in looking at her that for a minute or two he forgot the nettles.

"Thank you, dear child," said the old dame, after a fit of coughing, "thank you for saving me the trouble of stooping. I used to come here every Saturday, to clear my grandchild's grave from all the weeds; but I have been ill, and weeds, like all bad things, grow apace." Here she coughed again, and Paul went on weeding till the nettles disappeared. Then he got up and went back to the

wood, where he made a cross of the withered boughs lying about, gathered his cap full of moss, turned it into a wreath as well as he could, and came back to plant the cross on the grave, and hang the wreath upon it. Paul looked gravely at his work, but turning to the old dame, he noticed that her eyes were filled with tears. "God bless you, my boy," she said, "I am too poor to give you anything in return for your kindness, but He will reward you."

Paul could say nothing, for he was thinking of his grandmother, but slipped the ten silbergroschen into the old woman's pocket without her knowledge, and left the churchyard. He strolled about in the wood for an hour longer, with the happy feeling of having done somebody good. He enjoyed the green

wood, the blue sky, the lofty trees, and the many-coloured mosses. Paul had never seen such a variety; there were some dark green, some light green, some yellow, some red, some brown; he gathered a bunch of every kind, and then suddenly remembered what he forgot in the churchyard, that Mr. Rambach had advised him to buy osiers with his groschen, and make baskets of them. His money was spent in a different way; what was to be done? He thought also of Miss Gerber, and the glory of the day was over. "I cannot buy osiers now," thought Paul, "and how shall I earn my living. What will Mr. Rambach say—what will she do to Fido when the two months are finished, and there is nobody to pay any more." Here his eye fell on the moss, with all its various colours.

Would people like to have wreaths and garlands of it. "I'll try," said Paul; and he gathered a great deal more, carried it to the inn, stowed it safely in Mr. Rambach's waggon, and returned with him to Berlin.

CHAPTER V.

FIDO'S PUNISHMENT.

When Paul reached home he was very much astonished at not seeing Fido as soon as he entered the room. Charlotte looked as if she had been crying, and seemed not to hear him when he inquired about the dog. He was obliged to repeat his question; and was then told that Miss Gerber had been there early in the morning, telling a long story about Fido's breaking a glass which was particularly valuable to Mr. Gerber, and out of which he had drunk for many a year. She wanted to punish Fido, but in spite of

all her endeavours to catch him she did not succeed, for he crept under some old pieces of furniture, and nobody would help her to get him out. She was obliged to go away without whipping him, which rendered her still more ill-tempered, and she abused Paul and the dog, vowing she would get rid of them both before long. Charlotte tried to keep Fido all day within doors, for fear of Miss Gerber, but the stupid dog did not comprehend the danger with which he was threatened, and escaped from her just when she had finished the collar and was about to put it round his neck. Some minutes after she heard Miss Gerber beating him, and the dog whining. Charlotte had even mustered courage to ask his pardon, but had met with a harsh refusal. "Fido is in the cellar," said

the poor child, "I know he has had nothing for dinner, and I can hear him whining in our yard." Paul had listened with breathless attention; he thought Miss Gerber very cruel, but what was his indignation when an old woman who occupied the top room entered, and declared that Miss Gerber herself had broken the glass in washing it at the pump, and that she was ready to go with Paul and tell this to her very face. Mr. Rambach, however, advised Paul to go alone; and when the poor boy went he was greeted with a storm of abuse. His humble request that Fido might be let out was refused; and he was told that the dog should stay in the cellar for at least twenty-four hours longer, without any food. This was too much for Paul. "Why do you punish him," exclaimed

he, "you know very well it was not Fido, but yourself, who broke the glass."

Clap went Miss Gerber's hand on his cheek, with a force that for a moment blinded and deafened him, and he would probably have fared worse but for the entrance of her father. He had seen her from the window break the glass while washing it, and was very angry when the whole story came out. By his orders the dog was immediately liberated; and Miss Gerber was so thoroughly frightened that she thought it best to remain in the cellar sometime after letting him out. Paul returned to his kind friends accompanied by Fido, and forgetting his swollen cheek in the gambols of the dog, who was quite mad with joy, jumping and barking, and licking every hand he could reach. Mr. Rambach gave him some-

thing to eat, Paul washed his shaggy coat, and Charlotte tied the pink collar round his neck. The dog looked so pretty that she wished he could see himself, and brought her little looking-glass, holding it straight before him, but Fido only barked the louder and licked his own image.

This eventful day brought still better things to Paul. Mr. Rambach recollected that he should remove to a new house on the following Tuesday, and that there was one little room in it more than his family wanted; it would do for Paul to sleep in, the boy would be no trouble and very little expense, for he was industrious and would work for his own living. The children were delighted when they were told that Paul, if he liked, might go and fetch his things

from Mr. Gerber's, and bid him farewell, as Mr. Rambach intended to take him entirely into his house and teach him his trade.

Paul did not hesitate for a moment. He found Mr. Gerber paler than usual, sitting in his corner, looking very desponding. Paul shook hands with him, thanked him for his kindness, told him how Mr. Rambach had offered to take him, and that he wished to go. "Go, my boy," said Mr. Gerber, "and may you be happier with him than you have been here." Miss Gerber was not visible, and Paul did not wish for her appearance. He packed up his few things, took leave of the kind old man, but felt truly thankful when he lay down that evening on his straw mattress and fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOSS-WREATHS.

THE idea of bringing garlands of moss to the market was a very happy one; Paul had already sold some, and by and bye his trade proved very profitable to him. People had found out that when fastened round the windows, they not only gave a cheerful appearance to the house, but kept the draught out. At first, only a few houses were decorated with them, but in the following winter all the principal houses in Berlin had garlands of moss outside the windows or between the double sashes, which are

generally used in that city to keep out the bitter frost. The moss-wreaths are to be seen there every winter at the present day, but the fashion of them was set by little Paul, the boy of our story.

Mr. Rambach never repented having taken him into his house. He loved him as if he had been his own child. By his industry, Paul was able to pay for his own living, and even put himself to school. He used to bring every farthing he earned to Mr. Rambach; and once the basket-maker reminded him of the old woman's good wishes in the churchyard, and said he thought they had been fulfilled. "I think so too," answered Paul, "and I am sure I should never have thought of making garlands but for her."

One day when Paul had been to the

market and sold a great many moss-wreaths, he went home holding in his hand a little garland which had not been liked, it was made of the finest moss, but so narrow that no one knew what use to make of it. The day was beautiful, and Paul lingered with hundreds of others in the beautiful street called in German *Unter den Linden*, under the lime-trees. He was leaning against a tree, when he saw two ladies pass close by him. They had left their carriage, preferring to walk a little while; Paul wondered who they could be; but what was his surprise when the younger one turned back, and; pointing to the garland in his hand, said, "Please, dear aunt, let us stop a moment and look at this pretty moss. Don't you think it would make a lovely trimming for my white dress?" The elder lady smiled,

and putting the garland upon her pocket-handkerchief, answered, "I like it very much, and besides it would be quite a novelty; shall I order a few yards of it?"

"If you please, dear aunt."

"Could you let us have ten yards of such garlands to-morrow?" asked the lady, turning to Paul.

"Yes, gracious lady," answered Paul, "where shall I bring them?"

"To the palace. Ask for Fräulein von Stern, and tell her that Princess Wilhelm ordered them—here, take this Friedrich d'or, you will receive two more when you bring the wreaths," and the princess handed him a gold coin, value seventeen shillings, and called a Friedrich d'or.

With these words the two princesses walked away, and left Paul quite astonished at his good fortune. But

this was not all, the young princess looked so beautiful in her green trimmings at the palace balls, that for a few weeks moss trimmings became quite the fashion, and Paul had plenty to do.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING.

Fashion changes, as everybody knows. Paul got another order from the palace; this time it was merely a kitchen-maid, who wanted a wreath of moss and everlasting flowers for her curly hair. The moss trimmings were going out of fashion; though Paul had some days before received a Friedrich d'or for a wreath, he was now satisfied when a kitchen-maid promised to give him ten silbergroschen. When the garland was finished, he took it to the palace, but could not find his way to the kitchen.

He stood still, not knowing which way to go, in one of the great porticoes which lead to the inner courtyard, when a gentleman in uniform, leading a little girl by the hand, entered. The little girl looked at Paul, then at the garland, and said, "Papa, I should like to have that wreath."

"Let us see if we can get it," answered the gentleman, good humouredly, and taking two thalers, about six shillings, out of his pocket, he held them out to Paul, saying, "Will you sell your wreath for that?"

Paul politely raised his little cap, and answered, "No, thank you, sir."

"Well, but for this," said the gentleman, who appeared to Paul to be a colonel; and with these words he added a Friedrich d'or to the two thalers.

"No, thank you, sir," replied Paul, colouring with confusion.

But the gentleman, thinking he was not satisfied with the money, grew impatient, changed his tone and said, "You are a greedy boy, it seems; how much do you think you can get for this trifle?"

Paul coloured still more deeply as he answered, "Oh, dear sir, it is not because I want more money. I should like to make the young lady a present of the wreath, but it has been ordered by a kitchen-maid in the palace. I promised to bring it to her this evening by six o'clock, and you know I must keep my word."

"How much will the kitchen-maid pay you?"

"Ten silbergroschen."

"What is your name, and where do you live?"

"My name is Paul, sir; and I live at Mr. Rambach's, close to the Hallenschen Thor."

"Will you bring a wreath like that for the young lady, to-morrow?"

"Oh yes, sir, certainly."

"Then take this," said the gentleman, giving him all the money, and be here punctually at nine o'clock.

Paul did not know what to think; but when the gentleman had gone into the palace, an old man, who had been standing at a respectful distance, asked Paul if he knew who had been speaking to him. Paul answered, he did not. "It was the king," said the old man; "I hope some good will come of it to you."

That very day Mr. Rambach was sent for to the palace, and questioned regarding Paul's character. The good man spoke of his honesty, industry, and kind disposition, and finished his long account by saying, that he thought God had blessed him for having taken the orphan boy into his house, as everything had gone well with him since. When the king asked what sort of school Paul went to, Mr. Rambach answered, "Well, your Majesty, I dare say it is not a first-rate one; the schoolmaster is an honest man, but, as for learning, he is not very famous. If the words happen to have too many syllables, he does not mind saying, 'Skip them over.' Besides, his poor old eyes begin to fail him, and of course that makes reading and writing still more difficult for him."

The king seemed to be much amused with the idea of such a schoolmaster; but turning round to an officer who stood near the window, he said, "Remind me of this; we cannot possibly allow such schools to exist in Prussia." He then thanked Mr. Rambach for the information he had given him, and dismissed him.

Scarcely had Paul reached the portico next morning, with the wreath for the young princess, when a richly-liveried footman showed him up the staircase, and then through many passages and rooms, till at last he found himself in the presence of the gentleman he had taken for a colonel, but who was none other than the king himself.

"I have been told," said his majesty, "that you are a good boy, and as you are an orphan, I will take care of you.

First of all, you will be sent to a better school, where you will be able to learn more than you have hitherto done. Do you wish to remain with your kind friends?"

Paul, who felt exceedingly frightened, crushed his little cap into all imaginable shapes, and answered "yes, dear Mr. King."

"Would you like to be a soldier?"

"If you please, Mr. King."

"But I want to know what you would prefer?"

Poor Paul, he knew very well what he should like best, but he could not find words to express it. He rolled his cap, almost into the shape of a sausage, but the king encouraged him with a few kind words to say what trade he would choose, and whether he preferred town or country life.

"Country life, if you please, Mr. King; I should like very much to be a farmer."

"Well," answered the king, "I am glad to know what you like best, you shall have every opportunity to learn the trade you have chosen. When you have acquired some knowledge of it, I will send you to an agricultural college. All the rest will depend upon your conduct, your talents, and your industry. I hope you will do credit to your education, and be always an honest boy."

"Yes, I will, dear Mr. King."

"And," concluded the king, "patting him on the shoulder, "always prefer keeping your word to gaining money, my boy."

"I will, dear Mr. King." And Paul departed.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL'S REWARD.

LITTLE more remains of Paul's story, for it is the boy's history, not that of the man we promised to write. We will only say in few words what has become of him.

He distinguished himself in every respect when a student at the agricultural college, so much so that the king, who never lost sight of him, entrusted him with the care of one of his estates. Under his management the land yielded better crops than it had ever borne. Waste places were reclaimed, marshes drained, and

trees planted. For these good services Paul received a grant of waste land to cultivate for himself. Instead of miserable huts thatched with straw, there were seen, ten years later, lovely cottages, with glittering windows and tiled roofs, surrounded by kitchen gardens, orchards and flower-beds; and the almost starving people, who used to live in the straw huts, had also undergone a great change. They no longer looked poor and miserable, but healthy and happy—all this was Paul's work.

Need we repeat that he kept his promise, and never forgot his early benefactors.

Mr. Brawn, the butcher, before whose door he had stopped, holding in his hand the long sausage, and who had bestowed upon the poor, hungry, and exhausted

boy so much kindness, received a cask of wine every anniversary of that memorable day; for Paul remembered that Mr. Brawn was fond of a glass of good wine. Mrs. Brawn was presented with the most elegant black silk dress she had ever seen; it was for years the pride of both her and her husband, for silk dresses are much less common in Germany than they are in England.

Mr. Gerber did not live to see the better days of the orphan he had taken to his home; he died suddenly of apoplexy, after a violent dispute with his daughter. She herself died soon after, leaving the fortune she had hoarded up to heirs who did not mourn her.

Mr. Rambach, with his family, left Berlin and removed to the neat country house which Paul had furnished, and

which was within five minutes' walk of the beautiful manor house inhabited by himself. The neighbours always lived in friendship, and often talked of old times.

Fido had died when Paul was eighteen. He had buried him in a sunny spot near his present habitation, and raised a monument to his memory; for he had been a faithful companion of his poor and wandering days, the last relic of his early home and Mother Anna.

We have seen Paul in his own mansion, a large and handsome one it is, but wherever one looks there are garlands of moss to be seen, real, painted and carved; and above the door of Paul's own bedroom there are written in golden letters the words with which our story begun, "We are poor, but we shall be happy if we shun sin and do that which is right."

LITTLE GEORGE BELL.

LITTLE GEORGE BELL.

LITTLE GEORGE BELL.

GEORGE BELL was the only son of very wealthy parents, who loved him dearly. He had a very sweet, mild temper, and always showed a wish to please, which made him much liked by every one; he had, however, one great fault, he was very thoughtless; and though he had no idea of disobeying any command of his papa or mamma, yet, it so happened, that he always seemed to forget what they desired, as soon as the words were spoken, because he was always thinking of his top, or his ball, or perhaps, playing with his little dog Dash, while they were

speaking, instead of paying proper attention to them. This carelessness got him into many a scrape, and it was in the end, the cause of much sorrow to himself and his family.

When he was about six years and a half old, his mamma was one day preparing to go out to walk, and George asked leave to go with her; Mrs. Bell was very willing to comply with his request, for she seldom liked to go out without him; but she said she could not take him unless he would promise to keep by her side—he was so apt to stray, that she often feared she would lose him in the streets. The little boy faithfully promised that he would attend to his mamma's wishes, and said, if she pleased, he would leave Dash at home; to which she gladly agreed, and then desired him to

go and have himself very nicely dressed; this, indeed, he always was, for being a handsome child, Mrs. Bell felt rather proud of him, and spared no expense to set him off to the best advantage: an error which ultimately caused her much pain and sorrow.

As soon as they were ready, Mrs. Bell and little George set out upon their walk; at first he was very good, and never let go his mamma's hand; but she had a great many things to buy, and was obliged to go in and out of a number of shops, before she could get all the articles she wanted. All this time George was in the greatest wonder and delight at everything he saw; so much so, that Mrs. Bell sometimes found it difficult to keep him beside her, as he appeared at times to have quite forgotten the many promises

he had made to his mamma before they set out.

At last Mrs. Bell met with an old friend, who had so much to say, that her attention was occupied for a long while; but she did not at the same time forget George, for she very frequently, while speaking, held out her hand, thinking that he would take it. When the lady to whom she had been speaking took leave of her and went away, Mrs. Bell looked round for George, but he was nowhere to be seen: she was not much alarmed at first, for she thought he had remained in the last shop they had been in, so she returned there, and looked about every where, but he was nowhere to be found; she inquired of each person, but it was all to no purpose—no one could give any account of him.

Poor Mrs. Bell was now in great alarm, and went hastily from place to place, making inquiries as she proceeded; but, alas! no one could tell her anything about her little son; after having in this way wandered about the streets for a length of time in her fruitless search, it suddenly occurred to her mind, that he might, perhaps, have returned home: she was quite relieved at this thought, and instantly turned towards home, but before she got to the house, was so much fatigued and exhausted, that she could with difficulty reach it. Hoping each moment would bring the little truant to her view, she kept her eyes turning from side to side, till they were aching, still there was no sign of him. With trembling hand and beating heart, she knocked; while with anxious ear, she

listened for the sound of his little footsteps, running as usual to meet her. The servant appeared, but George was not visible. The poor terrified mother had scarcely power to mention her loss to the domestics, who soon collected about her, when she sunk down in a faint on the hall chair. Some of them ran out in search of Mr. Bell, who was not at home at the time; but as they did not know where to look for him, their efforts to find him were of no avail, so that unfortunately there was a great deal of time lost: the only thing they could think of, was to bring a physician to poor Mrs. Bell, who still continued in a very melancholy state, sinking from one faint to another.

Mr. Bell returned home at the usual hour of dinner, not knowing anything of

what had occurred; but who can describe the scene which presented itself, when he entered the house: he had left only a few hours before as happy as a fond father and tender husband could be, leaving behind him only smiling faces all around: now everything was changed; his wife, to all appearance, dying—his darling child gone, no one could tell where—the servants all in tears; the shock was almost too much for him, but he exerted all his fortitude, and trusting in the kindness so often experienced from his heavenly Father, preserved an apparent composure. It was some time, however, before he could proceed in search of his lost little one, as he was obliged to remain with Mrs. Bell, until she was in some measure recovered. He then placed her under the care of the doctor, and set out with

a number of friends who had come to offer their services to assist him in the search. They separated, and proceeded in different directions through the city, even to its most remote portions, but it was all in vain. The poor father made endless inquiries, and once or twice he thought he had gained some clue; now and then some person or other would say they had seen a child such as he described, but afterwards, it only ended in disappointment, and made him, if possible, more unhappy than before. To increase his distress, it was now growing very dark, the night was fast coming on, and it promised to be both wet and stormy. The heavens were full of dense, heavy clouds, the rain began to fall in thick black drops, faster and faster, while the wind blew in sudden gusts, which

swept along with a most mournful sound; at last, all the friends who had gone out with Mr. Bell returned, one by one, each as he entered the house shaking his head in token of his ill success, but afraid to speak, lest a sound should reach the ear of Mrs. Bell, who was still very ill. She was no longer fainting; she was restored to her senses, but so weak that she was unable to move; still she kept her eyes fixed upon the door, and was ever on the watch if she heard but the slightest movement, thinking it might be the return of her darling, with some of those who had gone in the pursuit; it was indeed painful to witness her state of mind. By this time all hope of his return for this night was given up.

The rain now descended in torrents, and the wind blew with great violence.

Mr. Bell was still out, but at last he too returned; his clothes completely wet through; but he appeared quite unmindful of anything, except his sad loss. To render the scene more distressing, poor George's little dog Dash, whom I mentioned before, went about from room to room with a dismal whine, as if he was looking for his little master.

The afflicted parents passed the night in the most dreadful agony of mind; and early the next day large rewards were offered to any person who might give the slightest clue which would lead to the child's recovery; hand-bills were printed and posted up in every direction. Mr. Bell still continued his search; assisted in his exertions by a number of persons who took an interest in the painful event, for the little boy had been a great favourite with

all his papa's friends: he was so gentle and engaging in his manners, and so very obliging at all times, that he had gained the affections of every person who visited at the house. The servants were also attached to him, as he was not in the habit of giving them trouble as some children do, nor of teasing them, or interfering with them while they were busy. When he wanted any thing from them he always said, "John, if you please, will you hand me such a thing," or, "Anne, if you please, mamma wants you." He was seldom known to be out of temper with them, or to display much anger; if they were not ready to attend to him as he wished, he would wait with the greatest patience and good humour till they were at leisure; while his little merry laugh was heard resounding through all

parts of the house, which put every one else in good humour when they heard it. It is no wonder, then, that the deepest grief should be painted on every countenance; for they not only mourned their own loss, but they thought also of what the poor child's sufferings might now be, perhaps without food or fire, or comfort of any kind—he who used to be so well and kindly taken care of by his parents, and every one near him. What a pity it was, that such a good-natured child should have been so thoughtless, for it is much to be feared that all the present sorrow of the family arose from his having forgotten the promise he had made to his mamma, to keep by her side in the street.

A day or two passed away, and still no tidings of little George; the grief and

dejection of Mr. and Mrs. Bell hourly increased; they could not sleep, and scarcely tasted a morsel of food: they would have been in utter despair, only that they placed their hope in their heavenly Father, and trusted that He in his goodness would hear their prayers, and restore their dear child once more to their embrace.

About the third day a report reached the ears of Mr. Bell, that a child about the size and age of George, had been discovered in a deep ditch at some distance from the city. When he heard it, he was in the act of trying to comfort his afflicted wife, for, though his own heart was overwhelmed within him, still he tried, for her sake, to conceal his sorrow, in order, if possible, to console and cheer her, with the hope that he him-

self scarcely dared to indulge. He would if he could have concealed this mournful news from her, but her quick and watchful ear caught the sound, and she then insisted on hearing all. Who can describe her feelings on being informed of the melancholy fact! It was necessary for Mr. Bell to repair to the place where the body was, and she, though in bed, expressed her intention to accompany him; this, however, he would not hear of: indeed, though she expressed the wish, she was far from being able to put it into practice, for after a few struggles, she sank back exhausted on her pillow, and Mr. Bell proceeded on his mournful errand with all possible speed. He followed the person who went with him to point out the place where the child was found. When he arrived at it and saw the

immense crowd of persons who had gathered round it, his heart sank within him, his knees trembled, and he had scarcely power to proceed to the spot.

As he advanced, the persons who had assembled, with much feeling and kindness gave way and made room for him to approach. Oh! what a shocking sight was then presented to his view: there lay indeed, a body, but so mutilated, that he, in his agitation, found it impossible to pronounce whether it was his own child or not; there was not one part of the child perfect, and as the little body lay perfectly naked, there was nothing to enable him to form any opinion. He stood quite doubtful, and irresolute, and so overpowered by the anguish of his mind, that he grew quite sick and faint,

and closed his eyes in order to shut out the soul-harrowing sight.

The gentlemen who were with him, proposed sending for some of the servants, and a messenger was dispatched for that purpose; but while they waited in suspense, a woman came rushing wildly amongst the crowd, which was still increasing, and having reached the body, she first turned it over, and over, and then giving a loud shriek, she seized it in her arms, declaring she saw by a well-known mark that it was her own child, which she would know amongst a thousand.

This was indeed a severe trial to the feelings of the unhappy father; he returned home seriously indisposed, and scarcely able to speak to his wife; but she on the contrary felt rather relieved

on hearing that it was not her own child who was found in such a shocking state. Mr. Bell was prevailed on to go to bed and take some rest; but he had not been long left alone for that purpose, when a new thought suddenly struck him, and he started up, and rang his bell violently. The servants quickly appeared, having been alarmed by the sudden call, and found that he was again up and dressed. He appeared much agitated, and looking very wild; then in a hurried voice, he said, "Why, oh! why, have I never thought of the pond?"

At first they all thought that he had lost his reason; but after a moment's reflection, they understood what he meant; which was simply this. About two or three miles from town, Mr. Bell had a very handsome country villa, the

grounds were laid out with great taste, with trees and shrubs of every kind. Here, little George had spent many a happy hour, but what gave him most delight was a very large pond on which two beautiful and stately swans were to be seen. It had been a favourite amusement of poor George to bring bread to feed them, and they used to swim to the edge of the water, when they saw him, to get their expected meal from his hand.

To this pond Mr. Bell declared his intention of setting off without delay; and, after bidding Mrs. Bell good-bye for a short time, he departed, leaving her in a most painful state of suspense; but, as she was not able to go with him, she endeavoured calmly to acquiesce, not wishing to give him pain, and fearing his health would sink under such continued excite-

ment and bodily fatigue; all she could do, then, was to commend him to the care of Him "who will not let a sparrow fall to the ground" uncared for, and to pray for His protection for her dear boy, in case he should be yet alive; for him, indeed, her prayers had been from the beginning unceasing, night and day.

As soon as Mr. Bell reached his villa, the first thing he did was to get the pond dragged, in order to see if the child could have fallen into it; but this trial was attended with equal ill-success as all the former ones; there was nothing to lead him to suppose the child had been there, nor had he been seen by any one about the place.

The distracted father was now more to be pitied than ever; everything which met his eye reminded him so painfully

of his lost darling. There were his favourite swans, reposing as calmly on the bosom of the water as they used to do, while watching for the kind little hand which formerly took so much pleasure in feeding them. There was his boat, which his papa had rigged for him with his own hand, that he so often had set to sail upon the water, watching it while the gentle breeze sent it to the other side of the pond. There was his little garden which he would so often dig with his own small spade, which his papa had bought for him; and there were the flowers, the seeds of which his own little hands had sown; and there, too, was his wheelbarrow, to carry gravel to the walks. Then, again, on entering the house, the first object which met the view was his rocking-horse, which always

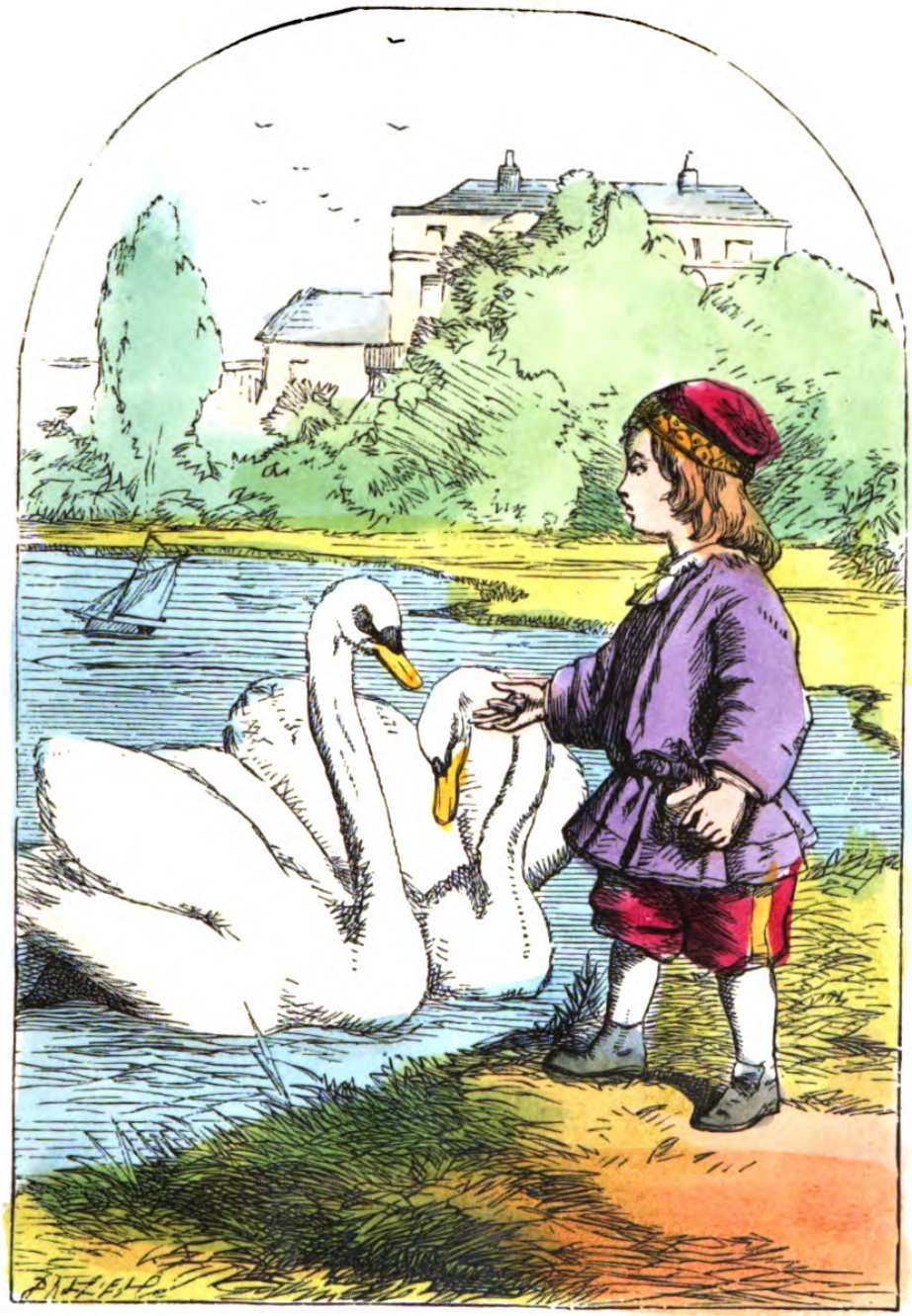
stood in the hall, and with which he amused himself in wet weather, that being the only time he rode upon it, for he had a very beautiful, small Shetland pony, which was very quiet and gentle, and on which he used to ride by his papa's side. But now where was the little boy himself, who had disappeared in such a mysterious manner? No one could answer that question, and his parents were left without their child.

Once more did the distressed father return to his desolate and dreary home; he almost dreaded to see his wife again, for, in consequence of all she had suffered, and the continued anxiety of her mind, she was now in a nervous fever, and the doctor feared much that she was in a state of great danger; for, though every care was taken to restore her, she

was sinking fast; and there were very little hopes entertained of her recovery.

But I shall now go back to the unhappy day when little George went out to walk with his mamma, as I am sure my young readers would wish to know what became of him.

While Mrs. Bell was on that day speaking to the friend whom she met, George amused himself looking in at the shop windows, being greatly delighted with all the beautiful things he saw, and which, in his own mind, he thought he would ask his mamma to buy for him. While engaged in this way, he suffered himself to stray to a distance, till at last on looking round for his mamma, he found she was not to be seen. A beggar woman was standing near, who was watching him intently all the time,



Feeding the Swans. P. 92.

and had followed him from one place to another, on perceiving that he was alone; for his handsome dress, which, I believe, I before mentioned, attracted her attention.

When he missed his mamma he looked very sad, but did not know which way to turn in order to find her.

The beggar woman then drew closer to him, and said,—

"Who are you looking for, my pretty dear?"

"For my mamma," replied the child.

"Which way did she go, my darling?" said the woman.

"I do not know," said George: and at the same time the tears came into his eyes, and he looked very mournful.

Now the woman knew very well, for she had been so long upon the watch,

that she had seen him separate from his mamma, and she only asked the question for an excuse to begin to speak to him; and, as we shall presently see, she had her own reasons for wishing to do so.

"Do not fret, my little dear," said she, "and I will show you which way your mamma went."

George for a moment looked doubtful, but he forgot everything except his wish to find his mamma; and the woman said again, "That is a good boy, now dry your pretty eyes, and come with me;" and as she spoke she led him in an opposite direction to that in which she knew his mamma was, and quickly turned the corner of the next street.

This wicked woman, I am sorry to say, had no intention of bringing the child to his mamma; for, seeing him so richly

Little George strays away. P. 94.

dressed, she had immediately conceived the horrid design of stealing him away; and it was for this purpose she had kept near him all the time, and only waited for an opportunity of speaking to him when she thought nobody could hear her; but even if there was any one near, every person was engaged about his own business, and did not stop to observe them. Indeed, she was so cunning that she would not long remain near any one who might have been led to observe, or listen to the conversation; therefore, she turned very soon out of the public street, into a narrow, private way, where she was not likely to meet with any one who might have known the child.

Then she took his hand, and went on much faster, so that he was obliged to run in order to keep up with her. He

did not appear to like the way she was bringing him; for, after awhile, he stopped and said, "Where are you bringing me? I think you must be going wrong, for mamma never took me to such nasty dark places—I shall not go any farther this way; you must, if you please, bring me the right way. I never was here before." Then the woman coaxed him, and said, "Indeed, my pretty dear, this is the way your mamma went; come on fast that we may overtake her; perhaps she is looking for you, and it would be a pity to keep her waiting; and besides, I want to buy you cakes at a shop which is a little way down here."

This is the way in which this wicked woman enticed the little boy to go on; and I am sure I need not tell you, that these were shocking stories which she

told him, and quite untrue; but poor George was so young he had not sense to know what she was about, and only thought of getting back to his mamma as fast as he could; but still he was not satisfied, and complained often, that he did not like the way, but she only hurried him on the more, till he was quite out of breath, and then he tried to stop, and said to her, "Mamma never made me walk so fast."

But she had now made another turn down a very dark, dismal, lonely looking passage, where there was no one to be seen, but a few dirty, tattered, persons, whose looks and appearance caused George to feel frightened and uneasy, and he began to cry; but the woman, instead of coaxing, now scolded and threatened him; and said, if he cried,

or said a word, that instead of bringing him to his mamma, she would give him to some of those persons whom he saw.

This threat proved effectual, for he ceased crying, and went on quietly; at least, he tried to conceal his fears, but the tears were still flowing silently down his poor little cheeks, and he turned away his face, and wiped them away, that she might not see them, for he was afraid that she really would give him away to some of those persons, as she had threatened; but he was all this time longing to meet his mamma, and wondering to himself why she had gone so far away from him.

At length the woman stopped before a dark looking cellar, the only method of going down to which, was by a broken ladder; but she called some one in a

low voice, when a wretched looking old man made his appearance. The woman taking the child in her arms attempted to hand him down to the man below, but poor George, thinking that she was now in reality going to put her threat into execution, screamed violently, and resisted with all his might; he clung so fast to the woman, that she could not for a length of time disengage his hands; and, as well as his sobs would allow him, he said, "Indeed, indeed, I will be good if you bring me to mamma; and I shall not cry any more! oh, do not give me to that wicked looking man: I am afraid he will kill me!" All the poor child could say, however, could not soften the hearts of those whom he had now to deal with: the man came up the ladder, and notwithstanding all his cries, and

screams, and struggles, they both persisted in bringing him down by force.

By the dint of threats they terrified the unfortunate child into silence, but he sobbed as if his poor little heart would break. Young as he was, he saw there was no use in making any more resistance, for he felt that he was in the power of these cruel people, and that they might do with him as they pleased, there being nobody to save him from them.

The first thing they did was to take off every article of clothing which he had on; and they then put on him a few old rags which did not half cover him—how miserable he felt at being obliged to submit to that which made him turn sick with disgust, but he dare not say a word or utter a complaint, for when he showed the slightest hesitation or dislike, they

threatened to beat him. When the clothes, such as they were, had been all put on him, the woman took a large pair of scissors and set about cutting off all his beautiful, bright, brown curls, which his mamma had taken so much pleasure in seeing flowing about his shoulders; nor was she contented with simply cutting off the curls, but she clipped all the hair quite close to the skull. After this was done she rubbed something over his entire skin, which altered the colour of it so completely, and produced such a change in his appearance, that if his papa and mamma had seen him, they would scarcely have known their child.

The man and the woman had a great deal of whispering together, and it would seem that they did not agree; they became very angry with each other, and

disputed for a long time; at length, however, the woman succeeded in having her own way; the man, unwillingly, being obliged to give up to her as she seemed to be the principal.

The quarrel being ended, she put together all the clothes which George had worn when she brought him in, and tying them up carefully in a bundle, in which also she placed the hair she had cut off, she ascended the ladder, leaving George in the care of the man. Bad as she was, he felt more deserted when she left him, for he could not bear to look at the man at all, he was so much afraid of him: he had a cross, forbidding countenance, such as George was not accustomed to, and he was ragged and dirty.

When they were left alone, he pointed to a stool in the most remote corner, on

which he desired the little boy to seat himself, for he had been left standing the whole time until now, and as the poor child was very tired, he obeyed the order without saying a word.

Several ill-looking people went in and out, all speaking to the man in whispers, as if they were afraid of letting their voices be heard; one or two of them looked over at the corner in which poor George was sitting, but they did not speak to him, or take any notice, but there he remained, and he now began to feel very cold, for the cellar was damp and chill, and the rags he had on did not half cover him; there was a small fire at which the man sat, but as George would not dare to approach it while he was there, he sat shivering and shaking till his teeth began to chatter. The

man perceived that he was cold, and in a voice which sounded a little more kindly than it had done since his entrance, he told George if he wished he might come over and warm himself. The poor child, glad of the permission, gently approached, and tried, by holding his little hands to the fire, to restore them to their usual heat. Then the man began to speak to him, and said, "I am afraid, my little master, you will not find yourself in such grand quarters as you have been accustomed to, but don't fret, be a good boy, and don't speak to any one who comes in or out, and may be you may be better off yet; what would you say to me now, if I would bring you to your papa and mamma?" George, at hearing his papa and mamma mentioned, burst into a flood of tears, but he

had not time to make any answer, for, just at that moment the woman appeared on the ladder coming down, and having heard a part of what the man was saying, she flew into a dreadful rage, and scolded him, but he said, if she did not take care, he would punish her, and so saying he went out.

The woman asked George if he was hungry, and she handed him a piece of dry bread, but the poor child, though so long without having taken any food, could not eat it, and laid it down beside him: then she said he must go to bed; George on this looked about him, for he saw no bed such as he had been accustomed to; he had no idea she intended him to sleep on a little bundle of straw which was lying in a corner, but she brought him over to it,

and told him to lie down, and he was afraid to refuse, for she spoke crossly; he hesitated, however, for a moment, for he had always been used to say his prayers to his dear mamma, before he lay down for the night; but again the woman spoke in a rough voice, told him to do as he was bid, or she would soon teach him. So he lay down on that wretched pallet; but though he was so tired, he could not sleep for a long time, thinking of home and his papa and mamma, and all the kind faces which used to be round him there. It was now that he began to remember the promise which he had made to his mamma in setting out on their walk that day, and he felt sorry that he had been so thoughtless as to forget it; now that it was too

late, he saw that he was wrong in not having paid more attention to his mamma's wishes, and that this was the cause of his present distress.

While he was lying awake he tried to repeat to himself some of the little hymns his mamma had taught him, but his mind was so confused with the sorrow of being taken from her, that he could get no farther than one verse of the last which he had learned. In case any of my little readers should like to know it, I shall transcribe the entire hymn :—

Could I so ungrateful be,
  As to cause a mother pain;
She was always good to me,
  Can I yield her ill again?

In each hour of harm or good,
  'Twas her hand that all the day,
Clothed me, kept me, gave me food,
  Taught me to my God to pray.

Oft as I have sickly lain,
By my bed her watch she kept;
And when she has seen my pain,
Sweetly looked on me and wept.

Heavenly Father, who didst give
Such a gift as this to me;
Grant me ever as I live,
Love to her, and love to thee.

The poor child at last, tired and weary with the first sorrow he had ever known, sobbed himself to sleep, where we shall leave him for a short time, till we see how his mamma is, who, you may recollect, we left very ill in a nervous fever. She continued for a long time in a most hopeless state; indeed, poor Mr. Bell was to be pitied, for he thought he should have had the additional grief of laying her in her grave; so he watched her with the greatest care, and never left the bedside for a moment, night or day—for he was a very kind husband.

While matters were going on in this way, one evening as he was watching as usual, a servant stole very gently into the room, and told him, that a man wanted to see him, but he would not tell his business to any one else, and he appeared so anxious to see Mr. Bell himself that they did not like to send him away; so Mr. Bell went down stairs, and the man when he saw him, begged he would bring him into some private place, for he had something very particular to tell him. Having brought him into his study, when the door was shut, the man commenced the conversation by saying, "I think, sir, you have lost a child." Mr. Bell had scarcely power to answer, he almost gasped for breath; however, he replied that it was true, and then the man said that he understood there was a reward

offered; Mr. Bell said there was, and if he could give any information that would lead to the recovery of the child, he would double that which he had already offered. The man appeared quite satisfied, and said if Mr. Bell would come with him, he would bring him at once to where the child was; but he refused to answer any of the questions which were put to him.

Mr. Bell was in such a hurry that he immediately set out with the man, without waiting to tell any one where he was going—he was so fluttered he scarcely knew what he was doing.

The man led the way, and he followed closely, through so many turnings and windings, that it would be difficult to describe. They were going up and down dirty narrow ways, such as Mr. Bell had never been in before, and he almost feared

if he lost sight of his companion for a moment that he should lose his way.

At length the man who acted as his guide, stopped at a cellar, and got down by means of a broken ladder telling Mr. Bell to follow him without making any noise. Only that Mr. Bell thought of nothing but finding his dear child, he would have hesitated before he went into such a shocking looking place; but he banished all fear from his mind, and went on boldly.

The man had no sooner alighted at the bottom of the ladder, than he uttered an angry exclamation of surprise and disappointment. The place was empty; but he said he would search further, and telling Mr. Bell that he would return in a few minutes, he darted up the ladder again, leaving Mr. Bell by himself in that horrid

place; he, however, would not remain below, but got up to the top and looked about, and now, for the first time, recollected how imprudent he was to have come by himself, instead of bringing one of the servants with him. He waited there at the entrance to the cellar for a considerable time, till he was afraid there was some harm intended by the man not returning, and he made up his mind to go home again, which he did more disappointed than ever, and wondering much what the man had brought him there for, as he could not believe he had really intended to bring him where his child was. In trying to make his way back, he found it rather a difficult matter; the man had brought him through such strange places, none of which he knew; at last he found himself in one of the

public streets, and, without further difficulty, proceeded homewards, where he arrived, greatly mortified and vexed; but he was glad he had said nothing on the subject to Mrs. Bell, as she was saved the misery which he had suffered.

He placed himself again at her bedside, and, as if to make him some amends for his trouble, he found her rather better: just as he left her she had fallen, for the first time, into a quiet sleep, and, therefore, did not miss him. The following day she was better still, and, at the end of two or three weeks more, she was declared to be out of danger, but still so weak that she was not able to leave her bed. God, however, is good, and always hears the prayers of those who put their trust in him, and by degrees

she became stronger, till at length she was able to sit up.

Then was Mr. Bell repaid for all his care and watching, and he could not but feel very thankful at her recovery. They would sit for hours together talking of their dear child, and lamenting his loss.

The summer came on, and the flowers came into bloom; the trees and the hedges were green, and the fruit was ripe; all nature looked sweet and smiling, but the hearts of these poor parents were still mourning for their lost one. They could not bring themselves to go to their country-house, where everything reminded them of him; but as Mrs. Bell was ordered change of air, they resolved on going to some distance: and having sold their houses, removed to a remote part of the country.

They generally drove out together when the weather was fine, and used to admire all the beautiful works and wonders of creation. One day they got out of their carriage in order to see to more advantage a fine prospect which presented itself. As they walked along they were accosted by a beggar woman, who begged very hard for some relief, as she said she had a sick child in her arms; at first they passed without paying much attention to her request, but the heart of Mrs. Bell always softened at the idea of a child, for she said to herself, "perhaps my own poor boy may at this moment want help from some kind hand." She therefore turned back, in order to give something for the sake of the child. Little Dash was at her heels; for, I should have told you before, they were

so fond of him, on account of his having belonged to George, that they never went anywhere without him; so he was now frisking and skipping about, and looking very happy, which, perhaps, you will say, was very unkind of him, in the absence of his young master; but though dogs may appear to forget, yet any one they have ever known or loved, they will be able to recognize after a great length of time; perhaps long after every person may have forgotten them; and this is particularly the case when they have been kindly treated. Well, as I was saying, as Dash was amusing himself, he suddenly jumped upon the beggar woman, just as Mrs. Bell was holding out her hand to give her money; but as she did not like to see people in distress, she was at the same time turning her head

another way, when she heard a little feeble voice saying, "*Dash, Dash!*" then she looked, and what was her wonder and surprise to behold her own sweet child, her darling George, lying partly concealed by the woman's cloak; she instantly snatched him in her arms, while she gave such a fearful cry that Mr. Bell heard her, and hastened to the spot. At first he did not know the child, and wondered to see him in the arms of Mrs. Bell; but he was not long in recognizing his dear lost little one, although it would have been difficult for any one to have known him, he was so sadly changed; he looked sickly and wretched; his eyes half closed; his cheeks thin and pale, and his only covering, dirty rags. Mr. Bell immediately, with the assistance of the coachman,

secured the woman, and after having brought home poor George in his sad plight, he put her into prison.

The child was stripped, and washed, and put to bed, and after he had partaken of some good food, he looked a little better; but he was not able for some days to give an account of himself or his sufferings. This wicked woman was brought to trial, found guilty of the offence, and then sent out of the country for her life.

From what the woman afterwards confessed, it was found, that the man who had come one evening for Mr. Bell, was the same with whom she had quarrelled when she first brought George to the cellar; she kept the child a close prisoner in that dirty place for some weeks, till having another falling-out with her com-

panion, he again threatened to deliver her up to justice, and while he went for Mr. Bell, she made her escape with the child. But that treacherous man, who was equally guilty, was soon brought to punishment himself; for, a few minutes after he had left Mr. Bell, he was taken up for a robbery which he had committed, and thrown into jail, where he afterwards died a miserable death, very bitterly repenting his sinful life.

Poor little George, under the care of his papa and mamma, in the course of a few months regained his former health and strength; his curls were once more flowing upon his shoulders, his skin as fair as it had formerly been, though his cheek was still rather pale and thin. As he grew up he endeavoured by his attention to his dear mamma, to show that he

wished to make some amends for all she had suffered on his account, and he was seldom afterwards known to forget any thing she desired him to do; he could not hear of a careless or disobedient child without remembering all the evil consequences it had brought on himself; then he would press more closely to the side of his mamma, while tears of joy would moisten his cheeks at the pleasure he felt at being restored to his parents, whom he more than ever valued. As to little Dash, I am sure I need not say that while he lived he was a great favourite with all the family.

When roving flocks are gone astray,
The anxious shepherds haste
And seek them by the beaten way,
Their wandering steps have traced.

By various roads the servants speed,
And search the lanes and fields;

O pause, my careless soul, and heed
The truth this lesson yields.

By sin beguil'd, even so hast thou
From God presumed to roam;
But Jesus deigns to seek thee now,
And longs to lead thee home.

Th' inviting word, the striving grace,
Convictions lodg'd within,
With close pursuit thy wand'rings trace,
Through the dark maze of sin.

When angels left their home in heav'n,
Unsought, unclaim'd, they fell:
They to eternal flames are giv'n,
While thou art snatch'd from hell.

Lord, what is man? Oh why regard
An earth-born wretch like me,
Who, while thy mercy follows hard,
Can thus unthankful flee?

Thou dost not seek my soul to slay,
But heals each fest'ring wound;
Receive me, Lord, and let this day,
Thy wand'ring sheep be found.

THE END.

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