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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HATTY AND MARCUS ***

HATTY AND MARCUS;

OR,

First Steps in the Better Path.

BY

AUNT FRIENDLY,

AUTHOR OF "KATE DARLY; OR, 'T WILL ALL COME RIGHT.'"

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AUNT BARBARA.

HATTY AND MARCUS.

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I.

HATTY LEE had been on a visit to her grandmother, and now she was coming home.

Mrs. Lee had hard work that morning to keep her young people in order, for Hatty was a favorite with her brothers and sister, and they were wild with delight at the idea of seeing her again.

Hatty was only ten years of age, and Marcus, her brother, thought because he was two years older he was almost a man, and quite able to give Hatty advice on all subjects. He pretended a great contempt for girls, but the fact was he had missed his little playmate sorely, and was full of glee at the thought of her return. He showed his pleasure in a noisy way that made the house not very comfortable for any one else.

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Old Aunt Barbara had twice put her head out of her bed-room door, to tell him he was the "roughest, rudest boy in the world, and would drive her crazy if he did not behave himself;" but Marcus still ran up stairs, jumping up three steps at a time, with his heavy shoes, and sliding down the balusters, hallooing as he went, as if he were riding a race in an open meadow.

Meggy, a mischievous little girl of six, joined her shouts with those of Marcus, while Harry, her next brother, was busy collecting all his new playthings in the hall, that he might show them to "sister Hatty" as soon as she arrived.

As drums and trumpets were among his favorite toys, they of course had to be brought out, and thoroughly tried to prove that they were in perfect order.

While all this tumult was going on in the hall, Mrs. Lee was vainly trying to hush the continual cries of her little baby, who, though only five weeks old, seemed to have remarkably strong lungs for its age, and to promise to resemble the rest of the family in his willingness to use them.

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Mrs. Lee was not very strong, and she was getting quite worn out with the screams of the baby, when old Aunt Barbara came stepping into the nursery, and declared that she was certain if she could take the child a moment, she could quiet it.

Aunt Barbara put the baby on her lap, and began to say to it some of the queer old rhymes she had heard in her childhood, seventy years ago. It is not likely that the baby understood aunt Barbara's funny stories, and wanted to listen,—but this is certain, it stopped crying, and soon closed its eyes and fell into a sweet sleep.

When there was silence in the nursery, the noise in the hall sounded all the louder. Mrs. Lee stepped to the door quickly, as if she were going to speak severely to the children, but something within her whispered that they had no idea of the pain their frolic was giving, and that it was joy about their sister's return that made them so unusually full of glee. When Mrs. Lee reached the head of the stairs, her face had a sweet motherly expression, and before she spoke, she could not help smiling to see little Harry blowing away at his trumpet with all his might, and marching up and down the hall as if he were a fat little soldier on parade, while they jumped up and down, and screamed with delight, to see how fast Marcus could move on his smooth-backed horse.

Mrs. Lee knew that in their present state of mind it would be next to impossible to keep the children perfectly quiet, and she resolved to employ them about something, that they might not waste their energy in making a noise.

Marcus heard somebody at the head of the stairs, and he looked up with an expression of provoking mischief, as if ready to receive another scolding from aunt Barbara. When he saw his mother's kind, pale face bending towards him, he felt a little ashamed of the thoughtlessness which had made him forget that her weak head might have suffered from what he called his "fun."

"Well, Mother," he said looking up cheerfully, "how soon do you think Hatty will come?"

"Not for an hour yet, my son," said the mother, kindly; "and, meanwhile, I have something for you to do. I want you to sweep the pavement, from the door-step to the gate, that it may look neat and tidy to Hatty when she comes home."

"Here, Meg, you go get me a broom, and I'll set to work in a twinkling," said Marcus, jumping down from the balusters, with a deafening stamp of his heavy shoes.

The sound seemed to touch every nerve in Mrs. Lee's head, and she drew her eyebrows together with an expression of pain; but she only said, quietly—"I must have a pair of slippers for you to wear in the house, Marcus, and then you can take off your shoes, when you come in, as your father does."

"O that will be first-rate," said Marcus, with delight. "I should like dog's-heads for the pattern; won't you begin them to-day, Mother?"

"I will make them as soon as I can," said the mother, with a languid smile.

Meg now came running along the hall, carrying the broom by the brush end, while the handle went "knock, knock," along the floor, keeping time to the skipping motion with which she generally moved.

Marcus seized the broom, and began to flourish it this way and that way, across the wide pavement, as if he meant to be rapid, if not particularly thorough, in his work.

"Now, Harry," said Mrs. Lee, quietly, "mother wants you to make a nice fence with your blocks all round your playthings. Meg will get them for you."

From a closet under the stairs Meg soon dragged out a box in which were Harry's stores of blocks,—playthings of which he never tired, and which never wore out.

The little fellow set to work very patiently; and then Mrs. Lee said, "Come, Meg, I will take you with me." Meg gave her hand to her mother, and skipped up the stairs, ready to take in good part anything that should happen.

Mrs. Lee led her to a small room at the end of the hall, and said, "Now listen to me, my little darling. You are to sleep in here with Hatty, and she is to help you dress, and to be very kind to you. I want you to be very careful not to hurt any of Hatty's things, and to mind her, when I am not with you. If you do as I say, you will be sure to get on well."

Meg gave a little jump, and perched herself on the edge of the bed, as she said, "O how nice, Mother! I am so glad. It is a great deal pleasanter than being in the old nursery with Jane."

"Don't sit on the bed, Meggy," said Mrs. Lee, helping the little thing gently down—and smoothing the tumbled place she had made on the clean counterpane; "You know Hatty likes to keep her bed very nicely."

"Hatty can't lock the door now—and say, 'You can't come in, Meg.' It is my room, too, now," said Meg, "and I shall have a right to come in."

"I hope my little girls will get on very pleasantly together," said Mrs. Lee, gently. "Jesus' little children never quarrel, never speak bad, angry words."

"Well, I won't, Mother, if I can help it," said Meg, and she put up her mouth to be kissed, as if that mother's kiss could ensure her doing right.

While this conversation was going on up stairs, Marcus had stopped in the midst of his work, and was actually still, for a moment, while his face bore the marks of deep thought.

Marcus did not feel altogether comfortable about the way he had spoken to Aunt Barbara that morning; he knew he had done wrong, and that brought to his mind a letter his mother had received from Hatty during her absence. Hatty had written that she was very sorry for all the naughty things she had ever done, and that she had made up her mind to be one of Jesus' little children, and that she believed He had forgiven her for all the past, and would help her to be a better girl. She sent much love to her brothers and sisters, and said she wanted them to forget every unkind word she had ever spoken to them, for she was very sorry, and never meant to do so again. [10]

Ever since Hatty could speak, her mother had been teaching her about her Heavenly Father, and trying to make her love Him and wish to serve Him. The little girl had always listened patiently, but Mrs. Lee had never been satisfied that Hatty had made her choice to be among the lambs of Jesus' flock, who love to hear their Shepherd's voice, and try to follow Him. This letter, therefore, written in the frankness and simplicity of childhood, had brought joy to the mother's heart. She believed that the love of Christ had taken root in the soul of her child, and that by God's grace it would grow and strengthen, and in time bear such fruit as angels love to see. [11]

Mrs. Lee had not only given the message Hatty sent to her brothers and sister, but she had read her letter to them, praying silently that by Hatty's example they might be led to choose God for their guardian and guide.

Marcus had listened intently, and had been moved more than he cared to show. When his mother laid the letter down, he said bluntly, "I have nothing laid up against Hatty," and abruptly left the room.

Now as he stood on the pavement leaning upon the broom, he was thinking of Hatty and her new resolution, and wondering if he should ever make up his mind to do right. Of one thing he was sure, doing wrong gave him no pleasure. He had been too well taught to be able to commit any sin, without being reminded of it by his conscience, but to obey that conscience was another thing.

Marcus could not help fancying that he should see some great change in Hatty, that she would look differently, speak differently,—and he made up his mind not to be at all pleased with her if she affected any new, serious ways. This was but a momentary feeling, for Marcus really loved his sister, and in the depths of his heart he rejoiced that she had chosen the best portion, the only blessing that will last forever and ever. [12]

II.



MARCUS spent so much time in meditating about Hatty and her new resolution, that he had but just finished his task, when the carriage, so anxiously desired, drove up to the door, and out jumped Mr. Lee, followed in another moment by Hatty. [13]

Marcus threw down his broom, and sprang forward, and before he thought he had kissed Hatty several times. Marcus was not much in favor of kissing,—he thought it was "girlish;" but now he was so really glad, he did not think what he was about.

While Mr. Lee was attending to the removal of his carpet-bag, Hatty's little trunk, and sundry baskets and packages with which the carriage was loaded, Marcus and Hatty walked up the wide pavement together.

"You are a good sweeper, Marcus," said Hatty, looking at the clean bricks upon which they were stepping. [14]

Marcus did not answer; he was gazing straight into Hatty's face to see if she were really altered. He could see no change, save that a few freckles about her nose disfigured her uncommonly fair skin, and told of the life in the open air she had lately led. Her red hair had not grown a shade darker during her absence, although it was

brushed a little smoother than usual. Her bright, reddish brown eyes had their own lively expression, and her mouth seemed as ready as ever to smile, until all about it the tiny dimples came like little pin-pricks in her fair skin.

Hatty's face was not changed, certainly; and instead of having the grave manner that Marcus expected, she was all joy at her return, and seemed to have forgotten that she meant to be any better than any one else.

Hatty had not forgotten her new resolutions, and if Marcus could have seen into her heart at the moment she stepped from the carriage, he would have read a prayer that she might be able to live among her dear brothers and sister like one of the lambs of the flock of Christ. [15]

Meg and Harry had heard the sound of the carriage wheels, and were on the door-step to receive Hatty. They first almost smothered her with kisses; then Meg untied her bonnet strings with rough kindness, and Harry seized her little travelling bag, as if it were his especial property.

Hatty was a particular little soul, and the way Meg took hold of the new blue satin ribbons of her leghorn flat, hurt her as much as if Meg had given her one of the twisting little pinches she knew so well how to inflict. Hatty was going to twitch away, but instead of the twitch came a bright blush on her cheek, that she should have so soon been near being out of patience, when again among the little ones at home. As a kind of punishment to herself, she let Meg lay aside her bonnet, and suffered Harry to run off with her pretty travelling bag, without saying a word.

"Where's Mother?" asked Hatty, eagerly, passing along the hall, and going directly up stairs.

"Here, here, my child," said the mother, as she met her on the landing, and folded her affectionately in her arms. [16]

Very pleasant it was to Hatty to receive that mother's tender kiss, but dearer still were the words which were, breathed in her ear: "God bless you, my darling, you are dearer to me than ever."

Hatty understood her mother's earnest words, and she could have echoed them, "you are dearer to me than ever." That was exactly what she felt. The mother who had talked to her of the blessed Jesus, and taught her His words and ways, was dearer than ever, now that she had resolved to follow Him.

In silence Hatty and her mother ascended the short flight of stairs that led to the upper hall; then the little girl asked eagerly—"But where is the baby? I have not seen him yet—or Aunt Barbara, either."

"So you did think of Aunt Barbara. I didn't know but you had forgotten me entirely, you were so taken up with your grandma," said the old lady, coming slowly out of the nursery.

"No, indeed, I had not forgotten you," said Hatty, and she kissed her affectionately.

Hatty had not forgotten Aunt Barbara; she had had painful reasons for remembering her. The unfortunate, disrespectful words she had spoken to the old lady, had risen up to her again and again, and made her pray with double earnestness to be forgiven for Jesus' sake. [17]

Aunt Barbara led the way to the nursery, and there on the bed lay the baby, the pet of the house.

"O what a dear, tiny little creature!" said Hatty, bending over it, with a look half wonder and half affection. "I never saw such a little baby before; that is, I don't remember Harry very well, when he was so young," she added, for Hatty was trying to be truthful, even about trifles.

"Harry was twice as big at the same age," said Aunt Barbara. "He always was a bouncer."

Hatty stooped down to kiss the wee mouth of the sleeping baby, but Aunt Barbara pushed her roughly back, and said impatiently: "Don't, child! don't, you'll wake him."

"Mamma does not say I mustn't!" sprang to Hatty's lips, for she was sadly quick-tempered, but again a blush of shame took the place of hasty words. [18]

"He will wake soon," said Mrs. Lee, quickly but quietly, "and then, Hatty, you can hold him in your arms; he is not much heavier than your dolly, Susan."

"Thank you, Mother. I should like that," said Hatty; she felt that her mother had wished to speak quickly to keep her from wrong words, and she was grateful for the kindness that would help her to do right.

"Now, Hatty, you had better come to your room, and take off your things."

"To *our* room," said Meg, with a saucy, mischievous look.

Hatty turned towards her mother with a sudden glance of inquiry.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lee, "you are to have Meg for a room-mate." Hatty's face flushed, and Mrs. Lee hastened to add, "I thought you would like to help me, and you can do so best by taking Meg with you, and having a little charge over her."

Hatty looked very soberly, as she answered, "I *should* like to help you, Mother."

Mrs. Lee opened the two lower drawers of the bureau, and said, "you see I have put some of Meg's clothes here; when you need any more you can come to me for them."

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"But, Mother, where are all my presents, and my pretty things? That is too bad! I have always kept them so nicely in those drawers!" said Hatty, hastily.

Mrs. Lee did not speak for a moment; she opened a door leading into a large lighted closet, and then said, "Here, my darling, you will have a place for all you want to keep particularly nice; see, I have put your presents in this drawer, and your books are there above, on the shelf. I have put a little table here for your Bible, and you must not forget to 'enter into your closet,' to pray to Him who seeth in secret."

"O, Mother, you are so very kind and I am so very hasty," exclaimed Hatty; "I will not forget to do as you say, for indeed I need it. You will have to be very patient with me, Mother, for I am afraid I shall have hard work to keep my resolutions."

"Trust in God for help to struggle against your faults, and in the end you will conquer," said the mother, with an affectionate kiss, and then she left her little daughter alone.

Hatty had led an easy, quiet life with her grandmother for the last three months, and had had but little temptation to give way to her hasty temper. Now she began to realize that it would be quite another thing, where at almost every moment she was called on to give up her own will and pleasure for that of others; but she was not disheartened. God has promised to give his strength to those who really wish to serve Him, and on this promise little Hatty relied. In her closet she knelt and asked the blessing of Heaven on her poor efforts, and she rose cheerful and happy.

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III.



WHEN Hatty had arranged her clothes once more neatly in her own room, she began to wonder what had become of Marcus, and she concluded to go in search of him; she met him in the hall. He seemed much excited, and said, "O Hatty, what beautiful bantams! I have put them in a barrel, and carried all the packages grandma sent, to the kitchen, and now I want to know where we shall keep them?"

Hatty was not quite pleased that Marcus should take the bantams so immediately under his protection, though she had brought them as a present to him. She checked the feeling of annoyance, and said pleasantly, "They are yours, Marcus, so you can plan for them as you think best; but perhaps you could manage to make a coop, as you do not go to school to-day."

Marcus was delighted with the presents, and resolved to set to work immediately to get the pets into comfortable quarters before Sunday.

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Hatty put on her sun-bonnet, and they both were soon very busy in the yard, planning for the chicken coop with as much interest as if they were going to build some wonderful specimen of architecture which all the world would admire.

Marcus found in the wood-house a large packing box, and after much hammering he succeeded in knocking out one side, so the chickens could have their feet on the ground in their new home.

"Chickens are like the Irishman who liked a mud floor that would never wear out, and never need washing," said Marcus, with the air of one who was instructing some ignorant person.

"Yes, grandma has all her coops made that way," said Hatty, who was well pleased to show that she understood the subject.

Marcus now selected a board of the right length, and had just begun to split it up into slabs for the front of the coop, when he heard Aunt Barbara's bed-room window go up.

Marcus did not raise his eyes, but he could not stop his ears, and he had to hear the shrill tone that called out, "Stop! stop! Marcus Lee!"

Marcus rested his hatchet on the board, and looked up.

"You are a wasteful boy!" began Aunt Barbara. "You ought to be ashamed to cut up that good board!"

"Don't mind her," said Marcus, in an undertone, as he resumed his work.

"Wait a minute, Marcus," said Hatty; and then raising her voice she called out, "Aunt Barbara, we want a coop for the chickens—some dear little bantams I brought from grandma's!"

"Chickens!" said Aunt Barbara, much as if she had said bears! "What on earth did you bring them here for? why, they'll ruin everything in the garden, and crow so in the morning nobody can sleep."

"We are going to shut them up, Aunt Barbara, and that will keep them out of mischief," said Hatty, trying to speak pleasantly.

"Take your own way! take your own way! Its never any use for me to say anything!" said Aunt Barbara, and her window was put down with such a force that made the glass rattle.

Marcus had expected to hear Hatty answer in her usual hasty way, and he was quite surprised to see that she did not seem at all angry, and now had no unkind remarks to make about Aunt Barbara. He did not know that Hatty had been obliged to cast one look up to the clear sky, to remember the Great Being who was looking down upon her, before she dare trust herself to speak, nor did he know that she was now wondering why Aunt Barbara should be so unlike her dear, dear grandma.

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Marcus kept steadily on at his work, but Hatty did not feel satisfied about it until she had asked her mother if there was really any harm in what they were doing. After Mrs. Lee had given them free permission to go on, the morning passed pleasantly away in watching Marcus, and she was quite surprised when the dinner bell rang.

"O dear!" said Hatty, "we shall have hardly time to put ourselves in order for the table."

Although Marcus knew that it was his mother's express wish that he should never come to the table without looking neat and tidy, he paid little regard to his personal appearance; but there was something in the eager way in which Hatty hastened to brush the hair she had been too much inclined to neglect, that had its influence on him.

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Hatty was in her seat before her father was at the table, and a pleased smile crossed her face as she saw that Marcus had been using the clothes brush, and combing his straight black hair off his high forehead.

The dinner hour was always a pleasant time at Mrs. Lee's, for then all the family were together, and some interesting conversation was sure to take place. Marcus was a restless boy, active in body and mind. He enjoyed his father's society, and affected to think that he was the only one in the family who was really a suitable companion for a boy of the mature age of twelve!

Mr. Lee was a merchant; he had lately met with large losses, but he did not allow himself to be saddened by misfortunes that left his home untouched, and all his dear ones alive and well. Mr. Lee was a tall, slender man, with a bright, expressive eye, and a large, pleasant mouth, and his children thought him the handsomest man in Hyde, the large inland town where he lived.

During the dinner-hour on the day about which we are writing, Mr. Lee was talking of a plan for building an Orphan Asylum, about which the citizens of Hyde were greatly interested.

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Marcus listened to his father's remarks, and seemed to think himself called upon to reply. He did so, and showed uncommon quickness and good sense for a boy of his years in what he said. Mrs. Lee modestly made some suggestions, which her husband thought particularly useful; but Marcus' lip curled as his mother spoke, in a way which it was well for him escaped his father's observation. After dinner, Mr. Lee was obliged to hurry away, but not too soon to give Hatty a kiss, and to say to her how pleasant it was to see her face once more at the table.

When Mr. Lee was gone, Mrs. Lee resumed the subject about which they had been talking, and sketched what she thought would be an improvement on the internal arrangement of the proposed building.

"Now don't, Mother!" said Marcus. "What do women know about such things?"

"What do boys know? you had better say!" said Hatty, hastily taking part with her

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mother.

"Any sensible boy of twelve knows more about such things than a woman!" said Marcus, turning to leave the room.

"Stop, Marcus," said Mrs. Lee, gently.

Marcus stopped, but did not approach his mother. She stepped to his side and said: "Marcus, there was once a boy of twelve who had more wisdom than the learned doctors in the Jewish Temple. He, of course, knew more than his mother. Yet he went down with her to Nazareth, and was subject unto her. Even he was not above honoring his father and mother. Will you not try to imitate him?"

Marcus was softened by his mother's gentle manner, and he answered: "If I don't behave as I ought to you, Mother, it is a great shame;" and then he was again turning away.

Again he was detained. Hatty laid her hand on his arm and said: "Marcus, I did not speak rightly to you just now. I was angry. I am sorry." Hatty blushed painfully when she spoke, and it was evident the acknowledgment cost her a great effort.

"I did not notice it," said Marcus, hurrying away.

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Hatty felt a little hurt at the way her apology was received, but her mother took her by the hand, and said: "That is right, Hatty. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. You must not forget Marcus in your prayers."

Hatty was silent a moment, and then her mother said: "Come now, my dear, the baby is awake, and you will have an opportunity to see his queer little blue eyes, and to hold him in your lap."

Hatty was delighted when she reached the nursery, to be allowed to take the tiny being in her arms, and to hold his pretty soft hand in hers.

Meg and Harry seemed to think it was a very attractive sight to see Hatty with the baby on her lap, and they left their soap-bubbles and came to stand about her.

At this moment Aunt Barbara came in. She did not seem to notice Hatty and the baby. Her eyes at once fell upon the bowl full of soap-suds Meg had placed on a chair.

"Dear! dear!" exclaimed Aunt Barbara, "what are the children coming to? Why, they waste soap as if it grew, instead of cost money! Here, Meg, pour this away directly, and don't do such a thing again!"

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"It won't help it to throw it away," said Meg. "I want to blow bubbles."

"Shan't have it! shan't have it!" said little Harry, holding tight to the edge of the bowl with his little fat hands.

"Aunt Barbara," said Mrs. Lee, very gently, "I told the children they might blow bubbles a little while this afternoon. Jane mixed the soap for them, that they need not be wasteful."

"Its little use savin' in such a house as this!" said Aunt Barbara, and she walked away as if she were particularly injured.

Marcus now came in to tell how happy and contented the chickens seemed in the new coop. He saw some evidences of displeasure on the faces of Meg and Harry, and he exclaimed, "I met Aunt Barbara in the hall, with her indignation strut on. What's up?"

"Marcus, my son, I cannot bear to hear you speak in that way of any old person, especially of Aunt Barbara."

"But she is too tiresome and provoking, Mother. If I want a piece of twine for a kite-string she calls it wasteful, and—"

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"Yes," broke in Meg, "and when I want to play tea, she won't let me have a bit of milk or sugar,—that is, if mother is not here."

"Hush, hush, my children," said Mrs. Lee, with a look of pain. "Come, sit down all of you, and I will tell you a story."

Marcus liked to hear stories as well as little Meg herself, and he forthwith sat down on the floor, where he could look straight into his mother's eyes.

Mrs. Lee began: "Once there was a little orphan girl, only seven years old. Her father and mother died, and she did not know what was to become of her. Now this little girl had an aunt, who was the widow of a clergyman. This aunt had a little cottage of her own, and just enough money to live quietly and comfortably by herself. She knew if she took the little orphan to her home, she must deny herself a great many comforts to which she had always been accustomed; but she resolved to do it.

The little girl was very glad when she found that she was not alone in the wide world, and she soon learned to love the kind aunt who did so much for her.

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Sometimes she was surprised to see what care her aunt took, that nothing should be wasted; and she often wondered why her aunt did not buy herself a new bonnet, or a new dress, which she seemed to need. She did not know that her aunt had to practice so much care and economy, to give her a home. By and by, when she grew older, she understood all this, and tried to be like a daughter to the friend who had been so kind to her. Her aunt's queer little ways only made her feel, then, that it was for her she had learned to save even the shreds she cut off when she was sewing. After the orphan girl was grown, she was married to a very kind gentleman. This gentleman was so grateful to the aunt for her care of the orphan, that he wanted her to come and live with them in her comfortable home; but Aunt Barbara said—

"There, there, Mother! you have let it out," exclaimed the children in a breath.

"Don't, don't," said Hatty; "what did Aunt Barbara say, Mother?"

"She said, your old aunty is queer and notional, and maybe you would be happier without her. No, no, let me stay here alone; I shall be quite contented to know my little orphan is so well taken care of! It was of no use urging Aunt Barbara, so we had to let her have her way. Now, my children, you know how Aunt Barbara got her very economical ways, and I hope you will have patience with her, for my sake."

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"Indeed, I will!" said Hatty, looking up with her eyes full of tears.

"I won't tease her any more," said Meg, nestling at her mother's side.

Marcus was silent; he felt too deeply to speak, how ill a return he had made to Aunt Barbara for her kindness to his mother.

"But how came Aunt Barbara here?" asked Hatty, with much interest.

"I will tell you," said Mrs. Lee. "We had been married three years, when I had a little, helpless, sickly baby. I was too feeble to take proper care of it, and your father was obliged to be too much away from home to give me any help. Aunt Barbara heard how weak and pale I was looking, and what a poor, suffering baby I had. Then the old lady let her little home to a stranger, and came one day to us. She said she could not sleep for thinking of me and the little one, and she had come to take care of us. And what good care she took of us! She seemed to know just what I wanted. I was young, then, and there were many things about which I was as ignorant as you are. Aunt Barbara had nourishing food made for me just when I needed it, she took the care of the housekeeping from me, and so nursed me that I soon began to feel strong again. But I have not told you about the poor baby. Aunt Barbara could not do too much for that baby. It was a cross little thing, crying even when it was not sick. Aunt Barbara was never out of patience with it. She attended to its food, got up with it at night, and even when I was well enough to take it with me again, she was hardly willing to give it up."

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"All this watching and nursing was too much for Aunt Barbara; she has never been well since. When her rheumatism keeps her awake at night, she is often irritable and inclined to find fault the next day. When I feel tempted to be out of patience with her, I have only to remember that it was for me and my little baby she came here, and that for us she wearied herself until her health gave way."

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"Mother," said Hatty, in a whisper, "was I that little sickly baby that Aunt Barbara was so patient with?"

"Yes, my darling," was Mrs. Lee's reply.

The many impertinent, hasty, impatient words that she had spoken to her old aunt, returned to Hatty's mind, and she resolved to ask God to give her strength to make amends for the past.

"It is a sad truth," said Mrs. Lee, "that old people have much less patience shown towards them than little children have, yet they need it quite as much. God has so arranged it, that those who are watched over and taken care of when they are helpless babes, should in their turn nurse and comfort the feeble old age of their parents. Remember, my children, old age makes people in one way like infants; that is, it leads them to be irritable and troublesome, and often helpless, and these defects should be borne with tenderly, as your father or I would soothe that dear baby on Hatty's lap. God has taught in his holy book the greatest respect to the aged, and his eye sees with displeasure even a rude look cast towards one who is grey-haired."

[35]

The children were all silent. Mrs. Lee saw that they were moved, and in her heart she prayed that God would grant a blessing upon the earnest words she had spoken, and save her dear ones from falling into the sin so offensive to the Holy One of Israel.

[36]

IV.

HEN Hatty went to bed, on the evening of her return, she found Meg fast asleep, and apparently as much at home as if she had always had a right to talk of "our room," instead of being one of the children in the nursery.

Hatty looked at the little brown face lying on the pillow, and the long dark lashes hiding the mischievous eyes, and she felt that she loved her little sister dearly, and would be willing to be put to a great deal of inconvenience to be of service to her. When Hatty knelt that night in the quiet closet her mother had given up to her use, she did not forget to pray that she might be patient and gentle with Meg, and so win her confidence as to be able to lead her to the Saviour, who loves to call the little ones His own.

Hatty's short reading in the Bible that evening was about the crucifixion of our Saviour, and as she prepared to lie down, she wondered how he could have borne such suffering without one murmur. Hatty had a perfect horror of pain. Her skin was thin and delicate, and even the grasp of a rough hand on her arm was sure to leave a bruise. Her usually pleasant face was clouded over by a scratch or a pin-prick, and her tears often fell fast for a wound that many children would have met with a smile. Hatty was naturally very sensitive to pain, and that was not her fault; but she had never yet begun to try to bear it patiently, as a part of her christian duty. As she lay down that night, she resolved to be more patient under, little trials, and to make light of little pains. [37]

Hatty's new resolution was soon put to the test. She had hardly put her head on the pillow, before she became conscious that her couch was anything but a bed of roses.

Meg had consoled herself for going to sleep in a strange room by herself, by munching hard crackers until that pleasure was lost in the new joy of the dreams of childhood. The bed was strewn with the crumbs, and through her thin night-dress Hatty could feel them in all directions. After brushing them this way and that way, Hatty jumped out of bed with an angry bound, and proceeded to light the candle and rectify the mischief in a systematic manner. [38]

"The troublesome little thing!" exclaimed Hatty, as she saw a half-eaten cracker lying in Meg's loosened grasp. "She ought to be punished for it!"

At that moment Hatty thought of her resolution to be patient under trifling discomforts, and a feeling of mortification came over her. Very quietly she brushed away the offending crumbs, gently she removed the half-eaten cracker, and then she knelt to ask forgiveness for this new exhibition of her hasty temper, ere she again lay down to rest.

Hatty was soon in a sweet sleep; but shortly after midnight she was awakened by a feeling very much as if a broom-handle were thrust against her, while at the same time Meg exclaimed, "Do move, Hatty, you crowd so. I wish you would'nt come on my side of the bed."

Meg was a thin bony little creature, and the children all dreaded a punch with her sharp elbows almost as much as one of her scientific pinches. [39]

Hatty's tender side actually ached, but she made an effort to say, gently, "Meg, you must be dreaming; wake up!"

"I am not asleep at all!" said Meg, pettishly. "I wish you would move!"

Hatty passed her hand along the seam of the sheet (Mrs. Lee used her old-fashioned sheets on the children's beds) to assure herself that she was on her own side of the bed, and then she was going to tell Meg that it was *she* who was out of place; but something checked her, and she only said, pleasantly, "Never mind, Meg, where the middle of the bed is,—you shall have all the room you want;" and making way for her little friend with the sharp elbows, Hatty composed herself again to sleep, with a far happier feeling than if she had contended for her rights.

Once she was going to say, "O Meg, it hurts me still where you punched me," but she checked the words, and thought how trifling was such a pain compared with the nails in the hands of our great example, who has bid us follow him in his patience, as well as in perfect purity. [40]

Hatty's long ride from her grandmother's, a distance of sixteen miles, and the excitement of her return home, made her sleep very soundly, when not disturbed, and she would gladly have continued her nap until the rousing bell gave forth its summons.

Meg was something like the uneasy birds who twitter at midnight on their perches, and wake at dawn to sing, as if they never knew the need of rest.

By the first grey streak of morning she began to stir, and was soon wide awake and full of glee at finding herself in her new quarters.

Hatty turned her back resolutely, but in vain. Meg was not to be so easily disposed of. Hatty was going to say some hasty words to Meg, as she twitched away from her, when Meg pleaded, "Do wake up, sister Hatty. It is Sunday morning."

"Sunday morning!" that thought brought Hatty to herself—and making an effort to throw off her sleepiness, she turned towards Meg, and said, "Well, then, give me a nice kiss to begin the day."

Meg gave the kiss with real good will, and then, nestling up close to Hatty, she began to talk as if her tongue needed violent exercise to make up for being quiet all night. [41]

Before many minutes were over, Hatty had set that little tongue at Sunday work, repeating all the hymns and Bible verses that Meg had learned during the three months that Hatty had been away from home.

Meg was full of eager questions about her hymns and her verses, and Hatty had an opportunity of giving the little one some sweet lessons about the loving Saviour and what He wishes in His lambs, that she would have lost if she had given way to her selfish wish for a longer nap.

We do not know, when we give way to our own whims, instead of being unselfish, what opportunities of usefulness we may be losing. If we do one duty well, some higher and more important duty generally follows close upon it.

Hatty took a pleasure in making Meg look particularly nice that Sunday morning, and she was well pleased when her mother smilingly remarked at breakfast that Meg showed very plainly that she had fallen into good hands. "Hatty needs a little attention, herself," added Mrs. Lee, and she glanced at the irregular white line which separated the two heavy masses of waving red hair on each side of Hatty's head. [42]

Hatty would rather have gone without her breakfast than had her hair parted. Hatty was apt to fret about being hurt all the while the operation was going on, and Mrs. Lee actually dreaded to propose what, if borne cheerfully, would have been but the work of a moment. Happily for Hatty at that instant her thoughts were called in a different direction by Marcus' sudden question—

"Where is Aunt Barbara this morning?"

Even the question showed some interest in the old lady; and Mrs. Lee hailed it as an indication of a better state of feeling in her son.

"Aunt Barbara is not very well this morning; she did not get up as early as usual," said Mrs. Lee.

"Shan't I go up to see if I can do anything for her?" said Hatty, eagerly.

"She will be down soon, I think; but you may go," said the mother, pleasantly.

Hatty ran up stairs, and knocked very gently on Aunt Barbara's door. [43]

"Who is it? What do you want?" answered Aunt Barbara's voice from within.

"It is Hatty. Can I do anything for you?" said the little girl.

"No!" was at first the decided answer; then followed a sudden call "Stop, stop, child. Come in a moment."

Hatty stepped in, but felt like drawing back as Aunt Barbara stood there, half dressed, with her grey hair uncovered, and her thin, shrivelled arms bare.

"Don't stare as if you were frightened," said Aunt Barbara, quickly. "Old people are not generally very beautiful to look at!"

"Can I do anything for you?" said Hatty, pleasantly.

"Yes, if you want to. I can't find my pocket. Perhaps you can see it."

Aunt Barbara wore a pocket tied on under her dress with a string, and she had been for some moments looking for it, as she was ready to put it on.

Hatty glanced round the room, and was delighted when she saw a piece of white Marseilles peeping out from under the tumbled bed-clothes. She sprang towards it, and handed the pocket to the old lady, who took it without a word, and went on dressing herself. [44]

Hatty began to pick up the things about the room, and to throw open the bed; for she knew Aunt Barbara would not think of going down to breakfast until the room was a little in order.

Aunt Barbara did not seem to notice her; but when she had tied the strings to her

close-quilted muslin cap, and pinned a broad black ribbon round it, she said: "Come, now, child, its not worth while your breakfast should get cold while you are waiting on me."

Hatty's face brightened, and she said, eagerly: "I should be glad to do anything for you, Aunt Barbara."

"You may have more chance than you want, if I feel like this many mornings," said Aunt Barbara, very sharply.

Aunt Barbara was not very pleasant at breakfast that morning. Nothing seemed cooked to suit her. The fact was, the poor old lady was not well, and had no appetite, and that made everything seem out of the way to her. [45]

Hatty could not help noticing how pleasantly her mother took Aunt Barbara's comments on the breakfast, that would have put many housekeepers out of patience. When nothing on the table seemed to suit Aunt Barbara, Mrs. Lee quietly sent out for a bit of ham to be boiled; and when it came in, she seemed pleased that the old lady ate a few mouthfuls,—complaining at first that it was done a trifle too much, and in the end making way with it all.

Mr. Lee did not seem to notice that Aunt Barbara was not well,—at least he did not ask about her health; and Hatty thought at first it was not quite right in her father, and she wondered that he should do anything so unlike himself. By-and-by she noticed that all the topics he brought up were such as were likely to interest Aunt Barbara. He spoke of meeting an old minister who used to live near her own home, and told how cheerfully he talked of his long, active life, and of the happy time when he should meet his Master in heaven. Then he brought up the new orphan asylum, which was always sure to enlist Aunt Barbara's attention; and at last she seemed to forget her pains, while listening to his account of the meeting on the subject he had attended the evening before. [46]

Hatty felt pleased as she saw the shadow passing from the old lady's face, and she glanced across for Marcus to sympathize in her satisfaction. He did not see her, but Hatty noticed that he placed a comfortable chair, after breakfast, near the window where Aunt Barbara best loved to sit, and drew a footstool up to it.

Marcus did not think that anybody observed him, but two hearts were made glad by this little effort of kindness. Mrs. Lee and Hatty both saw that Marcus' feelings towards Aunt Barbara had undergone a happy change. Marcus' feelings had been touched, but feelings are a poor dependence for doing right, without principle.

Hatty was delighted at the idea of going to church once more in her dear native town. She felt that it would be a new and better thing to be there, now that she could count herself among those who were glad at the thought, "God is in His holy temple." Hatty began, in her impatience, to make her preparations in very good season. She had laid out on her bed all the things she expected to wear, when her mother called her to come into the nursery. [47]

Hatty went promptly as far as the door, but she moved across the floor more slowly when she saw that her mother had a comb and brush in her hand.

"I hope we shall have no trouble about the hair, this morning. It needs parting, sadly," said Mrs. Lee, in her gentle way.

Hatty's mind was made up at that moment; her mother might pull as hard as was necessary, *she* would not say a word if it hurt her ever so much.

Mrs. Lee used the comb very carefully, yet it was disagreeable, almost painful to Hatty's delicate skin. She shut her mouth tight, however, and thought of her resolution to bear little hurts pleasantly, and actually got through without a murmur.

When the hair was brushed smoothly, Hatty's face looked very sweet from the effort she had made to do right, and she well deserved the affectionate kiss her mother pressed on her lips.

"Perhaps I could help Aunt Barbara get ready for church," said Hatty, one right action leading to another. [48]

"Aunt Barbara is not well enough to go, to-day. I am very sorry, on my own account as well as on hers. It is Communion day, and I had hoped to go to church, for the first time in many weeks."

"But cannot you go, Mother?" said Hatty, earnestly.

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Lee, quietly. "I do not like to leave Aunt Barbara with no one to wait upon her. I promised Betsy, yesterday, that she should go out this morning, and Jane will be busy with the baby and Harry."

Hatty was silent for a moment; a struggle was going on in her mind. At length she looked up with a beautiful, bright expression on her face, and said, "I will stay with

Aunt Barbara, if you could trust her with me. I do not want you to be kept at home."

Mrs. Lee knew the effort it must have cost her little girl to give up the pleasure for which she had been so eagerly preparing, but she did not refuse her kind offer.

"Thank you, my darling; I shall feel quite easy leaving Aunt Barbara with you. 'I was sick and ye visited me,' our Saviour says, and then adds, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.' That thought makes taking care of the sick doubly pleasant. And now, darling, instead of putting on your own things, which are all laid out so nicely, you will have to help me to get ready."

Hatty was glad to be kept very busy that she might not have a moment to regret her choice, and she made herself so actively useful, that Mrs. Lee was not at all too late in joining the group waiting for her in the hall below.

"Why! are you not going, Hatty?" exclaimed Marcus, as his sister appeared at her mother's side.

"Hatty is going to stay with Aunt Barbara. She may need some attention, and I did not like to leave her alone," said Mrs. Lee.

Marcus looked up in surprise. He knew with what eagerness Hatty had spoken in the morning of being at church, and could not but wonder at the sudden change,—she looked so cheerful. One glance at the sweet, bright expression of her face, convinced him of the generous motive that had kept her at home. Marcus began to think there was some strength in Hatty's new resolution to do right.

V.



UNT Barbara's room was in the back building, and the entrance to it was on the first landing to the front stairs. The old lady had chosen that room, when she came to Mrs. Lee's, because no one had ever occupied it; for she said, "I never did turn anybody out, and I never mean to."

There Aunt Barbara had collected about her all her favorite pieces of old-fashioned furniture, her dark mahogany secretary-bureau, with its bright brass rings held fast in the mouths of wrinkled old brass faces, and her curtained bed, with all its festoons and fringes.

When Hatty stepped into the room, she saw Aunt Barbara sitting bolt-upright in a stuff, straight-backed chair, and looking not much in the humor for little visitors.

"Aunt Barbara, mother thought perhaps you would like some one with you this morning, and so I have brought in my Sunday books, and will sit here, if you like," said Hatty, in a cheerful tone.

"I don't mind your sitting here, if you choose," was the old lady's reply.

Hatty did not know what to say next, so she mounted into one of the high, stiff chairs, and took up a book and tried to read. Her eyes would wander to Aunt Barbara, sitting up straight and still, and looking out of the window at the sky. At length Hatty said, "Do lie down, Aunt Barbara; I am sure you would be more comfortable. Let me fix your pillows nicely for you."

"I never go to bed when I can sit up. I was not brought up to loll about and make myself sick by being lazy," said Aunt Barbara.

Hatty tried to read for a few moments more; then Aunt Barbara moved, and she looked at her again.

The old lady evidently wanted something she could not find in her pocket, and yet did not feel like getting up.

Hatty glanced her eyes round the room, and saw Aunt Barbara's spectacles on the mantel-piece.

She jumped up and handed them to her. "You may give me my Bible, if you choose," said Aunt Barbara, in a pleasanter tone than she had used that morning.

Hatty laid the great Bible on Aunt Barbara's lap, and for a few moments the old lady seemed nodding; but she soon began to rub her spectacles as if they were not clean, and then she put her hand to her head, and said, "old folks can't sit and read all day like young ones."

"That is just what grandma tells me," said Hatty; "and she says young people ought to remember that, and learn a great many Bible verses to think about when they are

too sick or too old to read."

"But if they did not do that when they were young," said Aunt Barbara, "did grandma say what they should do then?"

"She did not say anything about that," said Hatty, looking puzzled. In another moment she added, in her most pleasant way, "would not you like me to read to you a little, Aunt Barbara?"

"If you can make that little tongue of yours go slow enough, for me to understand, you may try," said Aunt Barbara. [54]

Hatty drew her chair close up to Aunt Barbara, and was going to ask when she should begin, when the old lady said, pettishly, "Go round to the other side, child! don't you know that's my deaf ear?" Hatty moved as she was requested, and then Aunt Barbara told her to read the 103d Psalm. Hatty was a very pleasant reader, and she had lately taken great pains not to speak too rapidly.

Aunt Barbara must have been pleased, for she kept Hatty reading, reading, until the family came home from church; and when she turned to leave the room, she said, "Thank you, child; I think going to your grandma's has done you good."

Mrs. Lee had not told Aunt Barbara of Hatty's letter about her new resolutions, yet the old lady felt that some change must have taken place in Hatty to make her willing to give up her own pleasure to sit in that quiet room with a sick, fretful old woman, as Aunt Barbara knew herself to be that morning.

Hatty enjoyed her afternoon at Sunday school all the more for the sacrifice she had made; and when the children all gathered in the parlor before tea to say their catechism and Bible verses to their father, she felt as if she were one of the happiest little girls in the world. [55]

Mrs. Lee was all the afternoon with Aunt Barbara, and when night came the Doctor was sent for, and Jane and Betsy were called in to help Mrs. Lee to get the poor old lady into bed, for she was very sick.

The Doctor looked soberly, and said the disease must have been coming on some time—that there was a great deal of irritation in her system, and he could not say how her sickness might end.

Hatty and Marcus heard the Doctor say these words in the hall as he went out. The tears came into Hatty's eyes, and she said to her brother, "How I wish we had never spoken a wrong word to Aunt Barbara!"

Marcus did not reply, but he walked away to his room, to lie awake with sad, repentant thoughts.

Mrs. Lee had no idea how rude her children had often been to Aunt Barbara; her presence had been some check upon them, though she had heard enough to give her pain. Aunt Barbara had led for many years a quiet life, and the noise and restlessness of children tired and worried her; and latterly she had been far from well. [56]

Mrs. Lee had been for some weeks confined to her room, and during this time Aunt Barbara had had much to bear from Marcus and the little ones; but she never complained to Mrs. Lee, though she daily grew more harsh in her own manner to the children.

A little gentleness, a little patience on the part of those who were young, healthy and happy, would have done much to make poor old Aunt Barbara more pleasant and cheerful. [57]

VI.



OW came an anxious period in Hatty's home. Mrs. Lee, and a nurse who was hired for the purpose, spent their time in Aunt Barbara's room, while the Doctor came and went with a troubled, serious air.

On Hatty, meanwhile, fell the care of Meg and Harry. Hatty found having Meg in her room by no means so troublesome as she had expected. Meg's desire to meddle with Hatty's things, and to put them out of order, seemed to have gone now that she could say "our room." She even made herself a kind of guardian against Harry's inroads; and when she heard his little feet pattering that way, she would get in advance of him with her swift skips, and have the door shut before he reached it.

Hatty found it quite impossible to keep the children quiet, so she managed to have them in the garden as much as she could, in pleasant weather, that they might not disturb Aunt Barbara.

At the foot of the wide walk that led down between the flower beds, was a pleasant arbour, and here Hatty made a kind of a little home of her own. Marcus put up a tight box on one of the seats, and there Hatty kept a store of books and playthings for herself and the children, to make the place attractive, and looked so bright and happy herself, that when Marcus came from school he was glad to leave the dull, quiet house, to join the circle in the arbour.

Hatty was busy sewing there, one day, while Meg made a parasol for her doll, of a maple leaf, and Harry drew a long-necked squash up and down the walk for a carriage. Suddenly Hatty heard Marcus come out the back door, whistling a cheerful tune. Hatty tucked her work in her pocket, and quickly picked up some bits of bright-colored worsted that were scattered over her dress.

Marcus came down the walk, kicking a ball before him, and leaped into the arbour with a regular bound.

"Well, Hatty," he exclaimed, "I was head of my class to-day, and did not get a mark for being late, either. So I stand a chance for the prize yet."

[59]

"Were you not late?" asked Hatty, with surprise.

"O yes!" answered Marcus, with a laugh. "The boys were all on their knees when I went in, but I opened the door quietly, and nobody heard me; so I got off famously."

"But what did you say when your name was called? You did not tell an untruth, Marcus?" said Hatty, anxiously.

"No, indeed!" said Marcus, indignantly. "I am above that!"

"I don't understand it at all," said Hatty, uneasily.

"Why, this was the way. When Mr. Briggs called over the names for punctuality, some how or other his attention wandered just before he got to my name, and he skipped it, so I did not have to answer at all. After Mr. Briggs went out I looked at my name, and there was a cross after it for punctual; so you see it is all right, and my chance for the prize is as good as ever."

"I would rather have a brother who told the truth, than one who got the prize," said Hatty, earnestly. "Dear Marcus, won't you tell Mr. Briggs about it?"

[60]

"I shall do no such thing. Girls are so silly! You never can make them understand anything," said Marcus, hastily.

But Hatty did understand. She felt that Marcus had acted a lie for the sake of winning the prize he so greatly desired. She knew he would be angry if she said anything more about it; but she could not be silent and let him do wrong, without one more effort. After a moment, in which she asked God to help her to keep down her own quick temper if Marcus should make a harsh reply, Hatty said:

"Marcus, you know what mother tells us about the book where what we call secret things are written down, to be read on the great day when all things will be known. Something will stand against your name, there, worse than a mark for being unpunctual. Dear Marcus, do tell the truth, and not mind the prize. You will not care about the prize when you are happy with the beautiful angels in Heaven; but you will love to remember how you did right, when it came so very hard."

It had cost Hatty a great effort to say all this, and now she burst into tears.

[61]

"Girls are so silly!" said Marcus, impatiently. "I wish you would not set up to lecture me, Miss?" and the brother walked angrily away.

"For shame! For shame!" shouted little Meg, who had been an unnoticed listener to the conversation, and her slender finger was pointed at her brother. He took no notice of her; and she turned to Hatty, and threw her arms round her neck, and said: "Don't cry, sister. Meg will be a good girl. I will try very hard."

"Will you, Meg?" said Hatty, brightening. "Then I shall be very happy."

Now Meg had only wanted to say something to comfort Hatty, and had spoken the first words that came into her mind, without thinking what they meant. When she saw Hatty seem so much pleased, she thought to herself: "I do mean to try, if Hatty wants it so very much."

At that moment Harry's voice was heard in loud, angry screams. Hatty and Meg ran to the spot from whence they came. Marcus walked sheepishly away, as they appeared, ashamed to own that in his ill-humor he had been teasing his little brother.

[62]

Harry was a sweet-tempered, affectionate little fellow, ready to put up his mouth to

kiss anybody who smiled upon him; but now he had been too far provoked to bear all patiently.

Marcus had run away with his yellow carriage and dashed it against a stone, until all the seeds that had been riding about so comfortably were scattered far and wide on the grass. Then, because he looked displeased, and said, "Naughty boy!" Marcus had perched him on the high chicken-coop, and left him to scream for himself, or roll off as he best could.

Hatty took the little fellow in her arms and wiped away his tears. She promised to hunt with him for a "beautiful squash," larger than the one he had lost,—and he was soon comforted, and began to smooth her face and say, "Dear Hatty—Hatty so dood."

"Yes, Hatty is so good," echoed Meg.

"Sister is only trying to be good," said Hatty, modestly. But the praise of the little ones went to her heart.

Marcus was sulky towards Hatty all the noon. He did not go out to help her feed the bantams, though she went through the room where he was, with the food in her hand, to give him a chance, if he wished, to join her pleasantly.

Hatty loved her brother, and since she had been making an effort to govern her temper, she had enjoyed being with him. He, too, found in her a very pleasant companion. She was ready to listen to him when he talked, and let herself be instructed, though she sometimes knew as much as he did about the subjects of which he was speaking. Marcus did not tease Hatty much of late, as she had learned to laugh, herself, even when he warmed his hands by her red hair, or asked her if she was so hot-tempered that she had set her head on fire in a passion.

Marcus was glad that day when it came time for him to go to school again, though he generally thought the intermission quite too short. He missed Hatty, and he felt uneasy about what she had said. An uncomfortable feeling was at his heart. He was acting a lie! The truth had been plainly told him, and he could not forget it.

VII.



MARCUS was very cross to Hatty for a day or two after their conversation in the arbour; and whenever he was in the house he kept the children perpetually uncomfortable with his teasing.

Hatty had all this to bear in silence, for she would not trouble her mother with complaints when she had so much on her mind.

Saturday came, and Marcus was to be at home all day. Hatty actually dreaded it. She did not know how she should get through so many hours, with Marcus about the house, so she resolved to go early to the arbour, and perhaps he would not follow her there.

Marcus lounged about by himself for a while, and at last, out of loneliness, he went down to the arbour, too.

Hatty looked up pleasantly as he drew near, and said: "Why can't you get a book, Marcus, and read something to Meg and me?"

"To Meg and you!" said Marcus, contemptuously. "A pretty business for a boy of twelve!"

Hatty did not like contempt, and she answered, hastily: "I am only two years younger than you are, and mother says I am farther advanced in some of my studies!"

"Hurrah for the red-head; touch her, and she goes off like a brimstone match!" said Marcus, triumphantly, for he was tired of having all the crossness on his own side.

"Hatty's hair isn't red," said Meg, angrily. "I heard a lady say, the other day, it was beautiful auburn hair; and she said Hatty was sweet-looking and good, and that is more than anybody will say of you."

"Bad boy! bad boy! Go away!" said Harry, lifting his fat little leg and trying to kick Marcus with his wee foot.

Hatty could not reprove the children, for she herself had set the example of speaking angry words.

Heartily ashamed of herself, she said: "I am very sorry I spoke so to you, Marcus; it

was not right. I ought not to mind being put with Meg, for she is a dear little girl, and I love her very much."

"And I love Hatty, and you shan't be cross to her," said Meg, putting her arms round Hatty.

"It was Hatty who was cross," said the little girl, sadly. "Poor Hatty is only *trying* to be good. She does wrong very, very often."

"Hatty dood! Hatty dood!" said Harry, nestling at her side.

Marcus walked away, without saying another word. He took his fishing-rod, and Hatty saw him no more that day.

When Marcus came home in the evening he was very tired. The family had all done supper. He took what he wanted, alone, and then went up to bed without saying "good-night" to any body. When he got into his own room, he saw on the floor by his bed a beautiful pair of slippers, with dogs' heads worked neatly upon them. He took off his heavy shoes. How comfortable the slippers felt to his tired feet! Such an excellent fit—so loose and easy! "How kind in mother to make them!" he thought. "When could she have had the time."

[67]

Marcus was going to rush to the door of Aunt Barbara's room to thank his mother, when he saw a little note lying on the table. He broke it open and read:

"Dear Marcus: It has made me very sad all the week to think you were displeased with me. I love you very dearly, and cannot bear to have you look at me as if you did not care for me. I know I made you angry by speaking about the mark at school. If I had not cared for you I should not have spoken as I did. I hope you will yet tell Mr. Briggs. Perhaps I am too naughty myself to give anybody advice. Please forgive me all I have ever done wrong to you.—I began to work these slippers as soon as I got home from grandma's, and they were only finished this week. I hope they will fit you.—Won't you be pleasant to-morrow morning to your sister Hatty?"

Marcus read the note, with the slippers on his feet. He felt ashamed of his unkindness to his little sister, and he resolved to meet her pleasantly in the morning. Marcus did not go to sleep until late that night, but we will not tell what was the subject of his thoughts.

[68]

The next morning Marcus' ill humor seemed to have all passed away. He made no apology to Hatty for his late rudeness, but she was generous enough to forget the past. She did not now in her turn sulk and pout, and so keep up the quarrel, but she received him as cheerfully as if nothing had happened.

Marcus wore the new slippers, and declared he had never had a present that suited him better, and Hatty was repaid for all her trouble.

Hatty fancied that at church Marcus was more attentive than usual, and once she thought she saw him wipe his eyes, as if he were affected by something the clergyman said; but she was soon afraid she had been mistaken, for he began to look about as usual, and even exchanged a glance of recognition with one of his acquaintances in the gallery.

Hatty felt anxious for her brother, and she was particularly tender and kind in her manner towards him all day, and in the evening, when she went to bed, she prayed earnestly that God would soften his heart, and lead him to do right. Hatty had not forgotten that Marcus had acted a lie, and she remembered that our Heavenly Father is "a God who hateth a lie."

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VIII.



MONDAY morning rose bright and clear. For many days Aunt Barbara had been steadily gaining, and now she was coming down stairs, for the first time. Hatty felt it a pleasure to wait upon her mother, while she assisted the old lady to dress, and even Marcus seemed pleased to be useful. He and Jane carried down the old-fashioned easy chair, which Aunt Barbara particularly fancied, and then he drew a small table near it, placed a footstool beside it, and stood waiting to see if he could be of any further assistance. Mr. Lee helped Aunt Barbara down very tenderly, and looked at her as affectionately as if she were a dear little child instead of a poor invalid, tottering with age and sickness.

Marcus expected to hear Aunt Barbara say, "This room is too light for anybody," or "My! who could have chosen such a place for my chair?" but he was mistaken.

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Aunt Barbara sunk down among the pillows which Hatty had arranged, quite

exhausted, and for a while was too weak to say one word. Mrs. Lee brought her a glass of wine, and a light biscuit, and when Aunt Barbara had taken them she seemed better.

Then she looked round the cheerful library, and said, "How pleasant it is here, and how nicely you have prepared for me! And you helped, too, Marcus; that was kind!"

"I am very glad you are pleased!" said Marcus; and away he ran to school, feeling more light-hearted than he had done for many days. Mrs. Lee said she would take care of the children in the nursery, as Jane must be busy, and leave Hatty with Aunt Barbara. Hatty was glad to be trusted, and she brought her sewing, and took a low seat near the old lady.

Aunt Barbara did not seem inclined to talk at first, and Hatty kept very quiet, though every now and then she opened her mouth as if she were going to speak, and then shut it again quickly.

Hatty had learned that there are often times when older people do not care to hear even pleasant young voices. She had found out that a little happy child may show a great deal of unselfishness by keeping quiet, when she would gladly let her tongue speak out the joy that is in her heart. Hatty tried to think over all the hymns she had ever learned, and so be silent until Aunt Barbara should choose to speak.

Hatty's lips were beginning to feel quite stiff with their unusual effort, when Aunt Barbara said, "Hatty, my dear."

Hatty looked up suddenly, (Aunt Barbara had never called her "my dear" before,) but she only said "What, ma'am," and then waited to see what would come next.

"Do you love your grandma?" asked Aunt Barbara.

"Indeed I do!" said Hatty, warmly. "She is the dearest and sweetest old lady in the world!"

"She is older than I am, I believe, and a great deal more wrinkled,—at least I have heard so!" said Aunt Barbara.

"I don't know, I never thought about that; she looks very sweet to me!" said Hatty, with a puzzled look.

"I have had a notion," said Aunt Barbara, "that children did not like old people, and perhaps I have not tried to make myself pleasant to them. Do you think if I tried to be like your grandma you could love me, too?" and the old lady looked earnestly at the little girl.

"O Aunt Barbara, I love you now!" said Hatty affectionately; "and you grow more like grandma every day."

"Dear child!" said Aunt Barbara, and she laid her thin hand on the head of the little girl. After a moment's pause she went on—"Hatty, I think I must have been very cross before I was sick; somehow everything seemed wrong to me. I am sorry!"

"I and Marcus and Meg and all of us are sorry we were so naughty. It was our fault, Aunt Barbara,—and we mean to be better," said Hatty, eagerly.

"Poor old Aunt Barbara did wrong, too, child. God has laid her on her bed of sickness to think, and he has raised her up again for some good purpose. Perhaps he wanted to give her an opportunity to be more like what a person ought to be, who has had more than seventy years of blessings, and who has the promise of a home in Heaven. Aunt Barbara means to try not to be fretful, and you children must have patience with her if she don't always speak just as she should."

The old lady was in earnest, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

Hatty rose and wiped them away,—then she kissed Aunt Barbara, tenderly, and said, "We will never think any harm of what dear Aunt Barbara says,—for we all love you, and mean to make you very happy."

Aunt Barbara now asked Hatty to sing some sweet hymns; and she looked so quiet and peaceful as she listened, that Hatty could not help thinking that Jesus must be very near to old people, who are almost at the golden gate of Heaven.

From that time Hatty was much with Aunt Barbara; and it was touching to see how hard the old lady tried to be gentle and pleasant.

Hatty's example had a great influence on the other children. Meg learned to skip more softly as she passed Aunt Barbara's door; and Harry never ate an orange without pattering along to Aunt Barbara's room, to give her a taste.

In their hearts the children often acknowledged that it was their own thoughtlessness which had brought about much of the old lady's harshness; and now that they were more gentle and considerate, they found her a dear, kind friend, who

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IX.

WHEN Marcus came home from school on Monday afternoon, Hatty was in the garden, picking a bouquet to put in Aunt Barbara's room. He stepped quietly behind her and put his hands round her waist, before she heard him coming.

She looked round, expecting to see his face full of fun; but it was very sober,—and he said, quietly,

"I have lost the prize, Hatty!"

"Did you miss a lesson to-day!" said Hatty, eagerly.

"I have not made a mistake this term, and I don't mean to, if I can help it," said Marcus, rather proudly.

"Not a mark for misconduct?" said Hatty, anxiously.

"A mark for tardiness stands against my name. I have told Mr. Briggs."

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Hatty turned towards her brother, and kissed him tenderly. He did not push her away, but, putting his arm round her waist, he walked a few moments along the path in silence; then he said, "I have had a talk with Mr. Briggs, that I hope I shall never forget. I thank you, Hatty, for being a true sister to me."

Here Marcus broke away from Hatty, and ran into the house before she could speak a word in reply.

Hatty finished gathering the flowers, but her thoughts were not on her bouquet, but on her brother. In her heart she thanked God for prompting him to take this first right step, and earnestly she prayed that he might go steadily forward in the path that leadeth unto life.

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X.

THE weeks flew by, and Aunt Barbara was able first to take a short drive, and then to be in the air hour after hour.

One Saturday Mr. Lee pushed back his chair, after dinner, and looking pleasantly round on his children, said, "What do you all say to a visit to Mr. Sparrow's peach orchard to-day?"

The young faces flushed back a glad response, and every little voice was raised in a joyous welcome to the proposal.

"Aunt Barbara must go, too," said Meg, giving the old lady a protective look, which, although it was quite absurd, sprang from real kindness.

"Yes, Aunt Barbara must go, of course," said Mr. Lee, smiling.

"And Hatty, Hatty so dood," put in Harry, as he laid his plump hand caressingly on Hatty's white arm.

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"Yes, every one must go, if the carriage is as full as the shoe where the old woman lived, with that wonderfully large family."

"I hope none of us will have to be whipped and sent to bed," said Meg, laughingly.

"No, no. You shall all have peaches and bread, instead," said Mr. Lee, with a quizzical look.

The children all laughed so much at what they thought a charming witticism on their father's part, that they could hardly hear his voice when he spoke again to say they must be ready in an hour; and then away he went, to give orders about the carriage.

At the first mention of the excursion Marcus had darted away to get his fishing-

tackle in order; for he knew there was a famous trout stream on Mr. Sparrow's farm, and he meant to have sport, for which he cared more than for bushels of peaches.

The hour passed quickly away in busy preparation for the coming pleasure, and all were ready when the great family carriage Mr. Lee had borrowed from his brother, came up to the door. [80]

The horses seemed as full of glee as the children, and Mr. Lee could not leave them to attend to the ladies. Marcus assisted Aunt Barbara very carefully down to the gate, and handed her in so dexterously that she was able to take her seat without complaining of twisting her joints with the exertion. Then Mrs. Lee was escorted with great ceremony, by Marcus, and placed at Aunt Barbara's side. Jane (with the baby in her arms) and Hatty took up the middle seat. Marcus was to sit with his father,—but what was to become of Harry and Meg. The little things looked disconsolate as they saw the places filling up; but Hatty called out, cheerily, "I will hold Meg," and Marcus said, almost in the same breath, "Harry must sit on my knee, that all the gentlemen may be together."

"All de dentlemen todedder!" said Harry, with a pompous look, as he stood ready to be lifted to the place of honor assigned him.

"Now are all packed in tight?" said Mr. Lee, as he drew up the reins in his hand.

"All right!" was the merry shout within, and away went the horses, as if they enjoyed the sport. [81]

The swift motion through the cool air made Hatty glad to draw close round her the shawl she had thrown over her bare neck and arms; and Mrs. Lee reached forward to fold the baby's blanket closely about it.

Hatty soon found Meg rather heavy, and she might have made the whole party uncomfortable by complaining,—but she had learned that one way of doing right is, to check all complaints about trifles, and to be as cheerful as possible.

After a while Meg slipped quietly down into the bottom of the carriage, and said she had a charming seat there on the baby's strong basket. She did not say that she saw sister Hatty was weary, and wished to relieve her. Little Meg was learning something of Christian kindness; so true is it that where one child in a family is really trying to do right, all the others soon catch something of her spirit.

It was a real treat to the children to be fairly outside the town, among green fields and pleasant woods. Mrs. Lee had to keep her head bobbing this way and that way, to see a flock of turkeys that made Meg laugh; or a wild flower that pleased Hatty; or a "pretty moo cow" that Harry thought quite extraordinary. [82]

Marcus, meanwhile, was sitting up beside his father, and trying to talk learnedly of "crops and fallow-land, good timber, and pretty fair orchards." His father listened when he spoke, and quietly corrected his mistakes, without showing him the least sign of contempt, or making him feel his youth unnecessarily.

Mr. Lee saw that Marcus was bent upon appearing like a man, and he only tried to make him a sensible, accurate little man, instead of putting him down in a way likely to provoke him.

All Marcus' *mannish* ways went off, suddenly, when the carriage drew up at Mr. Sparrow's door. He leaped from his seat, and without waiting to hand out the ladies and children, he gave a merry shout, and started off for the brook at a pace that most men find neither easy nor comfortable.

Good farmer Sparrow was away in the orchard; but stout Mrs. Sparrow helped Aunt Barbara out as well as if she had been a man; and by that time Mr. Lee had tied the horses, and was ready to lift down the children; Meg came out with a flying skip, and Hatty bounded down cheerfully; but Harry was so sleepy, that his father had to lift him as if he were a bag of meal. [83]

The sight of the peach orchard was enough to fill the children with astonishment,—the rich fruit looked so beautifully, hanging on the bending boughs. Aunt Barbara was placed on a comfortable chair by the window; Mrs. Lee took the baby,—and then Jane and the children went out into the peach orchard, with Mrs. Sparrow.

The farmer's wife knew exactly to what trees to take them; and she reached up and picked two of the largest peaches Hatty had ever seen, and placed one in the little girls' hands. Away went Hatty back to the house with her treasures, and when she had given them to Aunt Barbara and her mother, she was ready for her own pleasure.

Hatty was learning to think of others first, even in trifles.

Mrs. Lee had told the children just how many peaches they must eat; and after they had come up to the number she named, they enjoyed going about with Mrs. Sparrow, and watching her while she filled the large basket that had been placed in the [84]

carriage, in front of Mr. Lee, for the purpose. Hatty could not help thinking, as she looked at the trees loaded with the beautiful fruit, how kind it was in our Heavenly Father to make so much that is "pleasant to the eye and good for food," that we may take without breaking any of his commandments. She pitied poor Eve, if the forbidden fruit looked anything like those tempting peaches, and was glad that there was no "serpent" at farmer Sparrow's that pleasant day.

Hatty forgot that there is temptation every where, if not quite in the form that was tried upon Eve.

After the children had enjoyed the orchard to their hearts' content, little Harry grew tired, and Jane took him to rest. Mrs. Sparrow and her strong maid carried in the heavy basket of peaches, and Hatty and Meg had permission to wander about to look at the chickens, the bee-hives, or anything else that might interest them.

Meg was full of glee, and would gladly have chased the chickens, handled the young ducks, and teased the turkey-gobbler till he was quite in a passion. Hatty checked her as gently as she could, and managed to keep her for some time from doing any actual mischief. [85]

Meg was charmed when she got to the bee-hives. She had lately heard Marcus discoursing, in his most learned manner, as to the habits and peculiarities of bees, and she was curious to see these wise little insects in their own home.

Hatty was glad to find her at last so absorbed as to be willing to be quiet a moment, and, a little relieved from her anxiety, she turned away to look at a curious plant that was growing in a small swampy place, into which the surplus water from the large back-yard was made to flow.

The plant was, indeed, worth looking at; it was the pitcher plant, or side-saddle-flower,—every leaf of which is so formed as to hold water. She walked round and round it, looking into each pitcher-like leaf, and thinking of the wonderful variety which God has chosen to make even in the forms of the leaves, not to speak of the many-hued flowers.

Turning accidentally towards Meg, Hatty saw her slender brown arms pushing with all their might against one of the hives, and it was evident from Meg's determined air that she had made up her mind to do something—some mischief, Hatty concluded, of course, and hurried to the spot. [86]

She only reached it in time to see the hive tumbling over, while a swarm of angry bees came forth to avenge themselves for this overthrow of their home.

The very impulsiveness of character, which made Hatty open to temptation from a hasty temper, now made her think and act quickly.

She saw at once the danger that Meg was in, from the angry insects. It was but the work of a second for Hatty to throw her light shawl completely over Meg—the child's straw hat—holding it at such a distance from her face and arms that the stings of the insects could not reach her.

Then, with one hand, Hatty held her white sun-bonnet close together in front, while she extended the other, to lead Meg.

Over Hatty's bare neck and arms the bees now settled, and began to vent their anger in sharp stings that made her scream with pain.

The cries of the children quickly brought Mr. Lee and Farmer Sparrow, who had been taking a survey of the place, together. [87]

Farmer Sparrow bade Mr. Lee keep at a distance, as soon as he saw, from the over-turned hive, and from the moving black spots on Hatty's fair neck and arms, what was the matter.

Mr. Lee found it hard to keep away from his children when they were in such trouble, but he knew it was best to obey.

With a dexterous turn of the shawl, Farmer Sparrow shut the bees up in it, while he bade Meg run for her life. She needed no second command, and was soon sobbing in her father's arms.

The few bees who had escaped from the shawl settled upon Farmer Sparrow, but he minded them no more than if they were so many flies, for the sagacious insects knew him too well to sting him.

"Stand quite still, child!" said Farmer Sparrow to Hatty, in a tone of command. It would have been hard for Hatty to obey, covered as she was with the tormenting bees, but for the belief that the prayer for help that she had sent up to God in her distress was about to be answered. One by one Farmer Sparrow picked off the bees with his hands, and slipped them into the shawl, which he held like a bag. They seemed to own him as a master, and not one offered him a disrespectful sting. [88]

When Hatty was freed from her tormentors she was in a piteous plight, her neck and arms being spotted over with the painful stings. Hatty struggled hard to bear them patiently, and Farmer Sparrow declared she was a perfect soldier.

Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Sparrow were now on the spot. The latter hastened to bind indigo on the wounded parts, and poor Hatty soon presented an odd appearance, her white face peering out from her blue wrappings.

Farmer Sparrow excused himself from any further attendance upon the party, as he must secure his beloved bees ere they were lost to him.

The sun was now sinking in the west, and Marcus, laden with the results of his successful trouting, came whistling up to the farmhouse. He heard, in silence, the story of Hatty's misfortune; but when his mother came quite to the end, Marcus walked up to his sister, and kissing her fondly, said: "You are a splendid girl, Hatty. You ought to have been a boy!" Then, turning to Meg, his indignation burst upon her, and he could not find words strong enough to express his anger at her mischief, and his conviction of the severity of the punishment she deserved.

Meg could only reply in sobs.

"Poor Meg is punished sufficiently by seeing her sister suffer. I think she will not soon forget this lesson!" said Mrs. Lee, kindly.

"Meg did not know the harm she was doing!" added Hatty, pleadingly.

"I only wanted to look inside," said poor Meg, in the midst of her sobs. "I thought the wise little bees knew too much to hurt us!"

"I hope my little Meg will remember, hereafter, 'to touch not, taste not, handle not' what is not her own," said Mrs. Lee, soberly.

"Indeed, I will try," answered Meg, earnestly. "Do kiss me, Hatty," and the child turned her swollen face towards her generous sister.

Hatty kissed her, and assured her the pain of the stings was almost gone, and that she should soon be quite well.

Mr. Lee was now ready with the horses, and the little party set out for home.

As Hatty rode along in the carriage, and all seemed so tenderly interested for her, the little girl went back in memory to the time before she started on that all important visit to her grandmother.

She recalled the frequent reproofs she then received from her mother, the stern displeasure of her father, her constant quarrels with Marcus, her impatience with Meg, and the saucy replies of the child. It seemed strange to her to remember that even Harry did not then like to be with her, and that she thought it quite a trial to be left with Aunt Barbara even for a few moments. Were all changed, or was the change in herself? When she thought all around her severe, cross, or quarrelsome, must not the fault have been in a great measure her own?

Hatty could not bear to think of her old naughty self, and she turned with pleasure to the happy present. God had given her the wish to do right, and granted his blessing on her sincere efforts. How near and dear now seemed that Heavenly Father to his little one; she realized that He was at her side; she needed not to wait until she reached home to thank Him for his mercies. Into her heart she knew He was then looking, and beholding her gratitude there.

Little Hatty felt very happy as she glanced round on the kind faces, beaming lovingly on her. Surrounded by such affection, she could bear almost anything. Yes, Hatty Lee, who once so dreaded pain, knew now that wrong, angry feelings, in herself, or the disapproval of her earthly parents, or the smile of her mother withdrawn, were far greater trials than the slight sufferings her body had been called to endure.

XI.



HATTY'S wounded neck and arms healed rapidly, but the red spots remained for many days to remind all the family of the late accident, and make them more tender than usual in their manner to the courageous little girl.

Marcus seemed to have quite changed his opinion of his sister, and felt called upon to treat her with marked respect, and to honor her with many long talks on his favorite subjects.

Hatty heard his footstep in the hall, as he was returning from school one afternoon, shortly after the accident. She knew that on that day was to be awarded the prize for which he had so faithfully labored, and which he had been induced to forfeit for the sake of truth.

She felt great sympathy for him, and was planning in her own mind how she could best cheer him under his disappointment, when he threw open the door, and with a joyous bound sprang towards her. [93]

"Look, Hatty!" he said, as he laid on her lap the richly bound copy of Virgil which he had so desired for its own sake, as well as a mark of his teacher's approval.

"It is mine, given in the presence of the school, by Mr. Briggs!" said Marcus, with a joyous smile, "And I owe it all to you, Hatty."

"I am so glad!" said Hatty, with real pleasure. "But you do not owe it to me, Marcus."

"Yes, Hatty," continued Marcus,— "Mr. Briggs knew all about my being late, and he was waiting for me to acknowledge it; if I had not I should have lost his confidence, and the prize would never have been mine, he said: as it was, no other boy stood as high as I did! Isn't it splendid?"

"I am very, very glad," repeated Hatty. "Is it not better always to try to do right, Marcus!" she added softly.

Marcus opened his mouth as if to speak, then turned silently away.

That evening Mrs. Lee sat in the library, in the twilight, with Marcus and Hatty. She too had heard about the prize, and had rejoiced with her son, with a silent prayer in her heart that he might see the wisdom of the Better Path, and be led always to do right by the happy results which had followed the step that had cost him such an effort. [94]

After the subject of the prize had been discussed, a feeling of quietness stole over the little group; perhaps all had their own serious thoughts at that twilight hour.

"Come, Hatty," said Mrs. Lee, pleasantly, "can you not recite a hymn for us?"

Mrs. Lee almost feared that Marcus would walk away at this proposal, as he had often done before, on similar occasions; but he sat down at his mother's side, and listened, while Hatty repeated, in a voice of deep feeling, the hymn,— "Ashamed of Jesus."

"Mother," said Hatty, earnestly, when she had done speaking, "Do you think anybody in a Christian country was ever *ashamed of Jesus*?"

"There are few in a christian country, my dear, who would be willing to be called infidels, or heathen," said Mrs. Lee, soberly; "and I doubt if there are any young people who have heard of Jesus, who would not shrink from the thought. Though this is quite true, there are many who are ashamed of Jesus—many children, I fear!" [95]

"O Mother! what do you mean?" said Hatty, earnestly.

"I mean," said Mrs. Lee, "there are many who are ashamed to have it known that they wish to serve him. They would rather their best actions should be attributed to any cause, than a desire to do His will. They hide their best feelings, and struggle to show indifference when holy things are named, in a way which proves them at heart to be *ashamed* of Jesus. Alas, poor foolish children! what will be their lot when he is ashamed of them, in the presence of his Father in Heaven!"

Marcus had laid his head on his mother's hand, as he sat beside her, and now she felt the hot tears trickle over it.

Hatty was questioning in heart whether she could be so situated as to be *ashamed of Jesus*, when Marcus suddenly rose, and said:

"I am afraid I have been ashamed of Jesus! Let me say now to you, dear Mother, and to Hatty, that I do wish to serve Him, and I want you both to help me. [96]

"We will together ask God for his help, which is better than any human arm, my dear son," said Mrs. Lee, solemnly.

The mother knelt down with her children, and earnestly implored God's blessing on their young hearts. Fervently she asked the Great Heavenly Friend so to guide and sustain them in the upward path, that they might at last be gathered to his Eternal Home, with all those that love Him in sincerity and truth.

When they rose from their knees, Hatty's heart was too full of joy for words. She walked to Marcus' side, and putting her arm about him, kissed him, with a deep, trusting affection she had never felt before.

Now came in Aunt Barbara, leading little Harry, full of glee, while Meg followed,

with her usual cheerful skip.

“Let us have one more hymn before supper,” said Mrs. Lee, as she gathered the little group around her. “We will have ‘I want to be like Jesus,’ and only those must sing who really feel what they say.”

Mrs. Lee began in her own clear, sweet voice. Hatty quickly followed, and Marcus united with her in trembling tones, with sober earnestness. Meg, with her childlike warble, and even little Harry, felt that he wanted to be like Jesus, and tried to lisp in “sweet accord” his Saviour’s name, blending his baby notes with those that fell from Aunt Barbara’s faltering tongue.

How welcome to the father’s ear, as he returned from his daily toil, was that evening hymn!

At the closing verse his manly tones were heard as a deep, full echo to the rest, while devout thanksgiving filled the mother’s heart.

And Hatty—little Hatty—she felt almost too happy for earth; and fully she realized the truth, that “Wisdom’s ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

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Transcriber’s Note: The table below lists all corrections applied to the original text.

p. 09: [added pair of quotes] and say, ‘You can’t come in, Meg.’

p. 09: [added open quotes] “Jesus’ little children never quarrel

p. 11: obey that conscience → conscience

p. 16: I did’nt know → didn’t

p. 27: [removed wrong quotes] “Marcus was softened → Marcus

p. 58: [normalized] a store of books and play-things → playthings

p. 96: [added period] that love Him in sincerity and truth.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HATTY AND MARCUS ***

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