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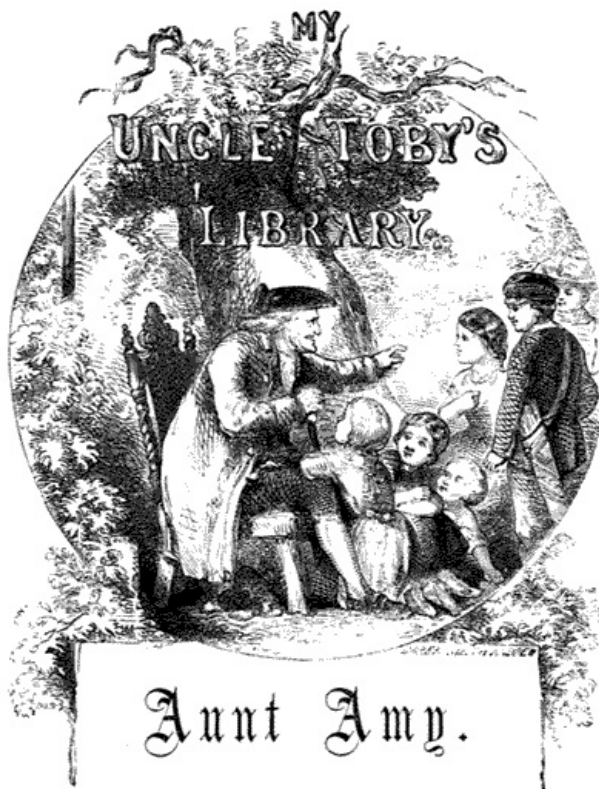
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AUNT AMY; OR, HOW MINNIE BROWN
LEARNED TO BE A SUNBEAM ***

My Uncle Toby's Library Aunt Amy.



AUNT AMY;

OR,

HOW MINNIE BROWN LEARNED TO BE A SUNBEAM.

BY

FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "ARTHUR'S TEMPTATION," "MINNIE BROWN," ETC.

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AUNT AMY.

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As Minnie Brown was walking one day along the principal street of Rosedale, she met Arthur Ellerslie, who said to her,—

"Minnie, there is a letter in the post office for you."

"A letter for me!" exclaimed the little girl, her bright eyes flashing at the bare idea of a letter being sent to *her*.

"Yes, there is a letter for *you*, Minnie. I saw it myself in the post office window," replied Arthur. [6]

"O, I'm so glad! It must be from my aunt Amy. I will run and get it;" and away she skipped to the post office, with a step as light as a fawn's, and a heart as cheerful as merry music. It was very pleasant to see her standing before the little window of the post office, her face wreathed in smiles, and her hand stretched out, as she said,—

"Please, sir, give me my letter."

"Yes, Miss Minnie, you shall have your letter," replied the good-natured man who kept the office, and who seemed, by his looks, to share the child's delight, as he handed her the letter. [7]

"Thank you, sir," said Minnie; and then, with swift feet, she ran into the street, and almost flew along the sidewalk. When she reached home, she was nearly out of breath. Finding her mother in the parlor, she exclaimed,—

"O mother! I've got a letter! I've got a letter!" and throwing her bonnet on the chair, she eagerly opened the letter, and, after looking at it a moment, cried out,—

"Ma, it's from aunt Amy!"

"From aunt Amy!" repeated Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, mother, and she says she is coming to see us next week. O, I am so glad—ain't you, mother?"

"Yes, Minnie, I shall be very glad to see my sister."

"She wants me to write to her directly, and tell her if it will be convenient for you to have her come. What shall I write, mother?"

"You may say we shall be very happy to see her at that time."

"Shall I answer the letter at once, mother?"

"You may, Minnie. Though, perhaps, you had better let me read it first."

Minnie blushed a little, as she handed the letter to her mother. She had been too hurried, and her mother's request sounded like a kind rebuke. Minnie's gentle spirit felt it, and she grew more quiet, as she waited for her mother to read the letter.

"There, my child, that will do," said Mrs. Brown, giving her the letter again. "Now you may go to your chamber and write as pretty a reply as you can to your aunt, inviting her to come, as she proposes."

Minnie carried the letter to her room, where she had some nice writing materials of her own. She spread a clean sheet of white paper on the table, and began her letter. When she wanted a thought, she stood the pen in the ink-stand while she read over her aunt's letter anew. When an idea came, she wrote it down, and so kept on until she finished her answer.



And a nice little letter it was, written in neat style, without a single blot. Minnie took it to her mother, who said it would please aunt Amy very much. The thought of adding to her aunt's pleasure increased Minnie's joy. So, after folding the letter very smoothly, she directed it in large, bold writing to her aunt, and, with her mother's consent, took it to the post office.

When she had placed her letter in the box, Minnie thought she should like to tell Arthur Ellerslie that her aunt Amy was coming to Rosedale. So she walked round by Arthur's house. Her gentle rap at the door was answered by Arthur's mother, with whom Minnie was a great favorite. Taking the little girl's hand, and printing a kiss on her lips, Mrs. Ellerslie said,—

"Come in, Minnie. I am very glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Ellerslie. I came to tell Arthur that my aunt Amy is coming to see me next week."

"Is that what the letter was about which Arthur saw in the post office for you, Minnie?"

"Yes, ma'am; and I am glad aunt Amy is coming, she is *so* good. I'm sure you would love her, Mrs. Ellerslie, if you knew her."

"If she is like Minnie Brown, I think I should. But will you come in, Minnie, or will you go round into the garden? Arthur is there, studying his Sunday school lesson."

"I'll go into the garden," said Minnie; and she tripped away, to find her friend Arthur.

Arthur was seated on a bench, just within the garden gate. He was so busy with his book he did not see Minnie until she was close to him. Then he looked up, and when he saw who it was, he smiled, and said,—

"Did you get your letter, Minnie?"

"Yes; and it was from my aunt Amy, who is coming to see me next week."

"I'm glad for you," replied Arthur; "because I've heard you say you love your aunt. But come here and sit on my bench, while I read you this interesting chapter in the Bible." Then Minnie sat down beside Arthur, and he read some beautiful verses from the book of Daniel. After listening a

while to Arthur's reading, Minnie arose, and said,—



"I must go now, Arthur. Good by."

"Good by, Minnie, if you must go," replied Arthur; and then, with a glad heart, Minnie hurried home again.

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The days seemed very long to the little girl during the next week. Old Time always seems to move slowly when any one wishes him to quicken his pace. But, like all other days, they were gone at last; and when the time drew near for aunt Amy's arrival, Minnie took her work and sat down by the parlor window. I don't think she did much work, however, for every sound which fell on her ear caused her to raise her head and look down the street to see if her aunt's carriage was coming. Sometimes she laid her work on the table, and went into the street, looking in every

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direction, and whispering to herself,—

"I wonder why aunt Amy don't come."

You may think all this was very silly in my gentle Minnie. Perhaps it was; but you know she was only a child; and I have known some grown up people to do just as Minnie did when they expected visitors. Minnie's mother thought of this, and did not chide her daughter. She thought of her own days of childhood, and only smiled at Minnie's eagerness.

At last, a carriage, drawn by two noble horses, and driven by a jolly-looking coachman with a fat, red face, and arms which looked stout enough to drive a war chariot, dashed up to the door. Minnie dropped her work, and exclaimed,—

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"O ma, ma, aunt Amy's come! aunt Amy's come!"

She was too well bred to rush into the street, as some little girls would have done. So she waited until the hired girl had opened the door, and Mrs. Brown had welcomed her sister. Then it was Minnie's turn. She sprang to return her aunt's kiss, and said,—

"I'm so glad to see you, aunt Amy!"

"And I am happy to see you, Minnie; especially as you look so well and healthy," replied her aunt.

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Aunt Amy was Mrs. Brown's sister. She was a widow. The grave had taken her husband and children from her; she was lonely in the world, and her heart dwelt in heaven with her children, her husband, and her Savior. She was rich, and delighted to spend her money in doing good. Having lost the earthly objects she best loved, her life was spent in making the miseries of the world less, and in adding to its happiness.

The day after her arrival at Mrs. Brown's, she took Minnie out with her for a walk through the village. Minnie waited by her aunt's side, and pointed her to all the changes which had taken place since her visit a year before. She was pleased to listen to the little girl's prattle, and their walk was a very happy one.

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The weather being fine, they went beyond the village and down a lane which led to an old granite quarry on the edge of a fine piece of woods. On reaching the quarry, they sat down upon a large fragment of granite to rest themselves, for their walk made them feel a little tired. As aunt Amy was viewing the scenery around her, she saw a wretched-looking house, half hid by the foliage of the trees, on the opposite side of the quarry. Turning to Minnie, she pointed her finger towards it, and asked,—

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"Minnie, what house is that yonder?"

Minnie's eye followed the direction of her aunt's finger until she saw the cottage, or hovel. She knew whose it was, and so she said,—

"That is Mrs. Button's house, aunt. She is very poor."

"Has she no husband to take care of her, Minnie?"

"Her husband is a bad man, aunt. People say he used to beat her sadly. But he has gone away now, and no one knows where he is."

"Has she any children?"

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"She has a girl about my age; the children call her ragged Kate."

"Poor child! I think we must call and see her and her mother. Perhaps we can do them some good."

"Why, aunt! You don't mean it, do you?"

"Why not, Minnie? Our Savior, you know, loved to help the poor, and we must try to imitate him."

"Yes, aunt, but—" and Minnie paused, as if unwilling to utter all she thought.

"But what, Minnie?"

"Why, aunt, I've heard say that Mrs. Button is a passionate woman; and they say that Kate swears when Bill Boaster teases her. So I thought you would not choose to call at the house of such a woman." [22]

"Perhaps it may not be pleasant, Minnie. But the more wretched these poor creatures are, the greater is their need of aid and counsel. Come, let us walk over and see the poor woman; who knows but that we may be as sunbeams to a dark and desolate spirit?"

"As sunbeams, aunt! How can we be sunbeams?" asked Minnie, as she walked along with her aunt towards the cottage. [23]

"Sunbeams are bright, cheerful things, you know, Minnie. They scatter clouds and darkness, clothe nature with beauty, and fill the world with light and joy. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Well, then, if we visit this woman, who is in trouble, and who has a sad heart, and if we can lighten her burden, and make her heart glad, we shall do for her what the sunbeams do for the world."

"O, yes, aunt, I see; and I would try to be a little sunbeam if I knew how. But here is the cottage."

Minnie's aunt gave a gentle tap at the door. A gruff voice replied,— [24]

"Come in."

Pushing the door open, Minnie and her aunt entered the cottage. It had but one room, and that was wretched enough. Many of the windows were broken, and pieces of shingle were stuck over the holes in the glass. In one corner stood a miserable bedstead, with a ragged coverlet partially spread over a dirty bed tick filled with leaves. There was only one chair, and that was a broken rocker, on which the unhappy mistress of the cottage was seated. But there were two or three rough stools, made of pieces of pine slab, standing beside the rickety table. Pointing to these stools, Mrs. Button, without quitting her chair, said to her visitors,— [25]

"Take a seat."

Aunt Amy looked on the poor woman with great kindness; and Minnie, thinking all the time of the sunbeams, did the same. Speaking in gentle tones, aunt Amy soon found the way to the poor woman's heart, and drew from her the story of her woes. It had been a long time since she had heard a voice of kindness, or met with affectionate sympathy like that now shown to her by Minnie's aunt. It was not lost upon her. Trouble and sin had long frozen up her better feelings. But under the warmth of aunt Amy's words of hope and love, the ice melted, and the poor creature wept freely as she told of her early and better days; of her husband's fall into evil habits; of her own evil temper, which his bad treatment had excited; and of her poverty, and sorrow, and despair. [26]

To all this aunt Amy listened with kind attention. She spoke words of hope in the woman's ear. She urged her to seek pardon from God for her sins, to look with faith for better days, until the poor woman's countenance lighted up, and Minnie said to herself,— [27]

"My aunt is really a sunbeam to this woman."

At last aunt Amy rose to leave. The woman arose, too, with great respect in her manners. Aunt Amy placed a piece of money in her hand, and said,—

"Now, Mrs. Button, be hopeful. I will send you a few things, presently, to help you along. I will also try to procure you some plain sewing; and if you will try to help yourself, and trust in God, he will help you; friends will rise up around you, and you will yet see better days."

"Bless you, ma'am, for your kindness. You are the first friend I have seen this many a year," said the poor woman, while hot tears trickled down her wan cheeks. [28]

Minnie and her aunt now left the cottage. The little girl had learned a lesson, by what she had seen, which she did not soon forget. Her gentle nature was charmed by the love her aunt had shown to the poor woman. After walking in silence a while, she said,—

"Aunt Amy, I guess you are the brightest sunbeam that ever entered Mrs. Button's cottage! Why, her pale face brightened up and looked almost cheerful before you left."

"You see, then, Minnie, how little it costs to do good. Our visit has really made the misery of that woman less, and it has done us good. We can now think of our walk with pleasure, because it has been useful."

"Well, aunt, I wish I could be a sunbeam to somebody before I get home."

"Perhaps you may be. Look down yonder lane. There is a little boy crying. He looks as if he was in trouble. See if you can comfort him with a kind word or two."

While Minnie ran to see what good she could do to the weeping boy, a girl came along, very poorly clad, and carrying a bundle of dry sticks on her head. Aunt Amy's kind heart pitied the poor child. She stopped her and said,—



"What is your name, little girl?"

"Kate," said the girl, looking earnestly at her questioner.

"Kate! Where do you live?"

"Down the lane, in yonder cottage. I'm Mrs. Button's gal."

"I'm glad to meet you, Kate. I've just seen your mother. I want you to try to be a good girl, and help her. Do you go to Sunday school?"

"No. I've got no clothes fit to wear there."

"Would you like to belong to one if you could get a new dress?"

"Don't know whether I should or no. Never was in a Sunday school in all my life," replied Kate, looking at the lady with a stare of wonder.

"Well, Kate, I'll send you some clothes and see your mother about the school before Sunday."

Aunt Amy now walked slowly on to meet Minnie, who was running back from her errand of kindness. Coming up to her aunt, with a flushed face and joyous look, she said,—

"O aunt Amy, I'm a sunbeam now! I've made that boy's heart glad."

"What did you do for him, Minnie?"

"Why, you see, aunt, he had been gathering a pail of berries for his grandmother, and was very tired. As he ran along the road with his pail, he kicked against a stone, fell down, spilled his berries, and hurt his knee. The poor boy was weeping, and I told him not to cry, for I would pick up his berries while he rested himself and wiped the dirt from his clothes. Then I picked up his berries, speaking kind words to him all the time. He soon left off crying, and when I gave him the pail, he looked so glad it made me cry for joy; for I knew I was a sunbeam to him."

"You are right, Minnie. I am glad to find you so apt a scholar in the art of doing good. But it is time for us to be going home now; your mother will feel uneasy about us, we have been gone so long."

Minnie gave aunt Amy her hand, and they walked to the village, talking, as they went, about Mrs. Button, and Kate Button, and about getting some clothes fit for Kate to wear to Sunday school. And I doubt if there were two happier persons in all Rosedale than they.

That evening, aunt Amy proposed to take Minnie and her mother, in her carriage, the next day, on an excursion to a pleasant seaport, about five miles from Rosedale. This trip promised too much pleasure to be refused. So it was agreed that they should start early in the morning, and spend the day in rambling on the sea shore.

Minnie awaked very early the next morning, and was up and dressed, all ready for breakfast, before either her aunt or her mother came down stairs. She was all alive with thoughts of what she should see and do during the day. Indeed, she was so full of happy excitement she ate scarcely any breakfast; and I am afraid she thought too much about the ride while her good father was offering his morning prayer at the family altar. This was hardly right; but Minnie was only a little girl, and we must excuse her for feeling like a child.

After family prayer was ended, aunt Amy's carriage, with its fine horses and fat coachman, drove up to the door. Minnie smiled, as she glanced at the jolly-looking driver, while on her way to the carriage. When she was seated opposite to her aunt and mother, and the horses began to move, she said,—

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"Aunt Amy, how good natured your fat coachman looks!"

"Yes, Minnie, John is a Christian, and that makes him cheerful. He is a good, careful driver too, and that, with my heavenly Father's care, makes me feel safe while I am riding."

By this time, the carriage was rattling rapidly along over the smooth village street. It soon carried them beyond Rosedale into a pleasant road, and Minnie was busy all the rest of the ride pointing to the pretty scenery they passed, and asking many questions about the mansions, cottages, and farms which met her eye. Thus occupied, it seemed but a few moments to her before the carriage drove up to the hotel at which they were to stop for the day.

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Very gayly did Minnie trip along at aunt Amy's side, as that lady walked down with her to the beach. Mrs. Brown, not being very well, did not walk with them. Minnie was charmed with the broad, calm sea, sparkling so brightly in the sun. The splash of the waves, as they came rolling in upon the sand, and the constant hoarse murmur of the great sea, sounded like grand music in her ears.

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"Hark!" she said to her aunt; "hark, aunt! The sea roars to-day, yet it is very calm."

"Yes, Minnie, that is old Ocean's mildest voice you hear to-day. In a storm, he speaks in a voice of thunder. You would tremble before it should you stand where you do now."

Minnie now amused herself and her aunt by picking up shells, by running down to the edge of the water, and allowing the returning wave to chase her, and by digging holes in the sand. Her good aunt sat upon a rock, watching her movements, answering her numerous questions, and rewarding her playfulness with smiles. She was a sensible woman, and knew that children not only need time to play, but that they should also be encouraged in it by the approval of their friends and relatives.

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But after Minnie had played a long time, her aunt said to her,—

"Come, Minnie, you have played long enough for the present; let us walk back to the hotel."

When Minnie heard this summons, she did not pout, nor plead for more time, as a self-willed child would have done; but she looked up to her aunt with a smile, brushed the sand from her fingers, and said,—

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"Yes, aunt, I will come directly."

The moment after, she was standing close to her aunt, ready to return to the hotel.

As aunt Amy arose from the rock, which had served her for a seat, she said,—

"We must now sow some good seed, Minnie, before we return home. It would hardly be right to spend a whole day in seeking our own pleasure without doing a little good to some one."

"But how can we sow good seed here on this beach?" asked Minnie, somewhat puzzled by her aunt's remark.

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"Do you see those little vessels down yonder, Minnie?" inquired aunt Amy, as she pointed to a distant part of the beach.

"Yes, aunt, I see them, a little this side of those great rocks."

"And do you also see those persons on the beach near the vessels?"

"Yes, I see some men who look like sailors."

"Well, I have some tracts in this little package; and if we give these tracts to those seamen, we shall sow some good seed; for the tracts may lead them to God and heaven."

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"Then sowing good seed means the same as being a sunbeam, don't it, aunt?"

"Yes, my child. By speaking a kind word, by smiling upon persons who need encouragement, or by giving a tract to do the same things for us, we are sunbeams to those we act upon. So that being a sunbeam or sowing good seed amounts to one and the same thing. But let us go and sow our seed."

They now walked down the beach until they came to the spot where they saw the sailors. Here aunt Amy gave Minnie a tract to carry to a stout sailor, who had on a large tarpaulin hat. She ran up to the man, with one of her sweetest smiles, and said,—

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"Please, sir, will you accept a tract?"

"A tract!" replied the man, looking at Minnie's happy face with surprise.

"Yes, sir, a pretty tract, if you please."

"Yes, little miss, I'll take it to please you;" and the rough-looking man stretched out his hand and took the tract, very much to the delight of Minnie.

While Minnie was giving her tract to the sailor, aunt Amy gave another to a fine-looking lad who was on the beach. She also sent one by the same boy to a sailor; and then she and Minnie set out for the hotel.

"Now," said aunt Amy, "we shall have at least one pleasant thought connected with our trip."

"Only *one* pleasant thought, aunt? Why, all my thoughts of it will be pleasant ones."

"So will mine, my dear. But I shall be most pleased to think we have not spent the day entirely for ourselves. Our tracts to those men may do them great good. They may be as sunbeams to light them on the way to heaven. Isn't that the most pleasing thought of the day, Minnie?"

"Yes, aunt; but do you think tracts are always sunbeams to those who receive them?"

"No, Minnie, by no means. Many persons get no good from them at all. But thousands have been greatly benefited by them. We must hope and pray that ours will prove to be as good seed sown on good soil. If not, we have done our duty."

By this time they had reached the tavern. Here they dined with Minnie's mother. After dinner, they took a long ride round the country, and reached home at an early hour. When Minnie lay down to sleep that night, she had many happy thoughts about what she had seen and done. But, as her aunt Amy had said, the thought which gave her the richest pleasure was, that the tracts she and her aunt had given away might be doing good. And she fancied how the sailor looked, at his own fire-side, reading her tract; and how it touched his heart, and made him weep, and pray, and seek the road to heaven. It was a beautiful fancy, and it made Minnie's heart swell with a rich joy. She fell asleep thinking she would be a sunbeam to some one every day of her life. Happy Minnie! She was learning to taste the pleasure of being kind and good to others.

The next day aunt Amy bought some things to make up for Kate Button. Minnie and her mother helped her, by sewing nearly all day upon Kate's new frock. And they enjoyed themselves too. They kept thinking of the pleasure it would afford poor Kate to be neatly dressed, and to be a member of the Sabbath school. Many times during that day Minnie sprang up from her chair, held up her work, and cried aloud, with a glad heart,—

"O aunt Amy! won't Kate be happy when we dress her up in this nice frock? It makes me joyful to think of it."

"That will depend upon the state of her heart, Minnie. Clothing may make her comfortable; but it takes something else to make either children or grown people happy besides clothes. If Kate seeks to be good, loving her Savior, she will be happy indeed. But if not, she will be wretched, even if we should dress her in silk, and adorn her with jewels."

"Yes, I know Kate must be good if she is happy. But I think she will be when she gets her dress, and goes to Sunday school. Don't you, aunt?"

"We will hope so, my dear. But now let us lay aside our work and take a walk."

To this Minnie could make no objection. So she and her aunt walked out into the shady streets and lanes of Rosedale. On their way, they saw a poor old soldier, with a wooden leg, hobbling towards them slowly. As soon as Minnie saw him advancing, she said,—

"O aunt! here comes poor Corporal Jim, the one-legged soldier."

"Poor fellow!" replied her aunt. "It must be hard work for him to hobble through the world on his wooden leg."

"Yes, aunt; and he is very poor. He lives in a little shanty alone; and he has not a relation in all the world."

"Well, let us speak kindly to him, and cheer him on his lonesome way. We may cast a sunbeam in his path."



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Minnie looked up into her aunt's kind face, and smiled with delight at the idea of being a sunbeam to poor old Corporal Jim, who, by the way, was a great favorite with all the children in Rosedale.

By this time, the poor old soldier was close upon them, holding out his hat for a gift. Aunt Amy stopped, asked him several questions, and, finding that he was pious, cheered him with gentle words of hope. She then dropped a piece of gold in his tattered hat, and passed on.

Poor Corporal Jim! The kind words of aunt Amy, and the sight of the piece of gold, went to his heart. Tears filled his eyes. "Heaven bless ye!" he murmured; and then he hobbled to the roadside, sat down upon a large rock, and wept for joy.

Minnie's keen eye had watched the effect of her aunt's words and gift upon the old corporal. She saw how glad they made his heart. The sight of his joy caused a stream of rich emotion to flow through her own little

bosom. It filled her so full she could not, for the moment, speak. But fondly pressing her aunt's hand, she walked on by her side in silence. As soon as she recovered herself, she said,—

"Dear aunt, you have been a sunbeam to Corporal Jim. I saw by his face that you made him feel very happy."

"That is just what God expects us to do, my dear, to every one who crosses our path. If every person in the world would smile upon and help every body, nearly all the misery and sorrow which make the world wretched, would be prevented; and every heart would be cheered by the sunlight of love and sympathy."

"Yes, but you know, aunt, that every body is not rich enough to give gold pieces to the poor, as you are."

"That is true, Minnie; but all can speak *golden* words, and look with friendly smiles upon the poor and sad."

"*Golden* words, aunt! What are *golden* words?" asked Minnie, gazing with surprise into her aunt's face.

"*Kind* words are *golden* words, Minnie, because they are precious to the heart. They are often worth more than gold to the unfortunate."

This Minnie could not deny. Indeed, it pleased her very much to think that she could speak golden words, if she could not give gold pieces.

Having finished their walk, aunt Amy and her delighted little niece returned home. After tea, they worked again upon Kate's dress, and it was decided that they should take it, the next day, with some other things, to Mrs. Button's cottage.

So the next day, early in the afternoon, they started for the old stone quarry, to visit Mrs. Button and her daughter Kate. At Minnie's request, Arthur Ellerslie went with them to carry the bundle, which was quite a large one. Aunt Amy was very much pleased with Arthur. As they walked, he told her all about his history, and she gave him much good advice.

Presently they reached the cottage. There was quite a change in its looks since aunt Amy's last visit, a few days before. The floor had been nicely cleaned, the shingles which formerly covered the broken windows had been taken away, and clean paper pasted over the broken places instead. The bed in the corner was "made up." The pine stools were set along the sides of the cottage; and it was quite plain that Mrs. Button had been trying to make her poverty appear as respectable as possible. In her person, too, she was greatly improved. Her face was now clean, her hair neatly combed, her gown mended, and she wore a hopeful look, which wonderfully changed her appearance. Her manners, also, were more civil. When her guests entered, she spoke to them with respect, and invited them to be seated. Her only chair she offered to aunt Amy. As to Kate, she seemed to have caught her mother's spirit, and looked as well as rags and bad habits would allow her to do.

The gifts brought by aunt Amy were produced, and many kind words of advice offered by that good lady. Kate seemed half wild with joy when Minnie spread her new calico frock out for her to look at, and when she saw the nice little bonnet, the new shoes, and many other things which were meant for her. Mrs. Button was very thankful. And when aunt Amy told her of certain plans,

which she had arranged through Minnie's mother, by which she would have employment, and when she placed a bank bill in her hand as she arose to go, the poor woman was so overcome with grateful feeling she could not speak. She modestly raised the hand of her kind friend to her lips, kissed it, turned away, sunk into a seat, and buried her face in her apron. Aunt Amy found her hand wet with the poor woman's tears.

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After they left the cottage, Arthur hurried to school. Aunt Amy and Minnie walked leisurely, and, for a time, silently along. At last Minnie said,—

"Aunt, I am very glad you came to see us."

"I believe you, Minnie, for you have given me full proof of that. But why are you glad?"

"Because you have taught me how to be a sunbeam, and how to speak golden words. I used to think a little girl, like me, could not do much good. You have taught me that I may."

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"I am glad to see you so willing to learn, Minnie. I hope you will try to practise the precious lesson after I return home. Whatever your lot in life may be, you must always try to be a sunbeam to others. I know a poor old lady who is so lame she cannot leave her house; yet she not only makes every one happy who comes near to her, but she contrives to give a handsome little sum of money every year to benevolent objects."



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"How can she do so, aunt, if she is poor?"

"She does it by the help of her dog."

"By the help of her dog!" exclaimed Minnie, laughing.

"Yes; she has a little dog, named Fido. She has so trained the little fellow that he brings home all the bones he finds in the street. These she hoards very carefully, sells them at a junk shop, and gives away the money."

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"That is a capital scheme," said Minnie, clapping her hands, "but I should never have thought of it."

"Perhaps not; but you may find other ways of gaining means to do good. If not, you can make smiles serve for sunbeams, and gentle words will do for gold."

"It makes me so happy to be kind, aunt Amy, I think I shall try to be so always," said Minnie.

"Do, my dear child, and be kind to *every one* with whom you have to do."

"I must speak kindly to my enemies, too, mustn't I, aunt?"

[63]

"Yes, Minnie, you must; for so Christ has taught us, you know. And there is nothing like kindness to change enemies into friends. It melts away their enmity when they see us returning their evil with good."

"But suppose my heart won't let me love them, aunt, what shall I do?"

"You must pray to God for aid. He will help you. So that you may be a sunbeam in the path of the worst enemy who may seek to injure you."

In a few days after this visit to Mrs. Button's cottage, aunt Amy returned to her home. Minnie was sorry to have her go, but she knew it was proper for her to do so, and she did not complain. She felt lonesome at first; but she did not forget the precious lesson her aunt had taught her. She had been a good and gentle girl before; now she was a light in her home, and her presence was as sunshine to all who knew her, and especially to Kate Button, who became a bright scholar in her Sunday school. She had her little failings, it is true; but she tried hard to subdue them; and henceforth the purpose of her life was

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TO BE AS A SUNBEAM, ALWAYS SHINING ON THE HEARTS OF OTHERS.

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