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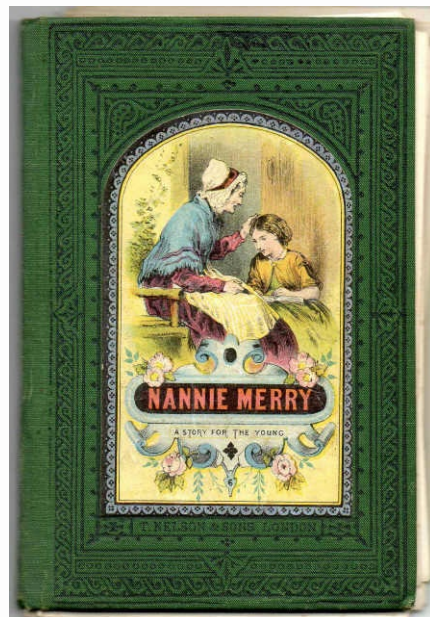
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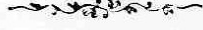
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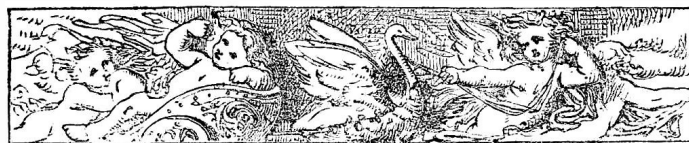
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## NANNY MERRY.



Crowning the Queen  
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**NANNY MERRY;**

OR,

**WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?**



LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;

EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.


1872.



# NANNIE MERRY.

## CHAPTER I.

### IN WHICH NANNIE IS INTRODUCED.

 little brown house, with an old elm-tree before it, a frame of lattice-work around the door, with a broad stone for a step—this is where old Grannie Burt lives. And there she is sitting in the doorway with her Bible in her lap. She can't read it, for she is blind; but she likes to have it by her; she likes the "feeling of it," she says. "When my Bible is away," Grannie Burt says, "I am sometimes troubled and worried; but if I can only touch it, my troubles are all gone; for what harm can any trouble do us when we are going to heaven at last?"

But grannie doesn't always have to *feel* her Bible. Sometimes—very often—a little girl comes down the path to the brown house, and sitting down close by grannie, on that cricket that you see there now, takes the good book and reads the blessed words to her, till the tears trickle down grannie's wrinkled face, and laying her trembling hand on the little girl's head, she says, "God bless thee, my child."

I think she is expecting her now; for, see the cricket is all ready, and on the little table is a pitcher of cool water from the old well that you see just behind the house; and here is the little girl herself.

"Good-morning, grannie; are you waiting for me? I couldn't come any sooner, because mamma wanted me to play with Charlie; and here are some peaches mamma sent you,—she thought you would like them;" and Nannie, quite out of breath with her walk and her talk, stops a minute, which gives Grannie Burt a chance to answer her questions and to thank

her for her peaches. "Now shall I read, grannie?" said Nannie, as, taking a long draught from the little pitcher, she sat down on the cricket.

"Eat this peach first," said grannie, picking out the softest and handing it to her; "I know you must be warm from your long walk, and this will cool you."

The peach looked so tempting that Nannie looked at it wishfully. Her mother had only given her one, and she had sent grannie a whole basketful. It was only for a moment that Nannie let these selfish thoughts trouble her. "Grannie never has any of her own, and in a few weeks I can have as many as I want," she thought; so taking up the Bible she said, "No, grannie, thank you; the water has cooled me enough; where shall I begin?"

"Read about heaven, Nannie; you know I like to hear about that best."

Softly the little voice began: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Then she read of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; and of the water of life, that flows near the jasper throne.

When she had finished, she said, "What makes you like to hear of heaven so much, grannie?"

"Oh, I'm going there, Nannie! When you read about the beautiful things, the pearly gates, and the golden streets, I think, 'I shall see them, for there will be no night there; not even in these poor old eyes of mine.' And when you read, 'the Lamb is the light thereof,' then I think Jesus will be there, and that's what I like best of all."

"Where *is* heaven, grannie?"

"Up there, I suppose," she said, pointing to the bright sky above.

"But, grannie, there was a gentleman at our house yesterday, and I heard him talking with my father, and he said he thought heaven was in the sun. So I thought I would ask you, because you always know so much about it. Do you think it is in the sun?"

"I don't think anything about it. I don't think it makes much difference *where* it is, if we only get there at last."

"Sister Mary said she thought heaven would be where God was."

"So I think, child; and I don't think it's the pearls, and gold, and all those things you read about, that make it either; for I think any place would be heaven, if we found Jesus there. This old room has been pretty near it, sometimes."

Nannie turned to the 14th chapter of John, which she knew grannie loved to hear, and commenced reading.

While she is reading, let us go down the street to the lane—bordered with trees—walk up the narrow footpath, and over the stile just by the blackberry-bushes, across the field to the little marigolds, to the white cottage where Nannie lives. You can come to it by the street, if you choose, and you may come in under the great elm-tree, by the gate; but then the street is so dusty, and you miss seeing the little garden with its bright flowers; and the blossoms in the lane smell so sweetly, that it is quite worth while going that way. But here we are, before the door, on which we read, in bright letters, "Dr. Merry;" for Nannie's name is Nannie Merry, and Nannie's father is a doctor. He is doctor in a pleasant little town that is situated on the banks of a narrow river. I don't think you could find either the town or the river on your maps, if you should try; so there would be no use in telling you their names. It was a pleasant town, however, with its large elm-trees, and pretty white cottages, with here and there a large house, where the grandest people lived.

But Nannie's father was only a country doctor, and didn't live in a very large house. You can see for yourself that it is only a white cottage, with green blinds, and a long porch in front, covered with sweetbriar and honeysuckle. But the people that live in the house are quite as pleasant as the house itself, or even as the people that live in the large brick house. After Dr. Merry comes Mrs. Merry, or Nannie's mother, who is, like most mothers, very kind and good; then sister Mary, who is grown up, and Nannie thinks the best sister ever was; then Belle, who is very pretty, and about twelve years old; John and Charlie, who are, like most boys, great teasers, and Nannie sometimes thinks a good deal worse than most boys—but then, Charlie is only four years old, so there is some excuse for him. Lastly, we have Nannie herself, who is—well, we shall find out what she is before our story is finished. She is nine years old, "nearly ten," and would feel offended if we left that out. But here she comes from Grannie Burt's, so we must stop talking about her. She is coming by the lane just as we did, running at first, then a little slower, till at last she stops, for her sister Mary is weeding one of the pretty borders in the little garden.

"O Mary! grannie thinks just as you do about heaven; I don't think Mr. Brown knows so much about it as she does."

"Why not, Nannie?"

"Oh, because grannie is almost there, Mary,—she ought to know!"

"What makes you think grannie is almost there?"

"Why, she said so; and then she loves to hear about heaven, just as I did about home when I was at Aunt Sarah's."

"Do *you* like to hear about heaven, Nannie?"

"Sometimes," she answered, while with her little shoe she played with the pebbles.

"Not always! Nannie; when don't you like to hear about it?"

Nannie played with the pebbles a good while. At last she said, "I like to hear *some* things about it always, but not everything."

"And what do you like to hear about it always?"

"I like to hear about golden streets, and the beautiful water, and the trees, and the harps of the angels, and their golden crowns."

"And what don't you like to hear about?"

The little foot moved backwards and forwards a good while, and when Nannie did speak, she spoke almost as if she were afraid to do so.

"I don't like to hear about its always being Sunday there."

"Why, Nannie, don't you like Sunday here?"

"Why, yes, always once a week; but that's not like *always*. I don't think I should like to go to church *every* day, and learn the Catechism, and have a cold dinner, and not play at all."

"Maybe I can help you a little, Nannie. Do you ever get tired of loving father?"

"Why, no; I should never get tired of that, I'm sure he never gets tired of loving me."

"Do you get tired of showing you love him by trying to please him?"

"No, Mary; but—"

"Never mind the 'buts' till I have done. Now, God is 'Our Father,' and all we have to do in heaven is to love him, and to show how very much we love him by trying to do all we can to please him. Do you think you'll get tired of that?"

"No. But that isn't like Sunday."

"What do we do on Sunday, Nannie?"

"Why, go to church and—"

"Yes; but what do we go to church for?"

"Oh, I see now!" said Nannie, her face brightening up,— "oh, I see! We worship God on Sunday, and that's what we'll do always in heaven; isn't it, Mary?"

"Yes, that's why we say it's always Sunday there; and we shall love God so much better there than we do now, that we can only be happy in praising him. Even now, when we think how good he is to us, and how he loves us, it seems as if we *must* praise him; but then we shall see him always, and never forget what he has done for us. Do you think we can help praising him, or that it will be hard work to join with the angels in singing, 'Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain'? Do you think you understand now, Nannie, and will like to hear about heaven as much as Grannie Burt does?"

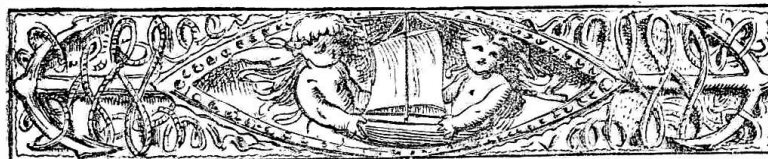
"Oh yes! I felt very sorry, because I knew I ought to love to think about heaven! And so I think I do. But Belle said they did nothing but sing hymns there, and she didn't see what there was so very pleasant in that."

"Belle ought not to talk so. But what did you say to her?"

"I said," Nannie answered, holding down her head, "I thought the reason she didn't like it was because she was not good; because all good people liked to hear about heaven."

"That's the reason, I think," said sister Mary, as she gathered up her weeds for Nannie to take away. Nannie carried them off, thinking all the time, "Oh dear, I wish I were as good as sister Mary!" If wishes would make any one good, Nannie would have been very good long before this time. "At anyrate," said Nannie, as she emptied the weeds into the ash-heap, "I will try. Father says there are weeds in our hearts, and we can pull them up. I mean to try."

We shall see in the next chapter how Nannie succeeds in pulling up the weeds.



## CHAPTER II.

### "IF THY BROTHER SIN AGAINST THEE, FORGIVE HIM."

ne bright sunshiny day, just when the snow had commenced melting, the children started in high glee to take advantage of its softened state to make a snow-man. This was a favourite occupation of the children. Two or three



times every year they adorned the front yard with a giant figure resembling a man, which was allowed to stand until Jack and Charlie snowballed it down, or the spring sun melted it away.

"Here's a nice place," said Jack, stopping under the old elm-tree by the gate. "He'll do for a sentinel here, and we'll arm him with a gun."

"Or a porter," said Belle; "and we'll give him a key."

"Here, Nannie, come this way," he said, as he saw Nannie and Charlie walking off in the other direction.

"Charlie and I are going to make one by ourselves," said Nannie.

"You can't do it," said Jack; "you don't know how."

"We know how as well as you," said Charlie indignantly.

"Well, we'll beat you then. Come, hurry, Belle."

So they set to work, rolling their balls, sometimes running across each other's track, when Master Charlie must always leave his work to throw a ball at Jack. Jack, however, was too busy to return them.

"Don't, Charlie, keep stopping so," said Nannie; "we shall not get it done."

"I want to snowball Jack," said Charlie.

"But we want to finish the snow-man first."

Then Charlie would stick to his work a few minutes; but whenever Jack came in sight, rolling his now huge ball, Charlie couldn't resist the temptation, and would fill his hands full of snow, and let fly at Jack. He yielded to the temptation the more easily, as he found Jack was too busy to pay him back.

Belle and Jack now could move their ball no longer, and so they proceeded to make a smaller one for the head, and to shape out the arms. Jack made the hat to crown him, while Belle shaped his coat and marked out the buttons. Soon Charlie, who was more interested in theirs than his own, cried out, "Oh, he's putting his hat on!"

Belle and Jack gave three cheers, and introduced Nannie and Charlie to Mr. James Snow.

Mr. James Snow was a very remarkable-looking old man, with a long white beard, who looked as if he had much better been leaning on a staff, than raising the gun with which Jack had armed him.

"You had better come with us," said Belle; "you can't make one by yourselves."

"Yes, we can," said Nannie. "Can't we, Charlie?"

"Yes, we can," said Charlie. "Nicer than that one too."

"And we'll call ours Jack Frost," said Nannie, as they hurried off to their work.

But Charlie was more trouble than help, and Nannie began to grow tired. Belle and Jack stood by, looking on and teasing her. Charlie stopped working, and began to defend their workmanship with snowballs, which Jack and Belle were not slow to return. At last, just as Nannie had fashioned a most uncomfortable-looking nose, and had succeeded with great difficulty in inducing it to stay in its right place, Jack's mischievous nature overcame him, and seizing a lump of snow, he threw it straight at the unfortunate

nose. This was more than Nannie could bear.

"You naughty, ill-natured boy," she said; "I'll never speak to you again."

"O Nannie, I'm really sorry. I was only in fun;" for Jack, like most boys, thought "only in fun" excuse enough for anything. "Come back, and I'll help you to make it."

Nannie paid no attention to him, but walked off in a very dignified manner. Jack whistled a tune, and walked off in no very pleasant humour, while Belle and Charlie went into the house. Their pleasure was all gone for want of "*the soft answer which turneth away wrath.*"

Nannie came in and sat down by the fire and began to read. She was very much interested in the book she was reading; but, somehow, to-day she did not like it as well as usual. She turned over the leaves, and read a little here and there; but it didn't please her. She got up from her chair, went to the window, and began drumming on the window-pane.

"Be still, Nannie," said her father, who was sitting in the room, reading. She sat down again, and sat looking into the fire.

"I don't care," she thought; "Jack had no business to do it. I think he was very unkind, and I'll do the same to him another time. Yes, I will," she said to herself more determinedly, because there was something within which said, "*If thy brother sin against thee, forgive him.*" Nannie wouldn't listen, but kept cherishing the angry thoughts.

"He may be thankful it wasn't Belle instead of me, for she would have told father of him in a minute. Jack is always teasing me. He spoiled all my card-houses yesterday. Forgiving him then didn't do him any good."

The little voice within whispered, "*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith, Until seventy times seven.*"

Nannie heard it again, but still wouldn't listen, and went on,—"*And the other day he tore my prettiest paper doll, just for fun. I'd like to know how he'd like to have me tear his things 'just for fun.'*"

"*And the other day he hurt poor pussy's ears.*"

The little voice whispered,—"*And the other day, when you were sick, he stayed away from the nutting party, and showed you pictures, and read to you;*" and as fast as Nannie told of an unkind act, the little voice whispered of a kind one. But Nannie could not listen to-day to the friendly voice which had so often helped her out of her troubles.

After supper Jack said again, "Come, Nannie, let us be friends, won't you?"

Nannie had let the angry thoughts have dominion so long, that although she felt almost inclined to make it up with Jack, pride conquered, and she turned away without a word.

Poor Jack! he really loved his little sister very much, and had felt very sorry about the quarrel. It had cost a good deal of effort to go so far towards making it up, even though he knew he was to blame. But now, instead of being sorry, he was only angry, and turned away, saying, "Well, I can stand it as long as you can."

That night, as Nannie lay awake, the little voice that Nannie had neglected so long kept whispering, "*Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.*" She tried to think of something else, but it kept whispering, whispering.

"I don't see," she said, "why I need trouble myself so about it. Belle



wouldn't mind it a bit."

When morning came, she felt better, and determined to think no more about it. But at prayers Dr. Merry read the sixth chapter of Matthew: *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."*

As her father read these verses, the little voice whispered once more, "Listen, listen;" and this time Nannie did listen; and when they all joined in the Lord's Prayer, it was with a trembling voice she said, *"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those that trespass against us."*

That morning, as Jack started for school, Nannie ran after him, and overtook him just as he stepped into the wood-shed to find his knife, which as usual was missing.

"Jack," she said, going close up to him, "I'm sorry I called you naughty and ill-natured."

Jack was in a great hurry, and already out of patience from the loss of his knife; besides, he had not forgotten how Nannie had met his effort for peace the evening before; so he pushed by her, saying, "Well, don't bother me now; you're in my light." She moved aside a little, so that the light from the door could come in, then spying his knife under the work-bench, she picked it up and gave it to him. He took it from her, and ran off without any thanks.

The tears came into Nannie's eyes. "He's too unkind, I think," she said; "he might at least have thanked me for finding his knife. Next time I'll leave it alone, and he may find it the best way he can."

Nannie's little friend inside whispered again, *"Forgive till seventy times seven."* Nannie listened now, and in her heart she prayed again, *"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those that sin against us."*

That afternoon, as Nannie was sitting reading, Jack put his head in at the door, and said, "Nannie, there's a gentleman in the front yard wants to see you."

Nannie was so busy reading, that she did not notice the strangeness of the message. She put away her book and went out. As she went into the yard, what should she see there but her snow-man, all complete! She turned round to thank Jack, but he was nowhere in sight. Nannie went up closer to examine the snow-statue, and found a piece of paper on it, with Mr. Jack Frost written on it in large letters. Under the name was written with a pencil:—

"Mr. Jack Frost requests of Miss Nannie Merry that she will excuse his friend Mr. John Merry for his rudeness this morning, as Mr. Frost assures her that he will behave better next time."

Nannie laughed as she took off the paper, and running into the house, she soon found Jack standing by the kitchen-fire. Coming up behind him, without his seeing her, she put her arms round his neck, and kissed him several times before he could speak. Then laughing, she said,—

"Miss Nannie Merry will excuse Mr. John Merry this time."

Somehow that evening Nannie and Jack were greater friends than ever; and as they sat together looking at the pictures in some large books that Nannie couldn't lift alone, Nannie was not sorry she had listened to the little voice that had troubled her only to make her do right.



## CHAPTER III.

### CHRISTMAS."



hat a beautiful morning it was, that Christmas morning! It seemed as though the earth, in its pure robe of snow, and the trees, in their sparkling armour of ice, every twig jewelled and gleaming in the sun, had clothed themselves in beauty, and with joyful thoughts were giving thanks to their Creator.

Nannie didn't think all this, but something very much like it was in her heart, as she stood looking out from the window, as sister Mary set the last smoking dish on the table.

That morning Dr. Merry read the 116th Psalm, beginning, *"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice."* Nannie listened very attentively, but there was one verse she didn't quite understand. It was this: *"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving."* She hadn't time after prayers to ask her father or sister Mary about it, but all the time she kept thinking of it and trying to understand it. She didn't know that every time she had looked out upon the snow, and felt thankful to God for the bright fire within that kept her warm, she had offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving. She didn't know that when she thought of Jesus, and her little heart seemed so full of love to him, because he had died for her, she had offered indeed an acceptable sacrifice of thanksgiving. She didn't know it; but Jesus knew it, and accepted the sacrifice, with the same love as when royal David sang the words to his golden harp.

"Nannie," called sister Mary, "Jack is waiting for you."

"In a minute," said Nannie, as she pulled on her warm mittens.

"It had better be a minute," Jack cried, "if you're going with me, for I haven't much time to spare before dinner."

Nannie, laughing, took up the little basket her mother had packed so nicely for Grannie Burt, and off they started, Jack drawing the large basket on his little hand-barrow.

"Where shall we go first, Jack?"

"Oh, to Grannie Burt's, of course, and then you can help me to draw the barrow the rest of the way."

"Let us go to the other places first," said Nannie, "and then you can draw me on the barrow the rest of the way."

"That's more than I bargained for; this basket is all that I want to carry before dinner."

Poor Jack, however, was destined to carry a much heavier load than his basket of mince-pies and roast chickens; for as Nannie skipped along, her foot slipped, and down she came, basket and all, while grannie's nice mince-pies tumbled out, and rolled down the street.

"Oh dear!" said Nannie, not knowing whether to laugh or cry, "do look at grannie's pie! What shall we do?"

"Pick it up, of course," said Jack, as he ran after it.

"Nothing but clean snow," he said, as he brought it back; "nobody will know it from sugar."

"Oh, but it's all broken! What shall we do?"

"See here!" said Jack, lifting the cover of the large basket; "mother has sent Aunt Betsy two; we can take one of them for grannie."

"Why, Jack, are you in earnest?"

"Well, it's the best I can do. I can't mend it, and I can't make a new one."

"Let us go back, then, and get another."

"Go back! why, Nannie, it's all you can do to walk now; you're limping away like crazy Sam."

"Don't make me laugh," said Nannie, laughing all the time through her tears; "my foot hurts me so, I can hardly walk."

Jack's fun was all gone in a minute, as he shouldered his big basket, and lifted Nannie on his little hand-barrow.

"O Jack! you can't carry the basket and drag me too!"

"Yes, I can,—and hundreds more like you."

And Jack trudged along, stopping now and then to take breath, until they came to Grannie Burt's.

"O Jack! what shall we do about the pie?" said Nannie, her tears starting afresh at the thought.

Jack couldn't stand the sight of Nannie's tears; so he said, "Never mind it; I'll go back and get another."

"Oh, will you? Thank you, Jack."

Grannie Burt's daughter, Susan, now came to the door, and made all sorts of exclamations over Nannie, whose ankle pained her so much, she couldn't walk, and Jack had to carry her into the house. While Jack told the story of the pie, Susan had taken off Nannie's shoe and stocking, and was bathing her ankle, while grannie kept saying, "Does it feel better, dear?"

"Never mind the pie," said grannie, as Jack went on with his story; "it's just as good as ever, though it is broken."

"Oh, but it doesn't look so nice," said Nannie.

"I can't see it, you know," said grannie, laughing.

But Nannie wasn't satisfied, and called to Jack, as he started off, to be sure and bring another.

Very soon Nannie felt better, and sitting up in the big chair, she reached over for the large Bible, and said,—

"Grannie, shall I read to you, while I'm waiting?"

"I'm afraid you don't feel well enough."

"Oh yes, I should like to read; I want to read the chapter father read this morning."

She turned over the leaves and found the place, and began: *"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications."*

"Oh yes," said grannie; "David isn't the only one who can say that. God has always heard me."

"Did you ever ask him, grannie, to make you see?" said Nannie.

"No; I never asked him. I asked him to make me patient to bear it. You think it's dreadful, Nannie, to be blind, and I used to think so too. But God never takes anything from us without giving us something else to make up for it. You think I sit in the dark always; but it isn't dark, Nannie; it's all light—a light brighter than the sun: it's the light of heaven; I see it constantly. It isn't only those that live in heaven that can say they have no need of the sun or moon, for the Lamb is their light: I can say it too.—Yes," she went on, more to herself than Nannie,—*"yes, dear Saviour, thou art my light."*

Nannie sat looking wonderingly at the wrinkled old face, so happy and peaceful, and at the withered hands folded so quietly, and thought she did not understand it then. Many years after, when she too was old, did she remember that peaceful face and those folded hands, and say in the midst of trial and sorrow,—

"Yes, dear Saviour, thou art my light!"

"I have thought sometimes," grannie went on, "that heaven will be pleasanter to me, for not seeing here. Think how new it will all be there! People that have always had their sight only see something different when they go to heaven; but I haven't seen anything for ten years. Just think what it will be to me to see those beautiful things you read about!"

"What are they, Nannie?"

Nannie said, "Golden streets, gates of pearl, the tree of life, the wall of jasper. I don't remember any more."

"And Jesus, Nannie; you don't forget him? Think of these poor blind eyes, that have seen nothing for so long, opening at last upon *his* face! I love to think of those blind people Jesus healed, and think that he was the first thing they saw."

Then Nannie read on: *"Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."*

Just as she finished, there was a knock at the door; and who should it be but Dr. Merry, with two pies for grannie, and the horse and gig to take Nannie home. And soon Nannie was lying on the couch by the bright dining-room fire, while mother, and Mary, and Belle, and Charlie all crowded round, asking how she felt.

"Oh, well enough," said Nannie, as sister Mary took off the warm hood, and kissed the dear face inside of it. "I hope it will stop aching in time for me to go to church."

"To church!" said Dr. Merry, looking up from his book; "no church for Nannie to-day."

Nannie said nothing, but turned her head away to hide the tears, while sister Mary, stooping down and kissing her, said, "Never mind; you couldn't walk there, you know."

Afterwards, when no one was in the room except her father, she reached over to the table for the Bible, and found the psalm they had read that morning. Pointing with her finger to the last two verses, she said, "Father, please read that."

Dr. Merry laid down his paper, and coming over to her couch, he read: "*I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord!*"—"Well what of that?" he said, looking up, though the tears stood in his eyes, as he watched the little face turned so wistfully toward him.

"I want to go to church so much, father," she said, as she saw he understood her.

"But, Nannie, I don't think David went to church when he couldn't walk."

"He might have been carried," said Nannie, driving back the tears that wanted to come.

"Perhaps he was," said her father; "and so might you be, if father thought it right."

"Would it hurt me, father?"

"I don't know that it would. It might, though; so I think you had better not try. You must be patient, and remember what I've told you, that God sends all these little trials. Do you understand me?"

"I think I do."

"I like to see my little daughter love God's house, but I like to see her bear it patiently when she can't go there."

"I will try," said Nannie, while she kept saying "No!" to the tears as fast as they came. Every little while, however, one wouldn't mind, and would jump over the edge and run down. But she kept on saying, "Be patient, be patient;" and at last the tears got tired of coming, and troubled her no more. She had pulled up an ugly weed called "Impatience" that morning.

Soon after, Jack came in with his empty basket.

"Well, Nannie, I wish I were in your place—not obliged to go to church, and not sick enough to lose your dinner. I always go to church, for fear, if I'm sick, father'll say, 'Turkey isn't good for headache.' I never thought of such a convenient excuse as spraining my ankle. Let me hear how you did it. It's too late to try it now, but it may do the next time."

"O Jack, how you do talk! I'm so glad you're better than you talk."

"How do you know that, Miss Nannie?"

"Why, everybody knows it. This morning you laughed at me; but as soon as you found out I was really hurt, you drew me and that big basket too on your barrow. You're so kind."

Jack whistled a tune and kicked the fire-irons, because he didn't want Nannie to see the tears that started. He was too much of a boy to let them do anything but start.

"Jack," Nannie began, after a pause, "why don't you like to go to church?" She was saying to herself all the time, "*In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.*"

"Oh, I don't know; I should like it well enough if father would let me sit up with the rest of the boys in the gallery."

"But you wouldn't do as they do in church, Jack?"

"Why not?"

"It's God's house," said Nannie softly. Jack sat silent for a long time, while Nannie lay looking into the fire, and whispering all the time to herself, "Be patient, be patient."

That afternoon, as father, mother, and children were engaged beside her, Nannie lay on her couch and looked on; but she did not need to say, "Be patient, be patient," for she was patient; and when her father, stopping for a moment, whispered, "Is all right, Nannie?" she said, smiling, "Yes, father; trying helps, doesn't it?"

Swiftly the evening fled. They had cracked nuts and eaten apples, till even Jack was satisfied; and as the fire burned down, and Charlie lay asleep in his mother's lap, the father said, "How many things we have to be thankful for this year! Let us each tell of something, and then together we will offer our sacrifice of thanksgiving."

The mother's fingers played in Charlie's curls, as she said, "I thank my heavenly Father for my children's lives."

They were still for a moment. They all remembered the sad days of last winter, when they gathered round the fire and whispered anxiously together, while Charlie tossed and wearied on his sick-bed.

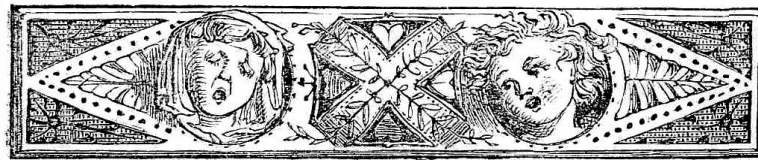
Then sister Mary said, "I thank him for his Son Jesus Christ."

Then Belle, in a softened tone, said, "I thank him for our pleasant home."

Jack said, while Nannie looked up with a pleasant smile, "I thank him for my little sister."

Then it was Nannie's turn, and, smiling to her father, she said, "I thank him for *patience*."

So ended their Christmas-day.



## CHAPTER IV.

### SOMETHING NEW.



"Oh, what a darling it is!" said Nannie to Belle, as they stood looking at the little bundle sister Mary was holding. "What wee bits of hands!" she said, as she opened the blanket. "I'm so glad it's a little sister; I haven't any little one, you know, and it's so much nicer than a brother."

"So much nicer than a brother!" exclaimed Jack, who was looking on with affected indifference. "I'd like to know how many snowballs that 'dear little hand,' as you call it, will make for you. I'm sure I'd like as good a brother as you've got."

"Oh," said Nannie, "a brother will do very well; but I think a little sister is nicer. Oh, just see," she added in a whisper, "it's going to sleep."

"Going to sleep!" said Jack; "I'd like to know how you can tell. It looks just as it did before."

"Why, Jack, its eyes are shut."

"Its eyes shut!—do let me see. I didn't know it had any."

"Come, Jack, they shan't make fun of our baby," said sister Mary, as she took it into the other room. "It's a good deal prettier than you were!"

Belle and Nannie both laughed, in which Jack joined, not at all offended.

"What are they going to call it?" said Jack, after a pause.

"Nellie, sister Mary said," Belle answered; "after a little sister of mother's that died."

"How old was mother's sister when she died?" Jack asked.

"Just four years old. I heard mother tell all about her. She was so pretty, with long brown curls and brown eyes; and mother said she was always happy, and when anybody seemed sad, she would put her little hands in theirs, and say, 'What make you feel sorry? I love you.' One day she came in, and climbed up into mother's lap—her mother's, you know, grandmother's—and laid her head down, and said, 'I'm so tired,' and went to sleep. She slept on and on, until grandmother got frightened, and sent for the doctor. When he came, he said she was going to die. She was sick for about a day, and didn't know anything. The next afternoon, while grandmother was holding her in her lap, she opened her eyes, and seeing the tears in grandmother's eyes, she said, 'What make you feel sorry? I love you!' and that was the last thing she said."

"Did she die, then?" said Nannie.

"Yes; mother said she only breathed a few minutes after it. I saw the grave when I was at grandmother's. There's a little stone, and her name written on it. 'Nellie Bliss, aged four years.'"

"Just as old as Charlie," said Nannie. "How old would she be now?"

"Almost as old as mother," said Belle.

"How long she must have been in heaven. I wonder if she'll know our baby is named after her?"

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The little Nellie soon began to find her way into their hearts. Nannie and Belle loved to sit and hold her, very carefully; and even Jack would step softly, and not slam the door quite so hard, when told that little Nellie was asleep,—though he did say, "He wished people would be as particular when he was asleep, and not make such a racket in the morning."

So for three short weeks the little bud shed its perfume, making happy those around it; then—oh, how often comes that *then* in human life!—then it withered.

The children stepped softly about, or sat in silence round the fire, while the baby lay in their mother's arms panting for breath; and when all was still, and they saw their father lay the little form in the crib, and close the eyes, they knew that it was dead.

Sadly passed that evening. Dr. Merry was absent to see some patients, and sister Mary was in the room with their mother. The children gathered round the fire, and talked in low, subdued voices, for death was new to them.

"How strange," said Nannie, "that our little baby should die before old Grannie Burt, who has been waiting so long."

"Aunt Nellie will know now that she was named for her," said Belle.

"And perhaps," said Nannie, "she will teach her about everything there." So they talked of heaven and heavenly things. The little baby's death had not been in vain. Belle and Jack both thought more of another world than they had ever done before, and in each a little voice whispered, "Am I ready for heaven?"



## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?



"Mother! Fanny Bell, and Mary Green, and ever so many of the girls, are going into the woods to-morrow afternoon, and they want us to go with them. May we, mother?" said Belle and Nannie together, as they came running into the room where their mother was.

"I'll see about it," she said; "it will depend upon what kind of girls you are."

"Oh, we'll be very good, mother, if you will let us go."

"We'll see," said their mother.

The morrow came, and with it the desired permission. Pretty early, Nannie, who was on the watch, saw them coming, and called out to Belle, "Here they are!" Belle ran out.

"Are you going?"

"Yes."

"Is Nannie?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I'm so glad Nannie's going," cried one voice and another. "Yes, I'm so glad."

"I don't see," said Belle to herself, "why they should be so glad Nannie is going. They don't seem to care about me at all."

With rather a cross tone of voice, she called to Nannie to make haste and get ready.

Just as they were starting, Charlie came in, and seeing Nannie with her bonnet on, he called out:—

"O Nannie, where are you going? I want you to show me the pictures in your new book."

"I can't this afternoon, Charlie; I'm going into the woods."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Charlie; "I like so much better when you're at home."

"It does not make any difference to Charlie whether I'm at home or not," Belle said to herself.

When they started there was such a strife who should walk with Nannie,



that Belle was very nearly left to walk alone. Their walk led through the pretty lane bordered with lime-trees, at the back of Dr. Merry's house, then on past Grannie Burt's house, when it turned off into a little path, across the field that was worn quite smooth by the boys going nutting. This path brought you at last to a stile. Over this stile they all climbed, and now were in the woods. What a beautiful wood it was! The trees opened here and there to let in the sunlight, which danced in and out among the green and yellow and russet brown leaves of the trees, changing into every hue of autumn. On the ground, springing up everywhere, were the dark leaves and bright red berries of the cranberry and bilberry; while down by the brook the greenest of all mosses covered the stones, and converted any old log that came in their way into the softest of seats. Then, what a wild and roaring little brook that Stony Brook was! You could follow it all the way through the woods by only stepping from stone to stone, and every little while you might see a great hole scooped out in the rock, where the water lay dark and silent, or a little precipice over which it dashed and foamed. This was a favourite wood with the children. In summer they often spent whole days there, gathering wild flowers or the beautiful fern leaves, which grew in every nook and corner. And now that the bright autumn leaves were scattered everywhere, and the tempting berries covered the ground, they found employment for many a spare hour. To-day the little girls had gathered leaves and berries till they were tired, when Ellen Bates said,—

"Let us choose a queen, and crown her."

"What will you crown her with?" said Mary Green.

"Oh, these bright leaves will do," said Nannie; "we can put them together by the stems."

Now when it was first proposed to choose a queen, Belle thought, "They always choose the prettiest one for a queen—I know they will choose me;" so she said with great eagerness, "Oh yes, let us have a queen!"

"Let us have Belle for our queen!" cried one of the girls.

"Oh no, we want Nannie!" said two or three at once.

"A crown of red leaves will look pretty with Nannie's red hair," said one of the girls, laughing.

"I don't care," said another. "We all love her best, and I don't intend to crown anybody I don't like, if they *are* pretty."

Belle stood looking on with pretended indifference, for she did not want the girls should know how much she cared about it.

"All that vote for Belle hold up a bunch of berries; and all that vote for Nannie hold up an oak leaf."

The girls laughed, and held up their hands. There were six oak leaves, and only two bunches of berries.

"I'd rather Belle would be queen," said Nannie, though it cost a little effort to say it; for she was as much pleased with the honour as any one.

"But we had rather not," the girls said. "You cannot help yourself; so sit down while we make your crown."

Belle was too proud to show her disappointment, so she sat down and helped to make the crown. Very pretty she looked as she sat on the mossy bank, while her hands worked in and out among the bright coloured leaves. A stranger looking at the two sisters, would have wondered why the girls had passed by Belle, and chosen the plain though pleasant-faced Nannie. So one would think that looked only on the outside; but could one have looked within, they would soon have understood the reason of the choice.

After the crowning of the queen, which was performed with all due ceremony, the children went home, following Stony Brook till it poured its waters into the little river on which the village was built.

After they reached home, Belle went upstairs, and sitting down by the window, gave free vent to the angry thoughts she had been keeping under all the afternoon.

"I don't see," she said to herself at last, "what makes the difference. I know I'm a great deal prettier than Nannie;" and she went across and looked at herself in the glass. "Yes, I am a great deal prettier, and yet the girls all love Nannie better. And I can learn a lesson twice as quick, and yet Miss Taylor likes Nannie better than me, and helps her out of all her difficulties. And father, and mother, and sister Mary, all think there's nobody like Nannie, and they are always scolding me for something or other. I wish people would love me as they do Nannie. I would rather be the ugliest person in the world and be loved." She was silent for a moment, while conscience brought before her all the kind acts Nannie was always doing for somebody. How ready she was to give up her own pleasure, and do anything for others. Then she went off into a pleasant day-dream, in which she was very good, always did just right, and everybody loved her. All the old women in the village thought no one could do anything for them like Belle Merry; her mother thought she never could spare Belle, and Charlie was never satisfied when Belle was away. She forgot, when she was dreaming, how, when her father said Granny Burt had no one to read to her, she said "she hadn't time to read to an old woman."

She forgot how often, when her mother had asked for some little help, it had been given so pettishly as to make that mother's face grow sad. She forgot how often, when Charlie had made some little request for entertainment, she had turned away, until now he never asked Belle for anything when Nannie was in the room. Yes, she forgot all this, she forgot all the hard part of doing right, and her dream was very pleasant—so pleasant, that at last she said, with great determination, "I mean to be so kind and good, that they will all love me. I'm going to try. I'll begin at once, to-night."

So she started down-stairs. Poor Belle! how many times had she come out of her little room and gone down-stairs with the same determination to do better, and how many times had she failed!

And how many times had Nannie come out of the same little room with the same resolution, and almost always succeeded! What made the difference? If you had been there sometimes with Nannie, you would have found that she did one thing that Belle had not done. She knelt down and asked God to help her.

There was the difference. Belle was trying to make herself good, Nannie was praying to Jesus to help her.

As Belle came into the sitting-room, her mother said to her, "You ought to have come down immediately to help to set the table, Belle; Nannie set it for you."

Belle said nothing, neither did she thank Nannie, who looked up for a moment, then went on reading.

"Belle," said her mother, "you may fill the water-pitcher, since Nannie has done your work for you."

"I didn't ask her to do my work," said Belle, as she took the pitcher. "That's always the way," she said to herself; "now I came down-stairs feeling pleasant enough, and mother began scolding me because I hadn't set the table. There's no use trying. I wasn't to blame."

Who *was* to blame?

After supper Belle sat down with a book she was busy reading. Just as she began, her father asked her to bring his slippers.

"In a minute," she said, without looking up, while she went on reading.

Nannie, seeing Belle so much interested, ran off and brought the slippers, and received a pleasant "Thank you!" from her father. Belle was not so much interested in her book as not to hear the "Thank you," and it again excited the angry feelings.

"I was going in a minute," she said to herself. "Nannie needn't have been in such a hurry. I wasn't to blame."

Who *was* to blame?

"I wish one of you would take Charlie to bed," said their mother, as she came in with her basket of mending. Here was a good opportunity to help her mother, and Belle put down her book with determination, and said, "I'll take him."

"No," said Master Charlie, "I don't want Belle to put me to bed;—I want Nannie. You go, Nannie," he said, putting his little arms around her neck, and looking up beseechingly. So Nannie laid down her book and took Charlie to bed.

Poor Belle! She held her book up to hide the tears that would come. "There's no use in trying," she thought. "It wasn't my fault if Charlie wouldn't let me."

Whose fault was it?

Dr. Merry had seen it all. He saw the struggle it had been for Belle to put away her book, and he saw the tears fill her eyes when Charlie refused; and now, as he got up to go to his surgery, he whispered to her, "Be strong and of a good courage. For the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee."

"What could her father mean?" Belle kept thinking it over and over. "Be strong and of a good courage"—she knew well enough what the words meant, but why should her father say them to her. She wondered if he knew she was trying to do better, and was almost ready to give up.

"Be strong and of a good courage,"—she said it again. "Of good courage, means not to be afraid, not to give up, to go on trying, no matter how hard it is. But I don't see the use in trying. It's always the same, everything goes wrong. I may as well give up at first as at last."

There was a Bible lying by her on the table, and, almost without thinking, she took it up, and began turning over the leaves to find the words; she knew where they were, for she had seen them many times. She found the place, and read over again the words,—

"For the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

"I can't do right,—there's no use trying;" but while she said it, she was reading over again the last part, "He will not fail thee."

"I wonder," she said, brightening up as the thought struck her, "if that is what father meant! I can't do right myself, but God will help me."





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STORY.



One Sunday afternoon, as Mary sat reading in the porch, Jack and Charlie came and sat down by her on the old sofa; and soon Charlie put his little curly head between her face and the book, and said coaxingly, "Please tell us a story, sister Mary."

The little upturned face was well kissed before sister Mary said, "Well, Jack, call Nannie and Belle, and we'll have a story."

Jack ran off in high glee, for sister Mary's stories were always welcomed by the children.

Nannie and Belle came as fast as their feet would bring them, and were soon sitting in readiness on the porch steps.

"Now, sister Mary," said Nannie, "a *good* story, please."

"What do you mean by a good one, Nannie?"

"One that will teach us to be good," said Nannie in a low voice.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Jack; "that wasn't what I meant. I want a pretty story."

"So do I," said Belle.

"And so do I," chimed in Charlie.

"Well," said sister Mary, "can't I tell you a good story, and a pretty one too?"

"I suppose so," said Jack, kicking the foot-stool.

"Well, she can't tell us anything, Jack," said Belle, "if you don't keep your feet still."

"I think you are rather hard on Jack; but never mind. Now," said sister Mary, "we'll have our story:—

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"It was a poor little room the sun was looking into, just as it was setting. There was no carpet on the floor, and no curtains to the window. The old grate was cracked and rusty, and contained a few red coals among the embers. By the fire, in a curious old chair, roughly made, yet looking comfortable, sat a little girl rocking herself backwards and forwards. It was a very pale face that the sun shone upon, and a very thin, pale hand it was that the little girl was holding up, shading her eyes. Every little while the girl dropped her hand, and looked towards the window with a bright smile,—and no wonder! for there stood the prettiest of rose-bushes, with bright green leaves, and one dark crimson bud just opening. She sat watching it, till the last rays of the sun died away, and it began to grow dark. Then the look of sadness came back to her face, and drawing her old shawl closer round her, she sat leaning her head on her hand. By-and-by there was a

sound of footsteps, and the door opened, and a man entered with a slow and heavy step. She turned round with a quick smile,—'O father! what has made you so late?'

"He said nothing; but, stooping down, lifted her in his arms, and sat down by the fire. Though he lifted her very gently, an expression of pain passed over her face, and you could see that the poor limbs hung shrunken and helpless. He was a rough-looking man, with a rough, heavy voice; but when he spoke to her, his tones were very gentle, and as he held her in his lap he stroked her hair softly and kissed her again and again.

"How have you been to-day, Lizzie?"

"Pretty well, father. When neighbour Green came in to see to the fire, she brought me some nice warm broth for my dinner. Wasn't it kind, father—and wasn't it odd too? I had been thinking all the morning how much I should like some broth, and then just to think I had some for my dinner. And then the best of all is that dear little rose-bush. You can't see it now, it's so dark; it's got one dear little bud, and it won't eat anything but water, so I can keep it. Mrs. Smith brought it to me, and she brought a nice basketful of things besides; and you'll get some of them for your supper—won't you, father?"

"He put her back carefully in her chair, then put on a few more coals, and brought out from a basket in a corner their supper. After they had eaten, he took her again in his arms and sat down with her.

"Was the day very long, Lizzie?"

"Yes,' she said; 'the days are all long without mother.'

"He started as she said it; then said, 'I'm very glad she isn't here.'

"Glad! father?"

"Yes, glad; for'—he said almost in a whisper—'they never hunger there. I wish we were there too.'

"He laid his head on her shoulder, while the words came fast: 'No work—I have hunted, hunted everywhere. I have been ready to give up, and then I would think of you, Lizzie, and I kept on; but there's no work to be had. O Lizzie, Lizzie, I could bear it if it weren't for you!'

"She said nothing, but kept stroking his hair with her little hand, while her face looked very sad.

"I will try once more, to-morrow, though I know there's no use.'

"Perhaps you can find something, father. Don't despair. God will take care of us. Shall I say mother's psalm, father?"

"He only nodded his head, and she began: '*I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*'

"Does it say, "at all times," Lizzie?"

"Yes, father, "*at all times*;" that means when we are in trouble too, doesn't it?"

"It must mean so; but it isn't so easy to praise him when we can't see any light, as when everything is bright.'

"It isn't so easy to *praise*, father; but then we can *pray*.'

"We can pray, Lizzie; but what if God doesn't hear us?"

"But he does hear us, father. That's just what the verse that mother liked best said: "*I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all*

*my troubles.*" And this verse too: *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all."* That is a sweet verse, father.'

"Say them all, Lizzie.'

"I don't remember them all. I will say all I can: *"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them."* *"Oh, fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."*

"Do you think that's always true, Lizzie?"

"I don't know,' she said, with a puzzled look; 'we want something now. You want work, and I want to be well and strong to help you; but maybe it doesn't mean we shall have everything we want, but all that is best for us. That's what mother used to say, and that's what the next verse says too: *"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."* And perhaps it isn't here that we shall not want. You said "there was no hunger there," didn't you, father?"

"Yes, Lizzie.'

"And then there is that other verse, father: *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

"Her voice trembled as she said it, and she paused, for they were her mother's dying words.

"We will fear no evil, father. We won't stop trusting; will we, father?"

"No, Lizzie; I sometimes fear I should if it weren't for you. What should I do without you?' and his arms grasped her closer, as if even the thought were painful.

"O father, you would be glad that God had taken me where I couldn't suffer any more, and where I should be straight and pretty like other children.'

"You are pretty now, Lizzie. I never see any face that looks so beautiful to me.'

"But it isn't like other children's, father. When Mrs. Smith came in to-day, she had a pretty little girl with her, with such bright golden hair, and such rosy cheeks, and so tall and straight, she must look like the angels, I think. And when I looked at her, it was so hard to keep the tears from coming. I had to keep thinking of what mother told me when I read about the pool where the sick people washed and were made well; and I said I wished there was such a pool now. Mother said the river of death was such a pool, and that after I had crossed it, I should be like the angels in heaven. But she said, father, she should still know me; so, father, you will keep on trusting and praising too, won't you, if God takes me there?"

"He made no answer, but held her closely to him, till the few coals in the grate grew white, and the room grew cold.

"It's too cold for you here, Lizzie, and we can't have any more coals to-night. Shall I put you in bed now?"

"Let me sing mother's hymn first, father.'

"He raised her a little, and in a sweet, low voice she began singing:—

"Breast the wave, Christian, when it is strongest;  
Watch for day, Christian, when night is longest;  
Onward and onward still be thine endeavour,  
The rest that remaineth endureth for ever.

"Fight the fight, Christian—Jesus is o'er thee;

Run the race, Christian—heaven is before thee;  
He who hath promised faltereth never;  
Oh, trust in the love that endureth for ever.

"Lift the eye, Christian, just as it closeth;  
Raise the heart, Christian, ere it repositeth;  
Nothing thy soul from the Saviour can sever,  
Soon shalt thou mount upward to praise him for ever."

Sister Mary paused after she had sung the hymn. There were tears in the children's eyes, and for a moment they were silent.

"Is that all?" they said at last.

"No," said sister Mary, "there's some more; but I'm afraid you are tired."

"Oh no; tell us the rest!"

"Very well," said sister Mary, "but we'll have to make haste; it's growing late:—

"The setting sun was shining again into the poor little room, and the little girl sat again, wrapped up in her old shawl, before the fire, rocking to and fro. The little girl's face had a very bright smile on it; but it wasn't the rose-bush with its little bud, now almost opened, that caused it, for she didn't look that way at all. She had a little bit of paper in her hand that she held very tightly, while her eyes kept watching the door. The sunlight faded, and the room grew dark, but the little face still wore the bright smile.

"As the door opened, she cried out eagerly,—

"'O father, here's something for you! There was a gentleman here to see you to-day, and he left his name; here it is on this card; and he said if you would come to see him, he had some work for you.'

"The man sat down in his chair, and laid his head in his hands.

"'O Lizzie,' he said, 'it's more than I deserve; I was just ready to give up trusting. I have sought all day, and I couldn't bear to come home.'

"'God did hear us; didn't he, father? I'm so glad we didn't stop trusting. Hadn't you better go now, father, and see about it?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'I'll go now,' stooping down to read the card by the light of the fire.

"He went out, and the shadows settled down over the room; but the little girl sat still, and you could just hear her humming to herself,—

"'Breast the wave, Christian, when it is strongest.'

"Presently she heard her father's step. It was quicker and lighter than it had been for many a day."

"'I've got it, Lizzie. It's a place as a porter in a warehouse; and good wages too. And see here,' he said, as he lighted a candle he had brought with him, 'we'll have a light to-night, and a nice supper too.'

"'O father!' said Lizzie, as she looked on with bright eyes as her father took out the parcels; 'how did you get all those things?'

"'The gentleman paid me something in advance. He said he knew people that had been out of work so long needed something.'

"It was a pleasant evening; the candlelight seemed so bright to Lizzie's eyes, that hadn't seen any for so long a time, and her father was so cheerful. Yes, it was a pleasant evening; and they closed by reading the 103rd Psalm:—

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."*

---

Sister Mary took up her book and went into the house, while the children gathered together on the steps to watch the sun that was now setting.

"Lizzie was a wonderfully good little girl, wasn't she," said Jack; "but then she was sick. I never knew any good people that weren't either sick or ugly."

"Why, Jack, there's sister Mary, and papa and mamma, and Miss Taylor, and—"

"Oh, I mean children. All the children I read about are good, and get ill, and die. I rather think Lizzie would have died if sister Mary had gone on with her story."

"It *is* so in books," said Belle; "they always die."

"People would not want to write about them if they lived," said Nannie.

"Why not?" said Jack; "I wish some one would write about me."

"If they wrote about you," said Belle, "they could call their work, 'A warning to bad boys,' or, 'An ugly boy that wasn't good.'"

While they were talking so, Nannie was thinking very intently.

"What are you thinking about, Nannie?" said Belle.

"I was thinking about what Jack said—that all the good people were either sick or ugly; I don't believe it's true. But if it is true, I was thinking that perhaps it's like what Abraham told the rich man: 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' So I thought that the ones that were sick and ugly here, but loved Jesus, had received all their evil things, and would be well and beautiful there."

"Maybe so," said Jack, more thoughtfully than before. Then stooping down and kissing Nannie, he said, "I know one good girl that isn't sick."

The sun was just setting, leaving about half its great face to light the world.

In Jack's heart the sun was just rising.

Nannie's words kept sounding in his ears,—"*Perhaps, perhaps they have received in this life their good things;*" and those other words, "*Therefore he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*"

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## CHAPTER VII.



## "THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF."



"annie, Nannie,—where's Nannie?" Jack called one pleasant summer morning.

Just then Nannie's voice was heard singing, and she came into the kitchen, where Jack was.

"Nannie, father has just gone down to Grannie Burt's, and he wants you to go there too. Mother is going now, and she says you may go with her if you'll make haste."

Nannie was off in a minute for her sun-bonnet, and very soon was walking with her mother and Jack through the tree-bordered lane; very quietly now though, for she knows that grannie is dying, and she thinks to herself, "Grannie will be in heaven to-night," and the little face brightens as she thinks of the beauties of the heavenly city; "and grannie will see too—why, how happy she must be! I should think good people would love to die. It's like going to some beautiful world we've heard of." But as Nannie looked up at the trees, and the heavy white clouds above them, and then down at the green carpet of grass at her feet, she thought it would be *leaving* a beautiful world too.

Now they reach the little brown house, and Nannie begins to feel a little frightened. She creeps in timidly behind her mother, and sits down at the foot of the bed, while Jack sits down on the door-step. Soon grannie says feebly,—

"Has Nannie come?"

"Yes," said her mother; "Nannie's here."

"Nannie, come where I can touch you."

As Nannie comes nearer, grannie stretches out her hand, and laying it on her head, says in a low voice,—

"God bless thee—God bless thee, my child! I have never seen you here, Nannie, but I shall know you in heaven. I shan't need to ask you to read to me there, for I shall see. But read to me here once more, Nannie—once more."

Nannie lifts up for the last time grannie's worn Bible, and begins to read, as she has so often read before,—

*"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth."*

Very still it was in the chamber of death, while the little head bowed over the sacred book, and the tearful voice read of the glories of that land whither the wearied one was going. Fainter and fainter grew the breath; and as the child read the words, "*And the city hath no need of the sun or moon to lighten it, for the Lamb is the light thereof,*" the lids closed over the sightless eyes here—but opened there, where the Lamb is the light. Grannie Burt was in heaven.

Long she listened for His footsteps,  
Echoing from those streets of gold—  
Now just within the pearly gates,  
She is no longer old.

The pilgrim-staff is broken—  
The worn-out garment fold  
And lay away for ever,—  
She is no longer old.

Farewell, farewell, our mother!  
Our greatest joy is told,

As we fold the aged hands and say,  
She is no longer old.

Twice have the trees blossomed, and twice the autumn leaves fallen, since first we met our little friend Nannie. We have given but a few pages in the life of those few years; there have been many others—some, perhaps, in which the little girl forgot to ask for help in her trying, and therefore failed.

It may seem hard to be trying on and on, never yielding to discouragement; but if you should see Nannie's bright eyes and happy face, you would not think so; and if you should ask Nannie if she was tired of trying, I think she would answer, "*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*"

We may perhaps hear of Nannie again, and of the success which always follows faithful effort. But whether we do or not, I can let you into the secret of her future life. Here it is in these words:—

*"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."*



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\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NANNY MERRY \*\*\*

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