

# **The Project Gutenberg eBook of Little Frankie at School, by Madeline Leslie**

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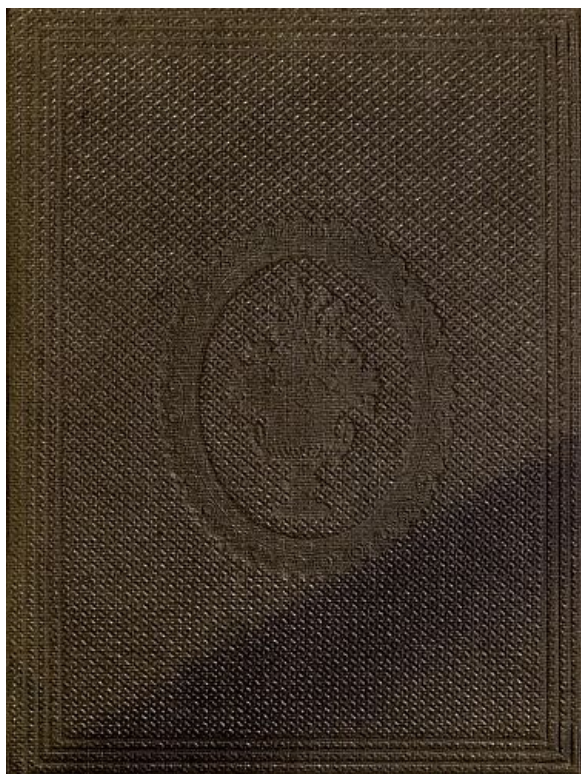
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## **LITTLE FRANKIE AT SCHOOL.**



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LITTLE FRANKIE AT SCHOOL.

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FRANKIE WHEELING THE CRIPPLE.

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# LITTLE FRANKIE AT SCHOOL.

[5]

BY

**MRS. MADELINE LESLIE,**

AUTHOR OF "THE HOME LIFE SERIES;" "MRS. LESLIE'S  
JUVENILE SERIES," ETC.



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[6]

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# LITTLE FRANKIE AT SCHOOL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FRANKIE'S NEW TEACHER.

WHEN little Frankie Gray was nearly seven years old, a lady came to reside in the town where he lived, hoping to collect a small school.

Frankie's mother called upon her, and was so much pleased with her frank, cheerful manners, her sunny smile, and her Christian conversation, that she promised, with her husband's consent, to send Frankie and Nelly to be her pupils. [8]

The young teacher's name was Fanny Grant. Nelly laughed merrily when she heard it, and said she should always think of her great doll, Fanny, when she saw her.

Papa had for a long time feared it was an injury to his wife to be confined so many hours as she thought it necessary to be in order to attend to the children's studies, and he was very glad to find a good teacher for them. [9]

Miss Grant hired a pleasant room in a house only a short distance from Mr. Gray's. Then she commenced furnishing it to suit her own fancy. First she fastened white shades to the windows, and then hung the walls with bright colored maps, and large pictures of animals and birds. On one side there was a nice blackboard, and next it a card containing the alphabet in large letters. [10]

When all this was arranged, Miss Grant engaged a carpenter to work for her a day in making a gallery of four steps, and in drawing a large circle on the floor, which he marked by driving in large brass headed nails. [11]

Nelly and her cousin, who had watched these arrangements with great interest, were very curious to know their use. The teacher, smiling, bade them wait and see.

"Is all ready now?" asked Frankie.

"Not quite," said the teacher. "I must have some small chairs for my little scholars; also some more apparatus." [12]

"What is apparatus?" inquired Nelly.

"It is any thing by which we can illustrate or explain our ideas. This blackboard, and these cards, are apparatus. You will see, when school begins, how I shall explain to you many things by their help. Then I have a large globe, a numeral frame, and an orrery."

"I had an orrery once," shouted Frankie. "It was made of wire, with potatoes and turnips. Is yours like that?" [13]

"O, no," said the teacher, with a hearty laugh. "The planets are made of wood, or plaster, and painted very prettily."

"I shall like to see it," said Frankie.

"So shall I," said Nelly.

The children then took their leave, after bidding the lady good by; but presently Frankie returned, all out of breath, to say, "Miss Grant, I have a whole box of beautiful great cards. They were my birthday present from papa and mamma. You may take them, if you want to, and hang them around the room." [14]

"Thank you, my little friend," said the teacher, giving him a kiss. "I am going now to my boarding place, and you may walk with me, if you can stop until I put on my bonnet."

"I should like that," said Frankie. "I'll run out and tell Nelly to wait." [15]

Miss Grant locked the door, and taking a small vase in her hand, joined the children who were waiting near the gate.

"What is that flower pot for?" asked Nelly.

"When school begins, I shall beg some flowers from the lady where I live," answered the teacher. "I like to have the room look cheerful and bright, so that the little scholars will like to be there." [16]

"I wish Monday would come quick," exclaimed the boy. "I want to begin to go to school. I mean to carry a great big bouquet, out of my own garden. Did you know I had a garden, Miss Grant?"

"No, I did not; but I am very glad to hear it. I love flowers almost as well as I do good little boys and girls." [17]

"I should think you would love your mother better than either. I do."

Miss Grant's lip quivered, and tears gushed to her eyes. "I do love my mother," she said, softly, "but she is in heaven."

"I'm real sorry," said the sympathizing child, affectionately kissing the hand he held. "If you were little, like Nelly and me, mother would let you be her daughter, I guess." [18]

When the children reached home, Mrs. Gray was most happy to see what an influence the young teacher had already established over them. She encouraged their love for her, and appealed to their sympathies by saying, "She is an orphan, without father or mother; we must all try to make her forget her sorrows by showing her that she has still many warm friends."

## CHAPTER II.

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### ONE DAY AT SCHOOL.

I SUPPOSE you will wish to know how Frankie and Nelly liked their new school, and whether they continued to love their teacher.

In answer to these questions, I shall give you an account of a day they passed about a week after the school commenced.

It was a lovely morning in June. After breakfast and prayers in the family of Mr. Gray, Frankie ran out into the garden to gather a bouquet for his teacher. He and Nelly kept her vase well filled with flowers. He put the bouquet into a pitcher of water to keep it fresh, and then ran to the sink to wash his face and hands very clean; after which he went into the nursery for Sally to pin on a clean collar, and to brush his hair.

[20]

[21]

While she was doing this, he called out to his mother, who was in the next room, "Mamma, mayn't I learn to part my hair myself? I'm almost seven, you know."

"Yes, indeed," she answered. "You may learn as soon as you please. Sally will show you how to hold the comb to make the parting straight."

"I wish my hair would lie down," exclaimed the boy, giving the brush a quick, impatient jerk. It curls up so close, I can't make it look smooth. And he brushed the front lock with all his strength.

[22]

"There, now, that looks well enough," said nurse in a comforting tone. "You might as well try to keep the wind from blowing as to try to keep your hair from curling. It will form little rings, do all you can."

"Now I'm ready!" shouted Frankie, taking his bouquet in his hand.

[23]

In the mean time, Nelly had been to her aunt's room, and had her long hair combed out smoothly, and then brushed over the curling stick. It was quite a tedious operation, and required to be very wet before the comb could be passed through it; but Nelly bore it patiently, as her aunt always tried to pass the time away agreeably, by giving her some easy example in arithmetic, or hearing a line of the multiplication table, or telling her a short story. By the time this was done, Sally had turned the mattress; and the little girl made up her bed, laying on the sheets and counterpane very smoothly, so that not a rumple could be seen. Then she hung up such of her clothes as were lying about the room, put her shoes into the bag on the inside of the closet door, then dressed herself in a clean apron, and was ready, by the time Frankie called, to take the flowers Willie had gathered for her, and walk out with him to meet their dear teacher.

[24]

[25]

Sometimes, when they were early, they went as far as the house where she boarded, and stood at the gate until she appeared; but generally they sat down on the stone wall under the shade of the large maple tree at the entrance to their avenue, and watched until she came in sight. Then they ran eagerly to give her their morning kiss, and present their little offering of flowers.

[26]

On this pleasant June morning, they each took a hand as usual, and walked on rapidly toward the school, talking merrily as they went.

When they reached the building, they found nearly all the other scholars, eighteen in number, waiting the arrival of Miss Grant. They went into the school room, took off their hats and bonnets, hung them up in the closet, and then went quietly to their seats on the steps, the little ones on the lower steps, and the others above them on the higher.

[27]

When the church clock struck nine, the teacher rang the small bell, when every eye was closed, and every head was bowed for prayer. The little voices all joined in repeating the Lord's Prayer, after which they sung a verse of the hymn,—

[28]

"There is a happy land,  
Far, far away,  
Where saints in glory stand,  
Bright, bright as day."

After this, they pass down from the gallery, and march along to their seats. For the next half hour the school is quite still, while the pupils are studying the reading and spelling lessons: when the bell strikes again, they march out in order to the front of the chair where their teacher sits.

[29]

As soon as one class has recited, another is called, until every little pupil has read and spelled.

When this has been done, every face begins to brighten, for they know what the next exercise is; and they like it very much. The largest girl takes her place on the circle, and the others follow her according to their size, until they come down to the smallest one, who is a pretty blue-eyed little urchin of four summers.

[30]

Miss Grant then strikes up a lively tune to the words,—

"This is the way we wash our face,  
This is the way we wash our face,

This is the way we wash our face,  
So early in the morning,"—

each little hand is vigorously employed in rubbing the face, as they merrily follow each other around the circle. As soon as they finish one verse, they stop a moment, to avoid being made dizzy, and then begin again:— [31]

"This is the way we comb our hair,  
This is the way we comb our hair,  
This is the way we comb our hair,  
So early in the morning.

"This is the way we brush our teeth,  
This is the way we brush our teeth,  
This is the way we brush our teeth,  
So early in the morning. [32]

"This is the way we clean our nails,  
This is the way we clean our nails,  
This is the way we clean our nails,  
So early in the morning."

After this marching and singing, the children return to their seats to prepare a lesson in geography, which they recite standing near the globe, the teacher pointing out the places upon it.

Recess and the various sports recommended by the teacher follow, and then come arithmetic and the numeral frame. This is a wooden frame about a foot square, with twelve stout wires passing from one side to the other. Strung on each of these wires are twelve round stones, about the size of marbles. With this frame Miss Grant taught her little scholars to add, subtract, and multiply numbers, in the same manner that Mrs. Gray had taught her little pupils with marbles. [33]

At the close of the morning session, the children marched in the circle again, singing five times five are twenty-five, and five times six are thirty, to the tune of Yankee Doodle. [34]

In the afternoon, the exercises were quite as varied. The lessons mostly being committed in the morning, the children were allowed to tell stories, which the teacher wrote for them on the blackboard,—or they recited hymns and verses they had learned; sung, marched, and listened to the instructions of their teacher. [35]



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## CHAPTER III. [36]

### THE NEW SCHOLAR.

IN a house near the one where Miss Grant boarded was a little girl whose name was Hitty Moran. Her real name was Mehitable, but her mother and all her companions called her Hitty. She belonged to a very poor family, and as she was the eldest of a number of children, her mother thought she could not spare her to attend school. [37]

From the windows of her chamber, Miss Grant often saw Hitty sitting on the doorstep, holding a large baby in her arms. She noticed that Hitty was always kind to her baby brother; that she sung to him, let him pull her long hair, and never became impatient or fretful with him. All this interested the kind teacher in the child, and she longed to be of some use to her. [38]

One day, when she was returning from her school, she overtook Hitty, who was carrying a

heavy basket of potatoes. "Let me help you," said the teacher, taking hold of the handle.

As they walked along, Miss Grant asked, "Did you ever go to school?"

"No, ma'am," said Hitty; "though I staid in a house once where the lady's son taught me my letters." [39]

"Should you like to learn?" asked the teacher.

"O, yes, ma'am; sure I should be proud if I could read; but mother has so much work, and Bobby takes kindly to me, so that she can't spare me to go to school."

"I should think it could be planned somehow for you to learn," said Miss Grant, kindly. "I will go in and see your mother this evening." [40]

She did so, and talked with Mrs. Moran of the advantage it would be to Hitty, if she could learn to read and write.

"Only think," said the lady, "she could teach her brothers their letters, and read them pretty stories to keep them quiet while you are busy at work."

"Feth, ma'am, sure, and I've sinse enough to see the truth of what you're saying," said the poor mother. "Her father often gets a paper from the ould country; but it's little use to us, you see, because the spelling and the pronouncing are quite beyont him. I've often enough wished we could have the luck to give one of the childer an education." [41]

"Can't you spare her to go to school a part of the time?" [42]

"Sure, ma'am, and that's the trouble intirely. The teachers complain when the childer don't be regular."

Just at this moment one of the children fell down, and began to cry so loud, that Miss Grant took her leave. She was in earnest about doing something for Hitty; and she walked as far as Mrs. Gray's, to ask her advice about it.

"Why don't you allow her to attend your school?" inquired the lady. "One hour in the day would be better than nothing." [43]

"I should be glad to do so, if I thought the parents would not object," answered the teacher. "I think with a little trouble she could be made to look tidy."

Miss Grant was not at all rich, but when a lady is resolved to do a kindness, she always finds out a way. She knew that Hitty had no dress suitable to wear to school. She opened her purse after she had reached home, and taking out some money she had laid by to purchase a new book, she walked to the store, and bought some calico to make a child's dress. [44]

On her way back she called at Mrs. Moran's, and told her Hitty might come to her school every afternoon if her mother could not spare her in the morning, and that if her mother would try to send her, she would provide a new gown. [45]

Mrs. Moran was very grateful for this kindness, and promised to get along without Hitty whenever she could. In three days, the little girl called for her teacher, her face and hands so bright, and clean, and rosy, that you would scarcely know her. The dress fitted charmingly, and the grateful smile and look of delight with which, she regarded herself when Miss Grant tied on a neat apron with pockets in it, quite repaid the lady for all her expense and trouble. [46]

Most of the scholars were kind to Hitty, and willingly lent her a slate, pencil, or book, when their teacher requested it. But one little girl, whose name I am sorry to say was Nelly, did not like to play with Hitty, because she lived in such a poor house. [47]

She was ashamed to refuse when her teacher asked her to show the new scholar how to make the figures on her slate; but she had a pout on her lips, which Miss Grant had never seen there before, and her voice did not sound sweet and kind.

When the lady saw these marks of pride in her beloved pupil, it made her heart ache. She had been so full of love to the poor, ignorant child, and so anxious to do her good, that she could not bear the thought of any one in her school treating Hitty unkindly. For a moment she gazed sorrowfully in Nelly's flushed face, saw her move away from her new schoolmate as far on the seat as she could, and then she called, "Hitty, come and sit by me." [48]

Presently Frankie raised his little fat hand, and when she nodded to him that he had permission to speak, he asked, "May the new girl see me make pictures on the blackboard?" [49]

"Yes, darling," answered the lady, rising and patting him on his curly head. "Perhaps you can teach her to make a picture too."

"See, Hitty," said Frankie; "this is the way to do it;" and the dear boy stood very erect and proud of the confidence of his teacher. [50]

When Miss Grant glanced toward Nelly, she was sorry to see that the little girl looked angry, that her cousin was taking so much pains with the new girl, and that he seemed so happy in doing it.

Shall I tell you what I think the bad spirit was whispering in her ear? It was this: "Nelly, your father is rich; you live in a fine house and wear nice clothes; you are right not to like to sit by Hitty, who is very poor and ignorant." [51]

Ah, my little girl, do you remember who has given you so many blessings? It is God; but if you are not grateful to him, and kind to those who are less favored, he may take away your father and mother, and leave you without home or friends.

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## CHAPTER IV. [52]

### THE INJURED GIRL.

MISS GRANT was very much pleased with Frankie's kindness to Hitty; and she hoped Nelly would see how lovely it made him appear, and try to imitate him.

When the school closed, Hitty felt so grateful to Frankie for showing her the figures, that she stood by him in the closet, to see whether she could not do something for him. His cap was on a low hook, where he could reach it; but the scarf he wore with it, was hung up higher. Hitty saw him trying to jump and catch the end to pull it down, and she said quickly, "I can reach it. I will get it for you;" and she gave it to him with a bright smile. [53]

"Thank you," said Frankie, pleasantly. [54]

When they were out by the gate the scarf blew off, and Hitty ran to pick it up, when Nelly snatched it from her, and said, "Let alone my cousin's things, you ugly girl;" at the same time she gave Hitty a rough push to get her out of the way.

I do not think Nelly was so very wicked as to wish really to hurt the little girl, but she was angry, because her conscience was telling her she had done wrong. [55]

She heard Hitty scream, but she ran on, pulling Frankie along, though he urged her to go back, and see what was the matter with the poor girl.

"No, no!" she cried; "I don't like Hitty, and I don't want to walk with her." Then she began to talk about Ponto, and said she wished he would come and carry her basket for her.

Almost always, when Nelly went home from school, she and Frankie ran up stairs to the chamber where Mrs. Gray sat at work; but now she proposed that they should play in the garden with the dog. [56]

The lady heard their voices, and wondered they did not come in to see her before they began to play. In about fifteen minutes she heard some one ring the bell at the back door, and presently Sally came up stairs into her room, leading a little girl by the hand. [57]

It was Hitty, but with such a great swelling on her forehead that Mrs. Gray did not at first recognize her. Her eyes were red and swollen with crying, and even now she could scarcely keep back her sobs.

As she came in, she walked straight across the room to the lady, and put a note into her hand.

Mrs. Gray opened it, and read with great sorrow the following words: "Nelly pushed this little girl against the stone post, at the school house gate. I am exceedingly grieved, and as I cannot see Nelly to-night, I have sent Hitty to you. Please do what you think best in the case." [58]

"Come here, poor child," said the lady, tenderly; "that is a dreadful bunch on your forehead. How did it happen?"

"I was picking up your little boy's scarf when it fell off his neck, and Nelly snatched it away, and pushed me so hard that I fell against the post. She called me names, too;" and Hitty began to sob again. [59]

"What did Frankie do?" asked his mamma.

"Nothing at all, ma'am. It's very kind to me, he was."

The lady bade the child sit down. She then went to the closet and poured some arnica from a bottle into a bowl of water, and after wetting a cloth in it, bound it upon the forehead of the child. Then she rang the bell, and sent Margie to find Nelly and bring her into the house. [60]

While she was waiting, she talked with Hitty, and soon became as much interested in her as the teacher had been.

Presently Nelly came in, followed by her cousin. She started and blushed when she saw Hitty; but Frankie ran to the little girl, asking, "What is the matter with your head? Have you hurt yourself?" [61]

"No," replied Hitty; "she did it," pointing to Nelly.

"Look here," said her aunt, raising the cloth and pointing to the swelling, which was half as



large as an egg.

Frankie exclaimed, "O, dear! I'm sorry. Does it ache bad?"

[62]

Nelly held down her head and began to cry. She was very much frightened at what she had done.

"Frankie," said his mother, "you may go down with Hitty to the cook, and ask her for a piece of cake for the little girl. Then you may walk with her as far as your teacher's, and wait till I come. Hitty, you may go home and tell your mother I shall bring Nelly there soon, to have her say what punishment so naughty a girl deserves."

[63]

"O, don't, aunty! don't take me there! I'm afraid to go!" sobbed Nelly, catching hold of her aunt.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Gray, gravely.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked the child, in an agony of fear.

"I am going to talk with you, and I wish you to tell me how this dreadful thing occurred. O Nelly, I can't tell you how very grieved I am, that you should do so! I thought you had conquered your bad temper, and had become a lovely, amiable child."

[64]

The tears stood in Mrs. Gray's eyes, and her voice trembled as she spoke. Nelly sobbed as if her heart would break; but as her aunt waited for her to reply, she said, "I am sorry, aunty. I didn't mean to hurt her so; but I didn't want her to touch Frankie's things."

[65]

"Why not? I am sure it was kind of her to pick up his scarf."

Nelly covered her burning face with her hands.

"Tell me the truth, my child," said her aunt, firmly.

"She is so poor," whispered Nelly. "I don't like poor girls; and then she lives in such an old house."

[66]

"Why, Nelly!" exclaimed the lady, "I can hardly believe you have so proud and wicked a heart. Suppose your father should lose all his property, and you should be obliged to go to the poorhouse, and wear an old, shabby dress; should you think that was a good reason why another little girl, whom God had blessed with a good home and kind friends, delighting to supply her with the comforts of life, should treat you unkindly?"

[67]

"No, indeed, aunty! I did not think how very wicked I was." Then Nelly confessed truthfully all the naughty feelings which had made her so unkind to the new scholar, though she sobbed so much that she could hardly speak.

Mrs. Gray talked a long time with her, explaining where her sin lay; first, in cherishing pride, and then in giving way to anger, which was the very spirit of Cain when he killed his brother. After this they knelt down together; and Nelly, in a voice broken with weeping, asked God to forgive her great sin, and help her to be a good child.

[68]

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## CHAPTER V.

[69]

### NELLY AT MRS. MORAN'S.

"COME, now, my dear," said the lady, putting on her bonnet; "we must go to Mrs. Moran's and inquire about Hitty."

"I am afraid to," screamed Nelly, clinging to her aunt. "O, I am sure I shall never do so again! I don't dare to go there."

"Why, Nelly?" asked her aunt, pitying her distress. "If any little girl had injured you so, I should think it was a very small thing for her to do, to come and say she was sorry, and ask your forgiveness. You are really sorry, I think. It is but right you should tell her so."

[70]

As they approached the house the poor child seemed in such an agony of fear, that her aunt was obliged to soothe her to lead her on. Her conscience told her she had been unkind, even cruel, to her companion, who had in no way injured her, and she feared Hitty's father and mother would be very angry.

[71]

Mr. Moran lived in the upper part of a building which had once been used as a shop. A pair of wide stairs went up outside the house to the door, which opened into their room. A man was at work chopping wood at the foot of the stairs, and as soon as Nelly saw him she ran behind her aunt, whispering, "O, I dare not go! that's Hitty's father."

[72]

"I will take care of you," answered the lady, knocking at the door.

Mrs. Moran presently opened it, and they saw Hitty sitting on a low stool, playing with the baby, who was cooing and crowing with delight at having her back again.

"I have come," said Mrs. Gray, "with my little niece, who injured your daughter at school. She wishes to ask you to forgive her." [73]

Nelly was crying bitterly, so that she could scarcely speak; but at last she sobbed out, "I didn't mean to hurt her so. I'm very sorry."

"Don't cry, pet!" said Mrs. Moran, kindly. "I dare say you meant her no harm; and if you did, sure and we all are in the wrong sometimes. Hitty lays up nothing against you. There, honey, stop a bit, and she'll tell you the same. Come, Hitty, tell the little girl you forgive her, since the lady is so kind as to ask it." [74]

Hitty came forward with Bobby still in her arms, and when Nelly held out her hand, shook it cordially, saying, "My head is almost well now, and by to-morrow I'll never think of the blow again. I'm sorry for you, Nelly, to see you crying so." [75]

Mrs. Gray sat for a time talking with Mrs. Moran, and encouraging her to allow Hitty to learn to read. There was one little boy just Frankie's age, whom the lady advised her to send to the public school.

This, the poor woman said, she should be glad to do, if the lad had clothes.

The next day, when Hitty returned from school, Nelly, Frankie, and Ponto accompanied her, each of them carrying a bundle as large as they could lift, with dresses, jackets, and sacks, the children had outgrown. [76]

Mrs. Moran hardly knew how to express her gratitude, as she held up one article after another, and saw how nicely they would fit Ned or others among her children.

This lesson, though severe at the time, was never forgotten by Nelly. After this no one was more eager than she to show kindness to Hitty, or more pleased when the poor girl succeeded in learning to read. [77]

In the afternoon most of the scholars repeated a hymn which they had learned at home, or a few verses from the Bible. Nelly noticed that Hitty never repeated any, and one day asked her the reason. [78]

"I haven't any books," answered the child, "and then I couldn't make out the hard words, you know."

Nelly looked thoughtful for a minute, and then jumped up and down in her glee. "Ask your mother to let you come to aunty's to-night, or else come early to school and stop there to-morrow," she cried, "and I will teach you one of my pretty songs." [79]

Two days later, when Miss Grant said, "Now we will hear the hymns or verses," Hitty, with a timid air and a blushing face, took her stand on the floor. She cast a glance at Nelly, whose whole countenance was glowing with pleasure, and then repeated the following pretty hymn:—

"Who was that, dear mamma, who ate  
Her breakfast here this morn?  
With tangled hair and ragged shoes,  
And gown and apron torn?" [80]

"They call her lazy Jane, my dear;  
She begs her bread all day,  
And gets a lodging in the barn,  
At night, among the hay.

'For when she was a little girl,  
She loved her play too well;  
At school she would not mind her book,  
Nor learn to read and spell.

"Dear Jane," her mother oft would say,  
"Pray learn to work and read;  
Then you'll be able, when you're grown,  
To earn your clothes and bread."

But lazy Jenny did not care;  
She'd neither knit nor sew;  
To romp with naughty girls and boys  
Was all that she would do. [81]

So she grew up a very dunce;  
And when her parents died,  
She knew not how to teach a school,  
Nor work, if she had tried.

And now, an idle vagabond,  
She strolls about the streets;

And not a friend can Jenny find  
In any one she meets.

And now, dear child, should you neglect  
Your book or work again,  
Or play, when you should be at school,  
Remember Lazy Jane."

---

## CHAPTER VI.

[82]

### FRANKIE AND THE CRIPPLE.

ONE evening, near the close of the term, Nelly walked home in company with one of her schoolmates, and did not notice that her cousin went another way. One, two hours passed by, and Frankie did not make his appearance; and at last his mother became so anxious, that she sent his brother out to search for him.

[83]

Willie went to the square to see whether he had stopped at any of the stores, then, as he did not find him, to the houses of some of his schoolmates, but none of them had seen him since school.

"Where can he have gone?" said Willie to himself. "Perhaps he was at his teacher's, and has returned before this time."

He walked back toward home, looking around on every side.

[84]

He was passing a house, when he heard a noise in the yard, and looking through the trees, saw a company of boys standing round a curious little carriage, in which sat a boy who was talking to them. He ran eagerly into the yard, for he thought Frankie was among them.

As he drew nearer, he found it was not a boy in the carriage, but a man without legs. He had met with a dreadful accident, and been obliged to have both his legs cut off; and now he was trying to support himself by selling pictures, rolling himself in his carriage from house to house by means of a crank wheel. This was very hard work for him, especially when he was going uphill; sometimes he was obliged to get boys to push behind.

[85]

Willie saw his brother Frankie standing by the man, helping him hold his pictures, which he was exhibiting to the lady at the window. Frankie's face was very red, and great drops of perspiration stood on his forehead and nose.

[86]

"Why haven't you been home?" asked Willie. "Mother is very anxious about you."

"O, Willie, see this poor man!" exclaimed Frankie. "I have been pushing his wagon for him ever since school. He says he is a cripple, and can't walk at all. I'm going to push his carriage home now, as soon as he has sold pictures here, and then ask mamma to give him some supper."

[87]

"Why, Frankie Gray," called out the lady at the window, "is that you? Well, come and take this money, dear, to pay for three pictures."

When the carriage started, the boys all ran along; but none of them offered to assist in rolling it, except Willie and Frankie.

[88]

"You are tired," said Willie; "I'll push now." So Frankie took off his straw hat, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. His hair was wet through, and curled in small rings all over his head.

Mrs. Gray was looking anxiously from the window when they entered the avenue, and ran eagerly down to meet them.

"O, mamma!" cried Frankie; "I met a poor man. He has no legs, and can't walk at all. He has to wheel himself about in a little carriage, to get enough money to buy his food. It's very hard work, and so I waited to push it for him a little while. Was it naughty, mamma? Will you please to give him some supper?"

[89]

Mrs. Gray looked in her son's earnest, loving eyes, and all her displeasure against him vanished. She caught him to her heart, and kissed his cheek and lips. "Yes, my dear," she said, "you shall have the pleasure of giving him a good supper. But are you not hungry yourself? It is long past tea time."

[90]

"I did not think any thing about it, mamma," said Frankie, "I was so sorry for the poor man. There, Willie has pushed his carriage up to the back door. I wonder how he can get out."

In a few minutes the poor cripple had walked on his knees to the table, where Jane had set him a bountiful meal. Frankie seemed to consider the man his especial charge, and Mrs. Gray drew Willie into the entry, where, through the door, they could see what passed.

[91]

As soon as the food was before him, the cripple began to eat; and Frankie, who was seated opposite, so as to be ready to attend to his wants, gazed at him in great surprise. "Why!" said he,

[92]

"you didn't pray to God."

I suppose the dear child had never before seen any one begin to eat without first asking a blessing. Even when he and Nelly were playing tea, one of them always shut their eyes, and solemnly asked God to bless the food.

The man stared at him and went on eating, while Mrs. Gray smiled as she peeped through the door, to see how serious the boy looked. [93]

"Don't you love God?" asked Frankie.

"I dun know," said the man.

"I love him," continued the child, "and I should think you would;" then, after waiting a moment, he asked, "Did he cut your legs off?"

"No," said the man, laughing; "the doctor did it." [94]

"I'm glad of that," said Frankie. "You ought to love God, and pray to him every day. Perhaps, if you did, he would let your legs grow again."

Willie almost laughed aloud; but Frankie was so eager to do the man good, that he did not hear him.

"I am afraid you are a wicked man," he said, "if you don't pray any."

Mrs. Gray saw the cripple lay down his knife and fork, and gaze at the child; presently he spoke, but his voice trembled as he said, "I used to pray when I was a little shaver like you. My mother taught me." [95]

"Where is she now?" asked the boy.

"She has gone up there, long ago," said the man, softly pointing his finger upward.

"Well," said Frankie, earnestly, "you can't go to heaven and live with her there, unless you are a good man and love God. I used to be naughty once, but my mother whipped me to make me good." [96]

"That's too bad," said the cripple.

"No; it's just right. The Bible says she must. I'm trying now to be a good boy; and I wish you would try too."

"I guess there isn't much danger of you," said the man. "You're the most wonderful chap I ever saw." [97]

"I don't know what *chap* is," replied Frankie. "When I say my prayers to-night, I am going to ask God to give you a new heart; and then you can't help being good."

"I wish you would," whispered the man, drawing his shirt sleeve across his eyes.

He pushed his chair back from the table, saying, "I've had a first-rate supper; and I thank you and your mother a thousand times for all your kindness." [98]

Willie then stepped into the kitchen, and helped him from his chair into his carriage, at the back door. The man gave Frankie two of his handsomest pictures, saying, "Don't forget what you promised to do for me to-night. I have nobody else to pray for me now."

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## CHAPTER VII. [99]

### THE RAINY DAY.

MISS GRANT gave her scholars Wednesday and Saturday afternoons for play.

One Wednesday morning it rained very hard; and as Nelly was not quite well, her aunt thought it not best for her to go to school. Margie too had been unwell for a few days; so Mrs. Gray sent for her to come up to the nursery, that they might amuse themselves with their dolls. [100]

Margie was eleven years of age; but she liked to play as well as ever. She had Frankie's black Dinah for her child; and then she had a large rag baby of her own, while Nelly had great Fanny and two smaller dolls.

These they set up in a row, and played school; but just as they were ready to begin, Ponto walked into the room, and tipped the scholars over. [101]

"O Ponto, how naughty!" exclaimed Nelly, laughing aloud, as he carefully stepped over the pupils, who were lying on their faces. "Now let us begin again."

So Dinah, and Fanny, and Lily Gray, and Jenny, Margie's doll, were all placed in nice order again, their backs up against the wall; and after a few words, charging the scholars to be very good and say their lessons well, Nelly rang her aunt's small table bell, for them to take their [102]

places in the class.

But not one of the dollies stirred; and so Nelly took Dinah's hand, and led her out to the floor.

They played in this way for more than an hour, and then Nelly complained of the headache; and so her aunt sent her to lie down and rest till dinner. [103]

In the mean time, Frankie had put on his India rubber boots, and holding a large umbrella, started off for school, as happy as possible. He had never been absent or tardy a single day; and his teacher had promised to paint him a beautiful card, if he continued his good conduct to the end of the term.

The dear boy was very much pleased at this, and was trying in every way to be good. He trudged gayly on right through the puddles of water, the rain pattering upon his umbrella, and dripping off upon the ground. [104]

"I don't care," said Frankie to himself. "It's hard walking, I know; but I shall have a good time when I get there. My teacher will say, 'I knew you would be here, Frankie, because you belong to the Try Company.'" [105]

When he reached the schoolroom, he found no one there but his teacher and Hitty; and how do you think they came so safely in all the rain? Frankie laughed most heartily when they told him. They rode with the butcher in his covered cart.

They had kindled a nice fire in the open grate, and after the little fellow had stamped off the mud in the porch, he came in and stood by it to dry himself. [106]

The clock struck nine; but not one more of the scholars came, because it was only a half day, the teacher said; and so Frankie and Hitty stood before her, instead of going on the gallery, and repeated the Lord's Prayer.

Then she told them to bring their chairs close to the fire.

"What a funny little school!" said Frankie, laughing.

The teacher laughed too, and said, "I think we shall have a very pleasant time." She rang the bell, and Frankie marched out alone to his class. Then she rung it again, and Hitty read and spelt. She could read quite well now, and was getting to be a very good scholar. [107]

After this, Miss Grant said, "I must march with you, I suppose;" and so she stepped upon the circle; and they marched around and around, singing,— [108]

"This is the way we wash our face,"

the teacher washing hers as hard as any of them.

At recess she took a piece of paper from her desk, and drew a pretty picture of a dog carrying a basket in his mouth, and told Frankie to draw one like it.

Frankie was delighted, and said, "This dog is like Ponto, only that it has a short tail instead of a long one."

Miss Grant then cut a paper doll for Hitty, and afterward one for Nelly. She made paper dresses, and aprons, and capes, and paper hats for their heads; and was so much engaged when she saw how delighted the children were, that she forgot she was teaching school, and never rang the bell for the close of recess for more than an hour. [109]

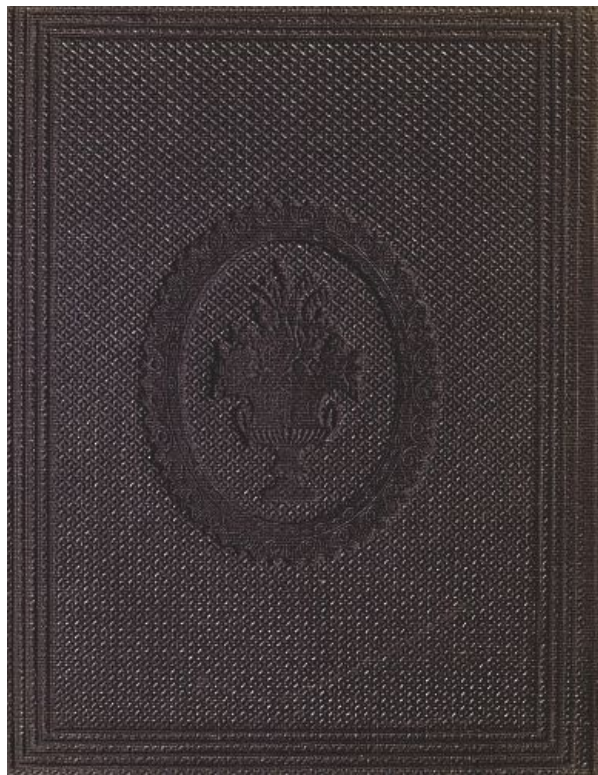
They all laughed merrily, and Frankie, clapping his hands, said, "I like rainy days best of all!" [110]

After recess, Miss Grant gave the children a lesson in geography, and then related a story of a boy, named Charles Huntington, who, by his honesty, uprightness, and faithfulness to his employer, became a great and good man. Having gained wealth, he gave freely of it to the poor and needy, and, after a long life of happiness and usefulness, died lamented by all who knew him.

Frankie listened attentively to the story, and then said, "I'm going to ask God to help me be like Mr. Charles Huntington." [111]

And here we must leave our young friend, with the hope that the promise of early youth was verified in his manhood; that the seed sown in his young and tender heart, and watered by his mother's tearful prayers, sprang up and bore abundant fruit.

As for his cousin Nelly, she continued with her aunt for many years, until her mother died, when she returned home to comfort and bless her father, and help train her little brother as she had herself been taught by her kind friends. She always entertained for Frankie the deep affection of a sister; and when he graduated from college with the first honors of his class, no one rejoiced or felt more proud of his success than his cousin Nelly. [112]



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**Transcriber's Notes:**

Obvious punctuation errors repaired. The quotation marks around the poem on [pages 79-81](#) was not repaired as the author's intent could not be ascertained. The marks were left as printed.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LITTLE FRANKIE AT SCHOOL \*\*\*

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