Title: Betty's Battles: An Everyday Story

Author: S. L. M.

Author of introduction, etc.: Mrs. Bramwell Booth

Illustrator: Gertrude M. Bradley

Release Date: January 1, 2011 [EBook #34805]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Chris Curnow, Julia Neufeld, Lindy Walsh and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at https://www.pgdp.net

"How can I ever go!" cries Betty
[See page 1

Betty's Battles

AN EVERYDAY STORY

By S. L. M.

Author of "Jabez the Unlucky"

Preface by Mrs. Bramwell Booth

Illustrated by Gertrude M. Bradley

THE SALVATIONIST PUBLISHING AND SUPPLIES, LTD.

London: 117-121 Judd Street, King's Cross, W.C. 1
Glasgow: 38 Bath Street
Melbourne: 69 Bourke Street
New York: 120 West Fourteenth Street
Toronto: Albert Street
Cape Town: Loop Street
Wellington: Cuba Street
Simla: The Mall

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY THE CAMPFIELD PRESS, ST. ALBANS

PREFACE

I have derived real pleasure from the reading of "Betty's Battles," because I am sure if we can only get it into the hands of other "Bettys," that they will be inspired and helped to take up arms in their own cause, and fight, as Betty did, for the love and peace and orderliness of their own dear homes.

I think a fact is revealed in this story which is not actually transcribed in black and white. It is that the Grandmother—through staying with whom Betty had been so much blessed and helped—bore the same surname as Betty's father. For if she had brought up Betty's mother, I am quite sure there never could have been so much difficulty in the home as was the case when Betty

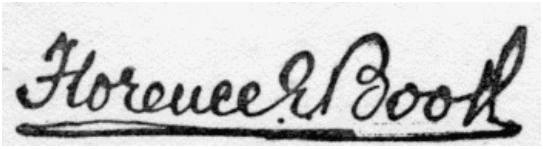
returned from her holiday!

This little book will, I believe, help our Young People to realise their responsibility towards their own homes and their fathers and mothers. [vi]

Nothing is more grievous at the present time in many countries where civilisation is most advanced, than the decay of all that which is precious and beautiful in home life. There are many causes which have contributed to this, to which I cannot allude here; but there is one remedy which by the blessing of God cannot fail. It is that our young women should be enlightened and trained to acknowledge and to carry their responsibilities for that work which God has committed to women.

Undoubtedly, it is God's arrangement that women should beautify and adorn the home. A home is an absolute necessity to her; and only by the retirement and protection of a good home, can women ever be fitted to train and mould the nation's youth. As a wise, far-seeing writer has said: "It is not too much to say that the prosperity or adversity of a nation rests in the hands of its women. They are the mothers of the men; they make and mould the characters of their sons, and the centre of their influence should be, as Nature intended it to be, the home. Home is the pivot round which the wheel of a country's highest statesmanship should revolve; the preservation of home, its interests, its duties and principles, should be the aim of every good citizen.... A happy [vii] home is the best and surest safeguard against all evil; and where home is not happy, there the Devil may freely enter and find his hands full. With women, and women only, this happiness in the home must find its foundation."

I believe in the successful mission of this little book, and wish it good speed.



Florence E. Booth

November 1907

CONTENTS

BETTY'S BATTLES

CHAPTER I [1]

"GOOD-BYE, GRANNIE"

"Oh, Grannie, how sweet it all is here! How can I ever go!" cries Betty.

Betty's bag stands by the gate. Betty herself roams restlessly about the little garden, while Betty's Grannie shades her gentle old eyes from the morning sunshine, and peers down the road.

Betty's bag is stout and bulgy; stuffed full of Grannie's home-made goodies, including a big plum-cake, and pots of delicious jam.

Betty herself is not stout at all; indeed, she is rather thin. She came to Grannie's country home, five weeks ago, to grow strong again after a bad illness; but though the moorland breezes have brought colour back to her cheeks, and strength to her long limbs, they have given no plumpness to either. [2]

Betty's Grannie—well, she *is* Grannie, a true Army Grannie, with a heart large enough to take in everybody's troubles, and a spirit wise enough to find a cure for most of them.

"The carrier's cart is a little later than usual," remarks Grannie, still peering down the road; "but don't worry, you've plenty of time to do the ten miles to the station; and Bob the carrier will see you safe into the express. Of course, your father will meet you when the train arrives, so you've nothing to trouble about, dear."

"Nothing to trouble about!" Betty turns round quickly. "Oh, Grannie, it's leaving *you* that troubles me so dreadfully—how can I go—how *can* I, when I'm only just beginning to understand?"

During these five weeks Betty has grown to love her dear good Grannie as she never loved anyone before, for, week by week, day by day, Grannie has been bringing her nearer and nearer to God.

"Last night, dear child, you gave your heart into the Lord's keeping," says Grannie softly, laying a loving hand on the girl's shoulder, "and He is with those who trust Him always, wherever they may go." [3]

"Yes, I know, Grannie; and while I'm with you it seems so easy to do right—and though you are so wise and good, you never get cross with me when I make mistakes, or answer too sharply—but, Oh, it is so different—so very different at home! Whatever shall I do without you?"

And Betty flings her arms round the old woman's neck, and clings to her as though she would never let her go.

"Your home is God's gift to you, Betty," says Grannie, gravely.

"My home? Grannie, it's *horrid* at home sometimes! The rooms are so stuffy, and dark, and untidy, and I hate untidy rooms! The children are always quarrelling, and they shout and stamp until my head aches and aches, and mother never seems to care. If only it were pretty and clean and fresh like this place—if only mother were like you!"

But Grannie's face grows graver still.

"Hush, hush, Betty! Indeed, you must not allow yourself to run on in this way. Remember, you have given yourself to God now, and you must do the work He puts into your hands bravely and well.

"Of course, it is easier to be cheerful and good when there is nothing to try us. Of course, it is [4] easier to carry a light burden than a heavy one. Your father is poor, and there are many little ones. Your mother has struggled through long years of weary work and anxiety. It is your part to be their help and comfort, Betty."

"I will try, indeed, I will; and I'll try to remember all you've told me, all the dear beautiful talks we've had together, and—and last night, Gran."

"That's my own darling!"

"Yes, I'm really going to be good now, and patient, and unselfish, and I'll help mother, and teach the children, and make our home as sweet as your home is. But, Oh, dear Grannie, if you could only see our home—it makes me so cross, for nobody even tries to help, and they are all so careless, and snap one up so."

Betty stops short, there is a queer little twinkle in Grannie's eye that is almost like a question.

"Oh, yes, I know. *I* am snappy sometimes; but they are all so unjust. When I try to put things straight a bit, Bob is sure to say I've lost some of his books; and, Grannie, it isn't 'interfering' is it to tell people of a thing when you know it's wrong?" [5]

"It may be 'interfering' even to put things straight, dear, unless you are very careful to let love do the seeing, and speaking, and doing.

"Courage, Betty! You were very weak and listless when you came five weeks ago; and your heart was heavy and sad. Now you are my own strong Betty again. And the Lord has come to dwell in your heart and take its sadness away.

"Let Him reign in your heart, Betty; give Him the whole of it. In His strength you will learn to

check the 'snappy' words when they rise to your lips; to conquer the discontented thoughts and careless habits. You will learn to be happy and bright, and to make all those around you happy too."

But Betty thinks, "Clearly Grannie doesn't know how horrid things are at home sometimes; if mother would only let me manage altogether it wouldn't be half so difficult."

"The carrier's cart, my child!"

Betty lifts her head from Grannie's shoulder and hastily wipes her eyes.

The cart stops; the bulgy bag, the paper parcel, and big bunch of sweet-smelling, old-fashioned flowers are lifted in. Betty turns to Grannie for the final kiss. [6]

"Remember, dear, the little crosses of daily life, borne bravely and cheerfully for Jesus' sake, will make you a true Soldier, and win a crown of glory by and by," whispers Grannie, as she presses her grandchild in her kind arms.

Betty nods, and then turns her head away very quickly; she dare not trust herself to speak.

The cart moves away. Yes, now, indeed, her holiday is over!

The blue sky, the golden gorse, the fresh, sweet air of the moors, they are still around her, but they belong to her no more.

Through a mist of tears she looks back at the little cottage where she has been so happy; Grannie still stands by the gate—round that turn in the road beyond is the village, and the little Salvation Army Hall, where Grannie goes every Sunday.

It was at the close of the Meeting last night that she gave her heart to God. Then afterwards, in her dear little bedroom, with her head buried in Grannie's lap, she felt so strong, so sure—and now?

"Oh, dear; Oh, dear," she sobs, "it is all so different at home!"

CHAPTER II [7]

HOME AGAIN

Betty dries her tears, and looks up.

She is in the train now, speeding towards the great, smoky city, where she has lived nearly all her life.

She watches the fields and woods flying past, and her thoughts are sad.

Already Grannie seems far away. The little white cottage is hidden among those great moors yonder. She can see them still, although they are growing fainter every minute, fading into the blue of the sky.

"Dear Grannie! how good she has been to me—how happy I have been with her!"

She pulls a little Bible out of her pocket. Grannie put it into her hands as she gave her the first kiss this morning.

"I will read it every morning and evening," she thinks, "just as Grannie does. When I see the words I shall remember the very sound of her voice and the look in her dear eyes. That will help me so much." [8]

The thought comforts her, and she looks about more cheerfully.

"Grannie has promised to write to me, and I'm to write to her. How I shall love her letters! I know just how she'll write—she is so wise and strong, and yet so loving and kind. But what sort of letters shall I write to Grannie?

"Why, of course, I must tell her all my troubles, and how hard I am fighting—*so* hard! Then she must know everything about the wonderful victories I mean to win. How pleased she will be! I shall have plenty of battles to fight, for home is horrid sometimes—it really is.

"There's Bob; when Bob is in one of his teasing fits it's almost impossible to keep one's temper. But *I* mean to do it. Bob shall have to own that he *can't* make me cross.

"Then I do believe Clara is the most trying servant in the whole world. Well, I'm going to teach her that a dirty face and torn apron are a real disgrace, and I'll show her how to keep the kitchen just as Grannie keeps hers. [9]

"I do wish I could persuade mother to keep the sitting-room tidier, and finish her house-work in the morning, and do her hair before dinner. If she'd only let me manage everything, I believe I

should get on much better.

"Jennie and Pollie must learn to sew, and Harry to read, and Lucy really must leave her perpetual poring over books and take an interest in her home like other girls. And father—dear old father!—he shall have all his meals at the proper time, instead of scrambling through them at the last minute; and I'll keep his socks mended, and his handkerchiefs ironed. Yes, Grannie's quite right—there are heaps of battles to fight every day. I'll fight them, too; I'll manage everything; I'll be more than conqueror! Oh, how surprised and glad she will be!"

And Betty sinks back in her seat with quite a self-satisfied smile.

And still the fields fly past; they are flatter now; the woods have disappeared, and every now and then the engine rushes screaming through the station of a large town.

Betty eats her lunch of Grannie's apples and home-made cake. She is sad no longer. The battle-field is before her; she is eager for the fight. [10]

"I'm *glad* now that things are so tiresome at home; there is so much more for me to put right. What a change I'll make in everything!"

All her doubts have vanished; she is sure of success. As for failure and defeat, that is clearly impossible!

It is late in the afternoon before long lines of houses, stretching away in every direction, begin to warn her that she is nearing home.

Be sure her head is out of the window long before the train draws up at the well-known platform, and her eyes are eagerly straining to catch the earliest possible glimpse of father's face. For Betty loves her father dearly.

There he is! The platform is crowded, but she sees him directly. He sees her, too, and, pushing his way through the crowd, he opens the carriage door, and she springs into his arms.

"Aye, Betty, my girl, I'm glad to see you back again!" he says; that is all. But John Langdale is a man of few words, and this is a great deal from him.

[11]

"How did you leave your Grannie?"

He shoulders her bag, and makes his way through the pile of luggage, the bustling porters, and anxious passengers, Betty following as best she can. [12]

Her head feels giddy and bewildered after the long train journey, and the noise, and hurry, and smoky air, all is so different from the quiet country scenes she left eight hours ago.

Her father does not speak again until they are safely seated on the top of a homeward-bound bus; and even then, before he speaks a word, he turns to his daughter, and looks searchingly in her face.

There is a change in Betty's face that tells of more than the mere return of health and strength.

"Aye, well, my girl!" he says softly.

Betty smiles confidingly into his eyes, and nestles closer to his side.

He half smiles in return, and then turns away with a sigh. For he thinks, "It is the country air and her Grannie's care that have made such a change in my Betty, and now she will have neither."

"Well, how did you leave your Grannie?" he says aloud.

"Oh, ever so well! And she sent lots of love and messages—and other things—for the children, you know. The other things are in the bag. Be careful you don't smash the jam-pots! I'll tell you [13] the messages as I remember them. And the love—Oh, father, Grannie showed me what real love is; and, father, I——" Betty comes to a full stop.

"Well, well, my girl, what is it?" asks her father, turning his eyes inquiringly to her face.

"Grannie has taught me so many things," she goes on, in a low voice, "and somehow, without saying much, she made me understand how selfish I have been; how through all these years I have been trying to do without God. And—and she took me to The Army Meetings, and last night I—I asked God to forgive me and make me as good as Grannie."

Betty's voice has sunk to the merest whisper, but father hears it above all the roar of the traffic.

"That's right, my girl. God bless you, Betty!" he says, heartily, and now at last a bright smile lights up his careworn face.

"Here we are!" says father, presently, and he signals to the driver. The bus pulls up at the entrance to a small street, father shoulders the bag, and Betty, scrambling down after him, soon finds herself standing on the shabby little front doorstep of her home. [14]

A narrow, dull street it is; closely packed with dull houses, all built in one pattern, all alike grey with smoke, all looking as though no breath of spring air, or gleam of spring sunshine, could ever find their way through the close-shut windows.

All too swiftly Betty's thoughts travel back to the white cottage in the hills, to the sunny garden, the fresh moorland breezes.

The contrast is too much for her; a big lump seems to rise in her throat. Her eyes fill with tears; her good resolutions fade away.

She doesn't want to be at home—Oh, that she were with Grannie now!

Father has found his key at last, and fits it into the lock. At the same moment there is a rush of noisy feet within, the loud clamour of excited voices. Directly the door is flung open Betty is surrounded by a boisterous crowd of younger brothers and sisters—they seize her, they dance round her, shouting out their rough welcome.

"We knew it was you! Mother, here's our Betty! Come along, Betty." And they almost drag her [15] down the passage into the family sitting-room.

Tea is set on the round table. Betty's quick eye notices that the tray is slopped with milk, and the stained cloth askew. "How different from Grannie's tea-table," she thinks bitterly.

"Where's mother?" she asks, after kissing her brothers and sisters all round.

"She was rather late to-day, and so she's only just gone upstairs to tidy herself," explains Lucy. Lucy is next in age to Betty. "You mustn't go up, she'll be down in a minute."

"This bag feels pretty heavy," exclaims Bob, the eldest boy, "anything good in it, Betty?" and he begins fumbling at the fastening.

"My flowers—Oh, Bob, do be careful!" cries Betty, rushing to the rescue of her daffodils and wallflowers. How sweet and fresh they looked this morning, how crushed and faded now!

"You careless boy; you've broken the stalks off ever so many! Put the bag down. Oh, dear, why isn't mother here! Father's washing his hands, I suppose. Lucy, do ask mother to make haste; here's the kettle boiling away, and the tea not in the pot or anything." Betty is growing more [16] irritable every minute; but now mother appears.

"Well, Betty, here you are at last, then."

Mrs. Langdale is a large, fair-haired woman. Her gown is only half-fastened, and stray wisps of hair are hanging round her face. This is nothing unusual, for Betty's mother is scarcely ever neatly dressed.

Betty knows this well enough. It would be well if she understood the look of love in her mother's eyes as clearly as she sees the untidiness of her mother's dress.

"Well, Betty, I'm glad to have you back again, that I am; there's so much to be done in this house, and time slips away so. Now, to-day, I really made up my mind to have everything ready by the time you came in, but what with one thing and another—Pollie, take your fingers out of the sugar-bowl, you naughty child—Jennie, fetch the knives, they're in the scullery, I forgot them; make

haste now! Can't you see your sister wants her tea?"

She pushes a few loose tags of hair out of her eyes, and begins making the tea, talking all the time.

"Well, my dear, did your Grannie send any message to me? What sort of journey did you have? [17]
How did those boots wear? Now did you——?"

"Betty's too tired to talk just yet, I think," interposes her father, coming in that moment. "She'll tell us everything after tea."

Indeed, Betty does feel dreadfully tired. The noise and confusion bewilder her. Every one seems to be talking at once. It is all so different from the quiet orderliness of Grannie's home.

The knives are brought at last, the tea made, and for awhile the younger children are too busy with their bread and butter even for talk.

Tea over, however, the tumult begins afresh. The tea-things are just pushed to one side of the table, and then mother begins to unpack the bag.

Shrieks of delight greet the various packages, the table is soon strewn with Grannie's good things. The paper is torn from the cake; Bob seizes on a great pot of blackberry jam, bumps against a chair and drops the pot with a crash to the floor. The sticky mess, mixed with broken glass, spreads slowly over the carpet. [18]

"There you go, you tiresome boy!" cries mother fretfully. "Always smashing something, always spoiling things. If you eat a bit of it you'll swallow broken glass, and serve you right. Lucy, ask Clara for a duster and pail of water to mop up the mess. Who told you to touch that cake, Pollie? Jennie, how dare you meddle with the honey—you'll overset that next! I don't believe there ever were such rude, tiresome, disobedient children! I'm sure I don't know what to do with you all. Harry, Jennie, Pollie, I *won't* have that cake eaten to-night! You shall all just pack off to bed."

The younger children sober down a little at this threat, and presently, between coaxings, and slappings, and the promise of unlimited cake to-morrow, they go off noisily to bed.

How thankful Betty is when she manages at last to escape to her own little room, and lays her weary head on her pillow!

She is utterly tired out. Too tired to remember any of her good resolutions; too tired even to think.

CHAPTER III [19]

THE BATTLES BEGIN

The morning is bright and clear, and just one glint of sunshine has actually found its way into the room. Betty sits up in bed. She has slept soundly all night, and feels thoroughly refreshed.

Grannie's daffodils and wallflowers, carefully placed in a large glass on the little toilet-table, have lifted their drooping heads, and look almost as bright as they did yesterday morning in their far-away country home.

"The battle is to begin to-day," Betty thinks, as she springs lightly out of bed. "Yes, to-day I am to begin to change everything in this untidy, stuffy old house—to-day I must commence the fight that is not to end until I have made it a really bright, cosy home.

"Half-past six! I shouldn't wonder if Clara hasn't got up yet; she's such a lazy girl in the mornings. [20]
Never mind, I'll soon shame her out of that. One of the very first things I have to do is to make every one in this house understand that they *must* get up early in the morning."

Betty's mind is so full of this grand idea that she quite forgets to ask the Lord for His blessing and guidance during the day.

Lucy is sleeping peacefully on her pillow by the side of the bed that Betty has just left. This will never do.

"Come, Lucy, wake up!" and she shakes her by the arm.

Lucy opens her blue eyes, and blinks at her sleepily. "It isn't time to get up yet; it can't be," she murmurs.

"Yes, it is. You've all got into fearfully lazy habits in this house. While I was with Grannie I always got up at half-past six."

"Oh, dear!" sighs Lucy, ruefully.

"Now, make haste. Those children are going to be *properly* washed and combed before they go to

school this morning; it's a disgrace to see them sometimes."

"Well, I suppose it is," admits Lucy. "But aren't you dreadfully tired, Betty, after yesterday?"

"If I am, I'm not going to let that stand in the way of doing my duty," answers Betty loftily. [21]

"Oh, dear!" sighs Lucy, feeling quite guilty because she would so much rather stay in bed one extra half-hour.

But the stern resolution in Betty's face shows no signs of relenting, and she begins to dress.

Betty splashes vigorously in the cold water, combs her hair back until not a single hair is out of place, and runs downstairs.

Clara, the little maid-of-all-work, is sleepily laying the kitchen fire. Her dirty apron has a great "jag" all across the front, and her tumbled cap is set all askew on her mass of dusty-looking hair.

"What, the fire not alight yet? Really, Clara, this is too bad. How can you expect to get through your day's work well when you begin it so badly! Now just get that kettle to boil as soon as possible, and I'll prepare the porridge and haddock.

"And, Clara, your face is as smutty as anything. Why don't you wash it properly? And your hair's just dreadful."

Clara tosses her head indignantly, and mutters something about "never having time for anything in this house." [22]

"There's plenty of time for everything; it's all because you manage so badly," says Betty severely. "Where's the porridge-pot? Not cleaned; how shameful! And here's the frying-pan with all the fat in it. How can you expect to be ready in time at this rate?"

Clara mutters that "Everything would be right enough if some folks would let her alone."

Betty takes no notice of this just now, for Lucy appearing at this moment, she orders her off upstairs to wash and dress the younger children.

By dint of a great deal of most energetic bustling on Betty's part, and sulky help from Clara, the breakfast is actually ready by eight o'clock, and the boys and younger girls sent off to school in good time. Betty feels greatly elated. "What a difference already!" she thinks.

And father, coming in for breakfast, she hurries down to the kitchen for his fish and tea.

Returning with the tray, she meets her mother coming downstairs.

"What, Betty, up already? I made sure you would like to lie in bed a bit and hurried down early on purpose." [23]

"*Hurried* down, mother! Why, I've been up since half-past six, and just sent the children off to school."

"Dear me. Is it really so late? I made sure the clock struck eight only a few minutes ago."

"Half an hour, at least, mother," answers Betty, sharply.

"You're going by the kitchen clock—that's always wrong, you know."

"Everything *is* in this house, it seems to me," snaps Betty, and she carries father's breakfast into the sitting-room. Mother follows her.

"Where's your father? Why, you don't mean to say you've finished breakfast? Good gracious me, Betty, the idea of having the window open! What a shocking draught, enough to blow one away, and I've had the face-ache all this week. Shut it down directly!"

"It's a lovely fresh morning for this place, and air's better than anything. Grannie always has *her* windows open," answers Betty in quite a hard voice.

"Oh, I daresay; the country's different, and your Grannie is one of the strongest people I ever saw." And Mrs. Langdale glances nervously at the window. [24]

"But, mother, the room was horribly stuffy, and Grannie says——"

"How dare you set your Grannie up against me in this way? If that's all you learned by being with her you'd far better have stayed at home."

"But *any* doctor would tell you——"

"Look here, Betty, unless you close that window at once I won't stay in the room!" cries Mrs. Langdale, red with anger.

Betty's face flushes also, and she bangs the window down in a fury.

"There! And anybody who knows anything will tell you that's thoroughly wrong!" she cries.

Perhaps so, Betty. But is there nothing wrong about your method of trying to put the mistake right?

Betty sits down hopelessly.

She has been home just a week now, and things have gone from bad to worse.

She has tried hard—in her own fashion, of course—she has been up early every morning, and bustled about all day. Yet all her grand ideas have resulted in nothing. It seems to her, as she sits there on the shabby little sofa, surrounded with piles of unmended stockings, that the members [25] of her family are determined to fight against any kind of improvement.

"They won't have the windows wide open; they won't get up early, or try to be tidy," she thinks, and her heart grows sore and bitter as she remembers the fruitless struggles of the past two or three days.

"What *is* the use of trying when no one seems to care whether things are properly done or not?"

She glances round the room. The carpet is worn and frayed; the book-shelves dusty, the curtains faded and torn. Her eyes rest on the piles of unmended stockings. They have been there more than a week already.

"How horrid it all is—how perfectly horrid! Why can't mother see that the whole house is a regular disgrace, and the children too—with their dirty hands and rough hair, and rude, noisy ways? But they won't obey me, though I scold them ever so—and no wonder, with mother always ready to take their part, and tell me not to be hard on them! Of course, they go away and forget everything directly. If mother would only leave them to me, I'd *make* them mind!

"Eleven o'clock striking, and mother hasn't been down to the kitchen to arrange about the dinner [26] yet! There'll be nothing ready for the children again when they come in from school; and Clara will just muddle through her work as usual. Oh, dear, how sick I am of the whole thing!

"If I could only live with Grannie—or even go out all day, and earn my living like other girls. I'm quick at figures. If I could be a clerk in the City, or something; at least, I should be away from this muddle most of the day. I should be independent, too, and able to buy things for the house when I see they're wanted—and that would help father. Nobody really understands me here, except father.

"Bob was cruel to speak to me as he did this morning; and what I said was perfectly true—his hands *did* look as though he hadn't washed them for a week. It was my duty to tell him that, and he had no right to fly in a rage, and say I was nagging. Nagging, indeed! Just because I told him that it was disgraceful and disgusting for a big boy to go about with dirty hands!

[27]

"They make a good heap, don't they?"

"A quarter past, and mother still over the newspaper—and she told me she wouldn't be ten minutes! It's too bad. I know just what will happen. There'll be nothing ready, and Clara will be [28]

sent out for some tinned salmon or something at the last minute. No, I won't have it!"

And Betty jumps up, all aglow with anger, and running down the passage, flings open the little front parlour door.

"Mother!"—very sharply—"don't you know how late it is?"

Mrs. Langdale looks up rather vacantly. "Late? how can you say so? I'm sure I haven't been here over a quarter of an hour."

"You've been here a whole hour, and if you don't make the pudding at once the children will have to do without altogether!"

"How you do hurry and flurry one, Betty. Well, I'll see to it."

Betty goes back to the sitting-room.

"I suppose I must begin at something," she sighs wearily—"not that it makes much difference."

Again her eyes fall on the stockings. Hours of hard work would not get rid of that hopeless pile.

On the first evening after her return home, whilst as yet all her good resolutions were hot in her, she had mended and put away all father's socks; but since then there has seemed no time for [29] anything.

"I must mend all those stockings to-morrow," mother has said each night; but there the matter has ended.

Shall she mend some now? or dust? or wash the curtains? or——

The door is flung open, and Clara comes in with a fresh armful of socks and stockings, barely dry from the kitchen.

"Missis says I'm to put these with the rest," she giggles, in her irritating way. "They make a good heap, don't they?"

That is the last straw. Betty waits until she is out of the room, and then gives way altogether.

"I can't bear it—I just can't!" she whispers, tapping her foot on the floor. "Grannie didn't know what it would be like when she said all that about loving one's home. I must get away from it—I must!"

The door opens again. "Oh, Betty, I just want you to—why, child, what is the matter? Are you going to be ill again?"

"No, of course not!" Betty's heart had grown softer as she thought of her Grannie; but she hardens it directly she hears her mother's voice. [30]

"No, only everything's so horrid at home that I mean to ask father to let me learn typing."

"Betty, how can you be so ungrateful! Just because things are a bit behindhand—and that through your being away so long! There, I didn't think it of you!" And Mrs. Langdale goes angrily out of the room.

Betty had certainly not thought of it in this light. Indeed, she has been thinking of little lately, save how to get things done in her own way.

"What could Grannie mean by talking as though I could become a real power for good in my home?" she thinks bitterly. "I've tried, and tried, and things only get worse and worse; and I've made Bob angry, and the children cross, and vexed mother besides. Grannie must have been wrong after all!"

Was Grannie wrong? Or is it just possible there is still something wrong with Betty herself?

CHAPTER IV [31]

BETTY'S BIRTHDAY

"To-day is my birthday."

That is Betty's first thought when she awakes next morning, and the remembrance soothes and pleases her.

"Surely, Bob will not be cross with me to-day. Surely, father will smile when he kisses me, and mother will make a real effort to finish her work earlier. But Grannie's letter will be best of all—a long letter it is certain to be, and, perhaps, a box of sweet country flowers besides—those I brought from her little garden are all dead now."

Betty's heart feels lighter than it has for some days past, and she runs downstairs quite briskly.

How eagerly she listens for the postman's knock as she helps Clara prepare the breakfast! "Ah, he's in the street now—I can hear his 'rat-tats'—they're coming nearer. Now he's next door——" [32]

Alas, for poor Betty! The next knock is at the house on the other side.

She darts upstairs. No, there is no letter on the door-mat; there is no letter coming to her at all! Grannie has forgotten the day. Betty could cry with disappointment and vexation.

But this is only the beginning.

Jennie, Pollie, and Harry never remember any birthdays save their own—she had expected nothing from them. But Lucy and Bob, it is hard indeed that *they* should take no notice of this all-important day which makes her just fifteen years old.

Worse still, Bob is in a thoroughly bad humour; and Lucy, having fallen asleep after Betty awakened her this morning, is ashamed of herself, and eats her breakfast in silence.

Not a word does Betty say to remind them. She is longing intensely for a birthday greeting, but nothing would make her confess it.

"I shouldn't have forgotten *their* birthdays," she thinks bitterly. "I thought they didn't really care much about me, and this proves it."

"You needn't look at me like that!" cries Bob sharply. "I shan't wash my hands any oftener for you, Miss Particular, in spite of all your naggings!" and he snatches up his cap, and clatters out of the room, banging the door after him. [33]

Soon after father comes in for his breakfast. Betty looks up eagerly. Alas! he also has forgotten.

After this, mother's forgetfulness is not surprising. She, too, takes her breakfast almost in silence, and disappears into the kitchen rather earlier than usual.

Betty's heart is very sore as she sets about her morning work. Her head aches, and she feels tired all over. She has just tidied the fireplace when mother enters.

"The kitchen-range is smoking again, Betty. I'm not going to have any more of it, so I've sent Clara for the sweep."

Betty is horrified. "Why, mother, there's no dinner cooked—not even a bit of pudding!"

"Well, we'll have to make do with this fire—it can't be helped."

This is too much. Betty knows what "having the sweep in" means.

"Why couldn't you wait until to-morrow?" she breaks out angrily. "It's too bad—that it is! Isn't everything horrid enough already without this?" [34]

And she covers her face with her hands, and bursts into a passion of tears.

"Why, Betty—Betty, for goodness' sake, don't—what can be the matter?"

"It's my birthday!" cries Betty, "and you've all forgotten—and I *did* think things would be better to-day, and now they'll be worse than ever!"

"Your birthday, child? So it is, I declare! Well, I can't think how I came to forget it! If I'd thought now, I would have tidied up a bit—but there's so much to do in this house—just no end to it, and yet there's no peace, and everything in a muddle——"

"It's all because no one *wants* things to be better!" sobs Betty.

"If you mean me, Betty, let me tell you you've no right to speak like that to your mother——"

"I mean everybody! I just hate everything, *everything*!" cries Betty, stamping her foot, and sobbing so wildly that Mrs. Langdale is alarmed.

She forgets her own grievance directly, in true motherly anxiety.

"Come, come, Betty, don't give way like this; you've been working too hard, my dear; keeping too close to the house. Clara and I will manage the sweep; just put on your hat, and go for a walk." [35]

"I can't, my head aches dreadfully," sobs Betty.

"Then you must lie down a bit. Come, come, you'll make yourself quite ill."

Betty's head is aching so badly now that she can scarcely think. Presently, lying on her bed, she grows calmer.

What a dreadful failure she has made of it all! She has fought and struggled all the week, only to meet defeat at the end. What would Grannie say? How rudely she spoke to mother just now—Grannie wouldn't approve of that.

"But I couldn't help it, and I can't do anything to make things better, or the house nicer. The harder I try, the worse it all gets. I don't see any way out of it at all, but earning my own living, and letting them all go on as they like. I wonder what Grannie would say to such a plan? Well, I can't ask her, she's too far away; and, Oh, dear, dear, she's forgotten my birthday!"

Worn out with crying and pain, presently Betty falls asleep.

When she has slept for about an hour, a loud "rat-tat" at the street door awakens her. She jumps [36]
up. The postman! Of course, she had forgotten the twelve o'clock post. She flies downstairs, still dizzy with sleep. Mother and Clara have not heard the knock, they are busy in the kitchen.

A letter and a parcel. Betty almost snatches them from the postman's hands, and scans them eagerly.

Yes, it is Grannie's well-known hand-writing. How could she think dear Grannie would forget her!

Betty hurries upstairs with her treasures. "A book—Grannie has sent me a book—that's just like Grannie; she knows I like reading better than anything."

She strips off the brown paper with eager fingers. The book looks quite delightful; it is prettily bound, and nicely illustrated. Betty turns over the leaves rapidly, and her eyes fall on a picture that attracts her attention directly.

By the open door of a rose-clad cottage stands a little maiden. She wears the quaint close cap and quilted petticoat of the olden time, and is eagerly looking at something which the dear old dame in front of her holds tightly clasped beneath the fingers of her right hand.

Somehow, the cottage reminds Betty of Grannie's cottage. The old dame is certainly rather like [37]
Grannie, and the girl is, Oh, just about her own age!

Did Grannie send the book because she also saw the resemblance?

"I must find out," thinks Betty. "Mother doesn't want me—she said so—and my head still aches."

So she lies down again, and begins to read, "The Talking-Bird: A Wonder-Tale."

"It's a real lovely story; I can see that. I was rather afraid that a book from Grannie might be rather dry—she's so *very* good."

Poor Betty! She has a great deal to learn yet, that is evident. Really good people are not dull; books that are good and true can certainly never be "dry." Betty wants to be good, she wants to walk in the Narrow Way, and follow her Saviour faithfully; but it all seems such uphill work; doing one's duty is such a tiresome, wearisome business; trying to be good is such a dull, uninteresting affair.

Her heart is still cold, you see; the fire of the Holy Spirit has not yet warmed it into loving life.

So Betty begins to read. The rose-clad cottage looks sweet enough, but Betty soon finds that [38]
there is very little sweetness in the maiden's life. Poor Gerda's lot is a hard one. She is always at work. She must spin, and bake, and milk cows; yet her stepmother never seems pleased with her.

Gerda's two brothers are out all day cutting wood in the great pine forests, but though she knits them warm stockings, and tries her best to cook them nice suppers, they never give her a smile, or a kiss, or a loving word. And Gerda says to herself:—

"It does not matter how I work, or what I do, I can never please anybody at all."

Betty pauses a moment. "How very like *my* experience!" she thinks. "Of course, I have to do different work—mend horrid stockings for Bob instead of knitting them, and sweep and dust instead of spinning; but the effect of it all is just the same, and Bob is exactly like that. I do all I can to please him. I always make the porridge myself, because he says it's 'lumpy' when Clara does it, but never a word of thanks do I get. Why, he couldn't even trouble to remember that to-day is my birthday, and I saved up for weeks and weeks to buy *him* a nice present on his birthday! It's too bad!" [39]

"Before Gerda's father married again," Betty reads on, "she had been allowed to manage the house as she pleased" ("I wish I was"), "but now everything is changed. Gerda loved to rise with the sun, and scour the kitchen floor with white sand before breakfast, and polish all the brass pans until they shone like gold" ("I don't sand floors or polish pans, but that's just how I feel about getting my work done early"), "but her stepmother liked hot cakes for breakfast, and as she would not rise early enough to bake them herself, Gerda had to leave her work and cook cakes instead; and because no one seemed to care for her, or notice how hard she had to work, she grew more discontented, and fretful, and unhappy every day; and meantime all around her became more difficult and sad."

"Oh, dear, that's exactly like me!" sighs Betty.

Then she goes on to read how a strange little old woman, in a big red cloak, came to the cottage door one day. Her eyes were blue as the sky, and she carried a flat basket slung over one arm.

"Gerda thought she had come to sell ribbons and pins, and turned to shut the door; but the old dame stopped her smilingly. 'I have come to *give*, and not to sell,' she said. [40]

"'You have been fretting, my child, and it's troubled you are, and sore and bitter you are feeling against those who fret you. Eh, my dear, I'll soon better that!' and her blue eyes seemed to dance with the knowledge of some happy secret.

"But Gerda stood quite dumb with amazement.

"Then the old dame raised her folded hand towards Gerda, and unclasped it a little.

"'Oh, how sweet!' she cried. There, in the old woman's hand, nestled a tiny bird. Its feathers were red as the heart of a rose, and its eyes shone like diamonds.

"'It is for you. My bird will stay with you as long as you need him, and smooth all the fret of your life away.'

"Gerda stretched out eager hands towards the beautiful bird. 'Oh,' she cried, 'if that could only come true!'

[41]

"'Oh, how sweet!' she cried."

"'It will come true, my child, if you do as I bid you. You must allow my bird to perch on your shoulder, and be with you wherever you go. He is a talking bird, and whenever you are tempted to give an angry answer, or speak a bitter word'—Gerda hung her head; alas! she knew that this [42] would be very often—'you must let the bird speak for you. Only do this, and in a few months you will be the happiest girl in the world.'

"'But what will people say?' stammered Gerda, quite bewildered.

"'Directly my bird touches your shoulder he will become invisible; *you* will feel him, but no one will see him; and when he speaks, his voice will be so like yours that no one can tell the difference. Your part is to keep down the angry words that rise to your lips. My sweet bird will do the rest,' and she kissed the bird's bright eyes, and placed him gently on Gerda's shoulder, and, behold! though she could feel the light fluttering of feathers against her cheek, she could see nothing."

"What can be the meaning of this—what is the bird going to do?" thinks Betty, as she hastily turns the page.

Betty has quite forgotten her headache, and reads on:—

"Just at that moment, Gerda saw her little pet kid jump quite over the wall of the yard where her father's fiercest watch-dog was chained. 'Oh, it will be killed!' she cried, and ran swiftly to the rescue. But when she returned with the kid in her arms, the old woman had gone. 'And I never [43] thanked her! You tiresome creature—it was all your fault!'

"That is what she began to say as she lifted her hand to beat the poor little kid, but at the same instant she felt the invisible bird fluttering at her cheek again, and, lo and behold! a voice—a voice exactly like her own, only much sweeter—struck in ere she could finish the sentence: 'Poor little kid, you knew no better, and I am sure the old woman will understand I did not mean to be ungrateful—she had such kind, wise eyes.'

"Certainly the words were much wiser than those she meant to use herself."

That is only the beginning. The story goes on to tell how Gerda's life is altered altogether through

the gentle, loving words spoken by the bird in her stead; how her brothers grow to love her, and are never so happy as when they can give her pleasure, bringing her home all sorts of treasures at the end of their day's work. Lilies from the valley, wild strawberries from the hill, honey from the woodbee's nest; how her stepmother becomes kind and thoughtful, and her father calls her the sunshine of the home—and all this because the old dame gave her that wonderful speaking-bird! [44]

Betty reads to the end, and closes the book with a sigh.

"What a pity such things can't be true! Now, if *I* had a lovely rose-coloured bird who would perch on my shoulder, and always say exactly the right thing in my place when I felt cross, or stupid, how different everything would be!

"Dear me, what nonsense I am talking! It's just a pretty child's story—that is all—and I can't imagine why Grannie sent it to me. I haven't read her letter yet. Dear old Grannie—*she* didn't forget my birthday. It was unkind of the others; just too bad, after all I've done. Well, I'll see how they like it themselves. I certainly shan't worry much about presents for other people's birthdays, if they won't even take the trouble to remember mine!"

Betty rises, and, taking Grannie's letter to the window, begins to read.

What love there is in the very first words—what a warm birthday greeting! Betty's eyes grow misty as she reads, and she holds the page to her lips for a moment.

"Grannie *really* loves me," she murmurs. [45]

"It is a long letter. Ah, here is something about the book! Dear me, what can Grannie mean?"

"'Has my Betty guessed the *name* of Gerda's speaking-bird yet? Has she discovered the secret of the happiness that came to the little maiden of the story?' ("No, indeed; how could I?") 'Does Gerda's story fit my dear Betty's own case?' ("Part of it does, of course.") 'Yes, for my Betty has troubles and trials; my Betty is tempted to think her own life is very hard and dull; is tempted to give up trying; is perhaps thinking of getting rid of the worry and fret by turning away from it all, and going out to work for herself?' ("Now, how could Grannie have found that out? I'm sure *I* never said a word about being a typist while I was with her!")

"'The bird's name was *Love*, Betty. The wonderful change in Gerda's life was brought about by pure, unselfish love.

"'In all this world there is no force so strong as love, Betty—true love; the love that suffereth long and is kind; love that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; love that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; the love that our Lord Jesus Christ gives to all those who truly love and follow Him.'" [46]

Love! Betty looks rather blank. Does Grannie mean that she isn't loving people enough?

"'The little maiden in the story had been troubled and discontented, but after she listened to the voice of the Spirit of Love, and let it speak for her, all her trials vanished away. The story of Gerda's Bird is only a pretty tale, but, Betty, you are one of God's soldiers now, and the Spirit of Love has come to abide with you; to dwell in your heart, and speak to your soul. The Holy Spirit, dear, the Heavenly Dove; the Lord's best gift to you.

"'Listen to it, Betty; let its voice speak for you. When sharp, unloving words rise to your lips, keep them fast closed until the Love within you can make itself heard.

"'You want a happy home, my child; you long for the love of all those around you, but it is only by bringing the Lord into all your thoughts about your home, that it can be really happy—only by loving others very much that you can win true love in return.'"

For a long time Betty stands by the window, thinking, thinking as she has never done before. [47]

"Is that *really* the way out of it? Can love, and keeping one's temper, make all that difference? Of course, I know that Bob would like me better if I didn't scold when he is rough and careless; and I'm sure mother would rather I didn't worry her about the house being so untidy and badly managed. But then, if I *don't* scold and worry, how can I get things into proper order?"

Suddenly a bright thought, like a ray of pure light, darts into her mind—"Does Grannie mean me to work just as hard to make things nicer, but in a different way? To love everybody so much that I don't get cross when they seem careless and unreasonable?

"Oh, have I been thinking too much of myself—of my own plans? Oh, dear Lord, help me, help me to seek the good of others, help me to suffer long and be kind; not to be easily provoked; help me to feel that my home and all within it are precious gifts from Thee!"

CHAPTER V [48]

Betty washes her face, brushes her hair, and runs downstairs; new courage thrilling her heart.

"Yes, now, indeed, I will try what love can do! Now I really will keep my temper whatever happens; now love shall speak for me however aggravating things may be!"

She feels so sure of herself; nevertheless, she has hardly been downstairs half a minute before she nearly slips into her old habits of irritation again.

An ominous rumbling in the direction of the kitchen chimney announces that the sweep is still at work. The children's dinner-hour has nearly arrived, there is no dinner ready, and the sitting-room fire has not even been lighted.

"What *was* the use of telling me to go away and rest, and then forgetting all about the children's dinner in this way? It's too bad! I'd much rather have been without the rest altogether than be [49] worried like this, and I shall just go and tell mother so—no, I won't."

Betty stops short. Where are all the good resolutions she made not five minutes ago? Where is the Love she was to listen to, and learn from?

"Mother has forgotten the dinner because she is doing all the horrid, dirty work of having the sweep herself, that I might rest. I won't say anything; no, I *won't*. I'll just run out and buy some fish, and cook it myself, without saying a word."

She lights the fire, buys the fish, prepares and cooks it in her swift, methodical fashion, and has dinner quite ready just as Bob and the younger children troop in from school, and Lucy returns from her music-lesson.

"Dinner ready?" cries Bob roughly, flinging his cap down on a chair.

"Bob, how dare you do that? Hang your cap up in the hall, directly."

"Oh, bother; I shall want it again in half a minute. Where's mother?"

A wave of indignation sweeps over Betty at his careless answer. [50]

"Not one scrap of dinner shall you have, Bob, until your cap is hanging up in its proper place; take it out at once!"

"Shan't; where's mother? I want my dinner. I don't want any of your nagging."

Nagging—how Betty hates the word! Bob knows her dislike of it well enough, and always uses it when he means to be especially aggravating. He does so now, fully expecting her to begin scolding violently.

But somehow her very dislike of the word reminds her of Grannie's letter, with its warning about troubles and trials. Is she nagging? has she failed already? Yet how rude Bob is—how wrong!

No, she *will* conquer; and she answers quite gently.

"Bob, how can you expect the younger ones to behave properly if you set them a bad example? They all watch you," and she goes out to call her mother to dinner.

The kitchen is in a truly dreadful state; table, chairs, and saucepans, all heaped together; a liberal sprinkling of soot over everything; mother, with a great smudge of soot across her face, Clara as grimy as a sweep herself.

"Dinner? Why, I declare I forgot all about it! Can I come? Bless the child, of course not. Just look [51] at the state that careless man has left everything in; it's disgraceful."

"But, mother, dinner's all ready, and——"

"Oh, that's all right; help the children, and I'll come when I can."

Betty's feelings are all up in arms again. She has cooked the dinner herself, and mother won't even take the trouble to come and eat it—her birthday dinner, too! Again her indignation almost masters her.

"You must come, mother. Bob's horridly cross."

"Poor boy. Something has upset him at school, I expect. He's made to work much too hard over those lessons. Now, Clara, I've told you over and over again that I won't have the table scrubbed before the floor's swept. Take that pail away at once, and fetch the soft broom!"

Betty sees that further interference will be equally hopeless, and goes upstairs, the spirit of rebellion surging in her heart.

"So unnecessary, all this fuss and muddle; what possible good can 'Love' do to all this sort of thing?"

Yet Love has already won one small victory for her. Bob would not have hung up his cap had she [52] scolded for an hour. But she had answered his last unkind remark gently, and when she returns to the sitting-room the cap is gone.

Nevertheless, as the day wears on, Betty feels more and more despondent.

"I don't see how things could be worse," she thinks, "and I can't see how I can ever make them any better."

The younger children are in bed now, and mother is trying to wash the soot from her hands and face in her own room.

"Father will be late to-night; he will want his supper directly he comes home. Of course, it will be left to me to get it. I wonder what Lucy finds to do so perpetually in her own room? I've a good mind to tell her pretty plainly what I think of her selfish, unsociable ways, always going away by herself, and leaving me to attend to everything," and Betty sighs wearily, and, seating herself on the little sofa, begins to sort over the heap of unmended stockings.

The next moment she is startled by a loud double knock at the street door. She jumps to her feet and stands listening. What can it be?

Ah, now Clara is coming upstairs. She is always so slow. [53]

What is that? Clara screaming? Betty flies down the passage.

"Oh, Oh, Oh!" shrieks Clara. "The master's killed, and they've brought him home in a cab!"

"Killed? No, no, miss; don't be frightened. It's only a bad accident," says the cabman, reassuringly, as he catches sight of Betty's white face.

"A bad accident! Father? Oh, what is it?" gasps Betty.

"Smashed his knee-cap, miss."

"Oh, is that all?" cries Betty.

"All! Why, miss, that is the worst kind of accident. Like as not, he'll never put foot to ground again; he'd better by far have broken both his legs. Is there anyone in the house to help me get him in?"

For a minute Betty's head seems to whirl round, and she cannot think. But with a great effort she steadies herself.

"Bob, Bob!" she calls.

Bob has come up, and is standing staring into the darkness beside her, Lucy's frightened face just behind him.

"Bob, run in next door, and ask Mr. Baker to come as quickly as ever he can; we must have help. Father can't move. Lucy, go and tell mother." [54]

Bob darts off, and Betty goes down to the cab door.

Father is lying back in the cab all huddled together; one leg held stiffly before him.

"Is that my Betty?" he says feebly. "Don't be frightened, dear lass, I shall be right enough presently." But the dreadful look of pain on his face turns her quite sick.

Mr. Baker comes, and father is got into the house; how, Betty never knows. Her heart aches to hear the deep groan that breaks from him when they lift him to the sofa.

It is father who remembers the cabman, and bids Betty take the purse from his pocket, and pay the man. As she gently feels for it, her hand encounters an odd stocking from the unmended pile on which father is lying, and the thought darts through her mind, "Oh, to think I felt things like *that* to be a trouble this morning!"

Bob is off again to fetch the doctor. Mother is in the room now, weeping, and wringing her hands helplessly. Lucy stands trembling with terror, and perfectly useless. Only Betty seems to know what to do.

Betty really loves her father, and her quick brain and skilful fingers are active in his service. Her love has made her forget herself entirely—for a time. [55]

It is her hands that arrange a pillow under the injured knee supporting it in such a manner that the pain is greatly lessened. It is she who opens the window to give him air, and brings a cup of hot milk to relieve his exhaustion. There is no thinking of herself just now, all her own little troubles are quite forgotten. Is there nothing she can do to make her father's pain easier? That one thought fills her heart.

The doctor! Betty draws back, breathless with anxiety. Will father groan again when the doctor touches him?

"Oh, dear Lord, do make the pain better!" she murmurs, with pale lips. It is the first time she has really prayed from her heart of hearts for anyone save herself.

"I was hurrying along, and slipped upon a banana skin, falling with a crash to the pavement, and striking my knee smartly against the edge of the curb-stone," she hears father explain to the doctor.

"Ah, 'more haste less speed' this time, with a vengeance, Mr. Langdale. It's a pity you weren't more careful." [56]

"It's my girl's birthday, and I had only just remembered it," murmurs father faintly. Oh, how poor Betty's conscience pricks her as she hears the words!

"Hem! bad job; bad job. A pair of sharp scissors, my dear," and the doctor turns to Betty, who flies to get them.

The doctor cuts away the clothing from the injured knee, and after a very brief examination declares that his patient must be taken to the hospital.

"I will send an ambulance for you immediately, Mr. Langdale. There is no help for it, I am afraid," he says, and takes his leave.

There is another dreadful interval of waiting. Mother continues to sob and rock herself to and fro. Bob takes up his stand by the window, on the look-out for the ambulance. He is truly sorry for father, yet, boy-like, feels all the painful importance of the position.

But Betty holds her father's hand, with eyes brimful of pitying love.

"Father, father," she whispers, "if I could only help you; if I could only bear some of the pain for you."

A faint smile flickers into his face, and the set features relax a little. [57]

A pillow under the injured knee.

"I fear you will have to bear your share, my lass. The pain in my knee is nothing to having to leave you all to shift for yourselves. You must see Mr. Duncan, the landlord of the houses I collect rents for, the first thing to-morrow, and take him the rent-books. You'll find them all in my bag, and the money I've collected this week, too. I haven't got it all yet. Perhaps he'll do something for your mother while I'm laid by; I don't know. Oh, Betty, my girl, I must leave so much in your hands. Do all you can for your mother. Try your best to keep the home together." [58]

"Father, I'll try so hard. I'll do everything I can. I'll——"

"Here's the ambulance, and there's a nurse and two men getting out," announces Bob from the window.

Mrs. Langdale's sobs rise into screams, but Betty scarcely hears her; just now she has eyes and ears for her father alone.

Skilful hands carry him to the ambulance, and this time no groan reaches Betty's straining ears, as she follows the party.

"Go to your mother! She needs you, and I am in good hands. God bless you, dear child! God be with you and help you!"

CHAPTER VI

[59]

FOR FATHER'S SAKE

Betty stands gazing at the ambulance, as it passes steadily out of sight, and a feeling of deep loneliness sweeps over her heart. No one loves her, no one understands her as father does, and now he has gone from her.

"Ah! there I am, thinking about myself again—I *won't* do it!"

She rouses herself with a brave effort, and goes back into the house.

A house full of noise and confusion just now. Mother sobbing loudly in the little sitting-room. Jennie and Pollie, awakened from sleep, shrieking themselves hoarse in their bedroom above. Clara helpless; Bob dazed-looking; Lucy tearful. Only Betty still manages to keep her wits about her.

[60]

"Lucy, run upstairs and quiet the children—mother, mother, you mustn't upset yourself so—father will soon be better, I'm sure—such a nice, sweet nurse came to look after him. Come, mother, you're quite tired out; lie down on the sofa, and I'll make you a cup of tea."

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" moans Mrs. Langdale.

"Father will soon be in less pain, and——"

"But what shall *I* do? Most likely he'll never be able to walk again. Mr. Duncan will get some one else to collect his rents and look after the houses, and we shall all starve."

"Mother, you really must not worry about all that to-night. Father told me to go and see Mr. Duncan to-morrow, and perhaps he'll do something for us."

"Mr. Duncan do anything? Why, he's as hard as flint, always grumbling at your father for not getting the last penny out of the tenants; *he* do anything? Oh, no, no!"

"Well, we don't know how it will be yet. Come, mother, I'm going to make you that cup of tea, and you must lie down while I get it."

Betty makes the tea, and coaxes her mother into taking it, and presently persuades her to go to bed.

[61]

It is very late by this time, the house is quiet, and Betty goes to bed herself.

Now, at last, in the silence, she has time to think.

This morning—was it really only this morning that she was so foolishly vexed because her birthday was not remembered? Did she really feel the sweep's visit a big trouble only a few hours ago? How small, how utterly insignificant her troubles have been up to now! And yet she has made so much of them, has felt herself so hardly used!

For a long time she lies awake, turning it all over in her mind. "Father, dear, patient old father is tossing in pain and fever, and his worry is much worse than mine, for he must lie still and think, and I can be up and at work. It is so much harder to bear things when you can do nothing to make them better. Lord, show me what to do; show me how to work for our home—for father's sake."

Somehow, soon after that prayer, Betty falls into a sound sleep, and does not awake until it is morning.

[62]

When at length she opens her eyes, it is time to get up. For a moment she lies still enough, not remembering what has happened; then, with a rush, it all comes back to her, and she starts out of bed.

Father, mother, children—what can she do for them all? Last night she had no answer to that question, but now a bright, a daring hope has flashed into her mind. Why shouldn't *she* collect Mr. Duncan's rents, and keep his accounts whilst father is laid by? She wanted to go out to work for herself. Here is the chance of doing something much better, of working for father's sake, of lifting a great part of this heavy load from his heart!

But can she do it—can she? Her heart sinks again. "Oh, will Mr. Duncan give me a trial?" Suddenly she remembers Grannie. "How sorry Grannie will be for this—Oh, if I were like Grannie how much easier it would be! Let me think, if Grannie was in my place, what would she do first?"

The answer to that question is easy enough. "She would pray."

Betty kneels by the bedside. She prays for her father, and then she prays for herself; prays that she may have strength given her, and wisdom, and courage, to do her work bravely and well.

[63]

Mother is quite unfit for anything this morning. Lucy must give up her music-lesson to wait on her. The children are very fretful. Clara declares she is "too much upset to do her usual work,

and it ought not to be expected of her."

Only Betty is patient and gentle, striving to get through the usual duties. Love is leading her at last—love for her father. Just now no thought of self dims her memory of his suffering face.

But for all that her heart beats very fast, when at last she knocks at Mr. Duncan's door, and her grand plan of carrying on a part of dear father's work suddenly appears quite hopeless.

"I'm afraid it will make Mr. Duncan quite angry to propose such a thing. Had not I better just give him the money father collected, and say nothing about my idea after all?" Betty hesitates a moment, then—

"For father's sake—for father's sake," she murmurs to herself.

The door is opened by a neat maid. Yes, Mr. Duncan is at home, will she please to give her name? Another minute and she is shown into a room, where an elderly gentleman is writing at a table.

"The young person to see you, sir," announces the maid. [64]

The elderly gentleman looks up with a frown, and fixes a pair of hard grey eyes on her face.

"Well, what's the meaning of this?" he says gruffly. "Where's your father?"

Betty pauses a moment.

"Where's your father? I want to see him particularly," repeats Mr. Duncan, still more angrily.

Betty quakes inwardly; but her courage is of the kind that always rises at an emergency, and she explains what has happened in a clear business-like fashion.

"Hem! accident indeed—pretty fix his accident has left me in," grumbles Mr. Duncan, when she has finished. "Have you the money with you?"

Betty produces it. He counts it over. "Why, how's this? There's two pounds short!"

"Father was to collect that to-day, sir; there's a note in his book saying which of the tenants haven't paid yet."

"Hem! bad system. If they can't pay up to time, they ought to go. And what am I to do now, pray?"

"Please, if you'll let me, I'll go round to the tenants in father's place," cries Betty, eagerly. [65]

"You? Why, what does a girl like you know about it?"

"I'm good at accounts; and father has told me how it is done, and shown me the books—I help him with them sometimes. If you would *only* let me try, sir—until father gets better——"

"Oh, that's it, is it? *You* want to take over my work!" and, rather to Betty's surprise, the hard old eyes give a little twinkle of amusement. "No—no, my girl, you don't understand; there's a great deal besides just collecting the money. Repairs to attend to; bad tenants to get rid of; new tenants to bargain with——"

"But, sir," interrupts Betty, eagerly, "if you would only let me try to do the best I can until father comes out of the hospital—perhaps the repairs could wait—and I'd try *so* hard; and—and we've nothing but a few pounds in the savings bank, and father said he thought you might do something ——"

"Oh, he did—did he? Very kind of him, I'm sure!" snaps Mr. Duncan, the hard, suspicious look returning to his face.

Betty feels ready to burst into tears. "He thinks the very idea of employing me utterly absurd," she thinks, and turns to go. [66]

But hardly have her fingers touched the handle, before Mr. Duncan calls her back.

"Don't be in such a hurry, young person. Your father is a great deal too soft with the tenants; but I believe he means well, and I'm sorry for his accident. Suppose you go round to the tenants who haven't paid this morning? It will be time enough to talk about your taking on the work when I see what you can do."

She is to have a trial after all! The expression on Betty's face changes so quickly, that Mr. Duncan's eyes twinkle again.

"Hem! you needn't look so pleased. I don't promise anything, mind—why, bless the girl, if she isn't off already! Well, if she takes after her father, I might do worse. Soft-hearted—a great deal too soft-hearted—but as honest as the day," and the old gentleman returns to his writing.

Betty hurries home for her father's little rent-collecting bag; and then makes her way through the network of narrow streets, in the midst of which the houses owned by Mr. Duncan stand.

Arriving at the long row, she looks round her in some dismay.

[67]

"Rent?" cries the woman bitterly.

How small the houses are—how dirty! How narrow and wretched-looking the street! [68]

She consults her list, and knocks timidly at the door of the first number. No answer. She knocks again. A shuffling of feet follows, and presently a woman appears. She is haggard and old-looking, and the child in her arms is wailing pitifully. A second child clings to her skirt, and mother and children alike are wretchedly clad.

"Rent?" cries the woman bitterly, in answer to Betty's timid request. "Pray, how do you suppose I'm to pay the rent, and my husband still on the drink? I told the agent it was no use calling, and if he wants to turn me out, he must!"

And without giving Betty time to answer, she drags the children in, and slams the door.

Betty has not the courage to knock again. What a glimpse of dull, hopeless misery the woman's face and voice have revealed to her! She passes on to the next house.

The woman who answers this door is rather cleaner. "Called for the rent? But you're not the agent," she says, looking at Betty very suspiciously.

Betty explains. "Hum! I don't like the look of it. How do I know it's all right? There, you needn't look so offended. If *you* had had to work early and late, denying yourself your proper rest, and a bit of butter to your bread, to make up the rent, you'd be careful who you trusted it with, I can tell you." [69]

Betty shows the poor woman her father's collecting book, and after a while the rent is put grudgingly into her hands. Betty cannot bear to take it from the poor thing.

It is a slow, miserable business, but before the morning is over Betty manages to get the greater part of the two pounds together.

"Hem; short, as usual," is Mr. Duncan's discouraging remark, as he counts it over.

Betty feels sick at heart. The morning's work has been quite a new experience. Occupied only with her own thoughts and plans, she has thought very little about other people's difficulties; and the miserable homes she has just seen have shocked and pained her deeply.

Mr. Duncan weighs the money in his hand for a moment or two, as though considering.

"Well, I can't be bothered just now with looking up anyone else. I suppose we'd better go on as we are—for the present. Here's the whole rent account-book; take it home, and let me know how much rent I've lost on the half-year. Good morning." [70]

So she is to take up part of father's work, after all! How glad dear father will be!

CHAPTER VII

[71]

DAY BY DAY

For the first time in her life Betty is glad to be at home. The rooms seem more comfortable and airy than they have ever done before.

"Oh, how thankful I am that I don't live in that horrid, narrow street, like those poor wretched-looking women and children!" she thinks. Even one morning's work among people so much worse off than herself has opened her eyes a little to the blessings she possesses in her home.

Why, if father were only coming home as usual to-night, she could feel almost happy—*if*—ah! but father is not coming home; yet he will come some day, his life is in no danger. Oh, she will be brave for his sake, she will be true to the trust he has left in her hands!

[72]

No dinner ready again; mother still quite incapable of attending to anything, and poor Betty thoroughly tired out with her anxious morning's work. Yet she is not even cross.

No, the more trying and difficult things are, the greater the victory; and just now she feels braced up, heart and soul, for the fight.

It is sometimes easier to be brave and unselfish in a time of real trouble, than to bear with patience and sweetness the little worries of everyday life.

But Betty is on the right road now, she is doing great things; she is marching straight on; she is opening her heart to the Lord, and allowing His light to shine into its dark places, and there is hope that before the little, wearing everyday worries come back again, she may be strong enough to resist even them, and prove herself a true Soldier at last.

She may fail though, and darken the light that God sends her! Well, we will hope for better things.

So Betty bustles about, and has dinner ready as usual when the children come in. Not until they are all off to school again has she time to tell her mother of the morning's work.

[73]

Mrs. Langdale is not at all encouraging.

"Nice place to send a girl like you to. What is he going to pay you?"

"I don't know yet, mother."

"And you never thought of asking? You silly child! He'll take your work and give you nothing."

"Oh, I'm sure he wouldn't do that, mother." But she looks rather blank at the idea.

"Well, you'll see; and don't say I didn't warn you. When are you going to see Mr. Duncan again?"

"To-morrow. I'm to make out an account of the rents to-night, and take it with me."

Betty finds that this last is easier said than done. She pores over the books until her head aches. Presently Bob comes in.

"Here, Betty, look sharp. I want a button sewn on my coat, and I can't find that new pair of boot-laces, and—why, just fancy sitting there reading like that! No wonder a fellow can never get anything done in this house—it's too bad!"

"I'm not reading, I'm doing Mr. Duncan's accounts," says Betty quietly. The knowledge that she is working unselfishly for the good of her family is a grand help towards keeping her temper!

[74]

Bob stares. "Rubbish!" he says.

"Come and see, Bob. I'm to do part of father's work, and Oh, I do wish you could help me. I feel so stupid to-night, and there is so much to do."

Bob melts at once. "Why, Bet, who would have thought of your doing such a thing? There, let me see—Ah, here we are! Now then——"

But, alas! just as Bob is beginning to bring his brand-new ideas of correct book-keeping to bear on the problem before them, a violent outcry arises from Pollie, who, until now, has been playing fairly quietly with Jennie in the corner.

"Harry, you bad, wicked boy!" she screams, "I'll pull all your hair out, that I will!" and she rushes at Harry like a little fury. Harry defends himself savagely, and Jennie, curled up on the floor, howls her loudest.

"Be quiet, Jennie! Pollie and Harry, if you don't leave off fighting at once, I'll box your ears all round!" cries Bob, looking up angrily from his work.

"Harry's sawn the leg off one of our dollies!" shrieks Pollie, "and he's a bad, bad, wicked boy!"

[75]

Harry defends himself savagely.

"She asked me to," roars Harry; "her dollie had smashed its leg like father, and I was the doctor, and had to take it off." [76]

"He hadn't! He was to cure its bad leg, and now he's made it worse, and I'll pull his hair out for that, I will!"

"I don't care about your old dolls and rubbish; but if you're not quiet this minute I'll knock all your heads together and give you something to cry for!" cries Bob, still more angrily, and he starts from his chair as though to execute his threat.

But Betty lays her hand entreatingly on his arm. "Oh, Bob, don't; father wouldn't like it. He can't bear you to strike the children. Pollie, perhaps the doll can be mended; Harry didn't mean any harm. Harry, be quiet, you must not beat your little sister. Pollie, leave go, you naughty girl——"

But Betty is powerless to stop the storm. Bob tries to separate Harry and Pollie, who are fighting desperately. Harry kicks at Bob, whereat the elder brother loses his temper altogether, and cuffs Harry vigorously on both sides of his head. Harry roars; Jennie and Pollie continue to shriek. Bob, his face flaming with wrath, drags each screaming, kicking child to the door, and flings it into the passage. Then he locks the door, and with flushed face and tumbled hair, though pretending to [77] look quite unconcerned, goes on with the books, in spite of the yells from the passage outside.

Betty is in despair.

"Oh, Bob, how could you be so violent? If father had been at home you would not have behaved so ——"

"Look here, Betty, if you're going to begin that, you may take the books yourself and do them; I'm sick of the whole thing!"

Betty is wise enough to make no answer to Bob's outburst. She leaves the room quietly, and, after some trouble, pacifies the children, and sees them all safely in bed.

She feels thoroughly humiliated and miserable. The whole thing is such a keen disgrace; that *her* brothers and sisters should behave so roughly and rudely!

How untrained they all are—how badly brought up! No wonder father has grown so sad and old-looking of late. His old home—when he lived with Grannie—must have been very different.

She returns to the accounts. Bob is still poring over them, but looks so savage that she is almost afraid to speak. He finishes the work in silence, answers her thanks with a grunt, and goes off [78] with his head in the air, and both hands deep in his pockets.

And Betty goes to bed herself, depressed indeed.

But the next morning there is a short pencil-note from father. His knee is more comfortable, but the doctor fears it will be a long business. He is most anxious to hear what Mr. Duncan will do.

Reading the note to mother, who is not up yet, makes Betty rather later than usual, and she runs straight to the kitchen to hurry on the breakfast.

"Oh, Clara, the kettle not boiling yet, nor the porridge on—why, this is too bad! You are more behindhand than ever. Pray, how does this happen?"

"Don't know," mutters Clara, sulkily.

"But you ought to know. Come, make haste—a bundle of wood, quick! The children must leave in half an hour."

Betty bustles about, and manages to get some sort of meal ready in time.

Breakfast over, and the children gone to school, she returns to the kitchen.

Things cannot be allowed to go on like this. She must talk to Clara.

But what can she say? Clara is so used to scolding, that she cares nothing for it. No, she must try [79]
to reason with her; she must teach her to think.

Wise Betty! Perplexed and troubled, she turns into the now deserted sitting-room for a few moments, and asks the Lord to help her. Then she goes back.

"Clara," she begins, "I have to go out this morning to look after some of father's business. I shall have to go out a good deal, for the work must be done, and is not easy to do; indeed, I can't do it at all unless you help me."

Clara opens her eyes very wide at this.

"I see you wonder what I mean. You must help me by getting all your work nicely forward, and the dinner prepared before I get back. Now, just look at this kitchen; I don't believe it's been swept since the day before yesterday; has it, Clara?"

Clara is silent; and begins biting the corner of her apron sulkily.

"Why are you neglecting everything in this way? Come, answer me, Clara."

"Don't know; I'm upset, I s'pose."

"Well, what has upset you?"

"Master's accident, of course. I wouldn't care a bit if it was some folks—serve them right! But [80]
master, who never speaks a cross word to anyone, and always asks after mother—that it should happen to him! It isn't fair! I don't see what is to prevent *any* of us getting our legs broken if he is to be smashed up in this way; and I'm that upset, I can't seem to settle to anything."

"But that is just what we've all got to learn to do—for father's sake. And, Clara, I think God has sent us this trouble because we have all been so careless and thankless in the past. You've never really cared to do your work properly, I'm afraid; you've never felt any real responsibility about it ——"

"Oh, how can you say that? I'm always at work, and never, never done!"

"That's just because you never think about your work; you don't ever take the trouble to arrange it; and you don't care a bit about neatness or cleanliness."

Clara raises the corner of the dirty apron from her mouth to her eyes.

"What's the good?" she whimpers. "I should get in a muddle again directly; my work isn't anything *but* muddle!"

"But that's what it shouldn't be. You do your work as though you thought it wasn't worth doing at all." [81]

"Don't think about it at all," mutters Clara.

"That's just it. My Grannie, she keeps her house as clean and tidy as a new pin, and yet always has time for everything. My Grannie says that all work is really beautiful if it is done for God. Did you never hear of the little servant who used to say she swept the floor for God, and cleaned the pots for God, too? God sees everything, you know.

"Then, again, you're sorry for father's accident; but why don't you show you're sorry by doing your work in the way father would like? Untidy rooms and careless, slipshod ways worry him dreadfully. Now, wouldn't it be nice if we could get all the house in apple-pie order, and ourselves into nice, tidy ways, before he comes out of the hospital? What a smile of thanks he would give us all round! Come, isn't that something worth trying for?"

"Hum! Don't see how it's going to be done," mutters Clara, looking round the untidy kitchen hopelessly. "We're just in a muddle everywhere."

"We can't get straight all of a minute, of course. But what I want us to do is to make a beginning. Ah, there's ten o'clock striking! I must go to Mr. Duncan with the books. Now, you will try—won't [82]
you, Clara? You'll work for God, and to please father, and to help me; and, Clara," adds Betty, in a hurried whisper, "*do* run upstairs and put your cap straight, and wash that great black smut from your face—it's right across your nose."

CHAPTER VIII

[83]

THE CAPTAIN

Mr. Duncan offers to give Betty a third part of her father's usual earnings. The rent-collecting will occupy three long mornings in the week at least, and an hour or two of every evening must be spent over the books.

The sights and sounds of the district she has to collect for trouble Betty dreadfully. Some of the women look utterly weary and down-trodden; others again are always scolding and quarrelling. Then the poor, sickly children—and occasional glimpses of rough, drink-sodden men—haunt her mind. She has over a hundred houses to collect for, and it takes her the whole of the three mornings to get through them all.

How many stories of want and misery she has listened to before the week's work is over!

"My husband has taken to the drink again." "My father was knocked down by a van and carried to [84] the hospital." "The children have all got the measles." "Mother's taken bad with bronchitis." "My husband hasn't done a stroke of work for three weeks." Are all the stories true? Betty has no means of knowing.

Sick at heart, she returns home and throws herself into a chair after each morning's work. A shabby, untidy room? Well, perhaps it is; but, Oh! how different from the homes she has just visited! How wrong she has been to grumble so in the past—how wicked to be discontented!

One day she returns in a specially humble frame of mind.

"My home could be made a really beautiful one if I only knew how to manage. But I don't. I'm very stupid, somehow. I try and try, but never seem to know what to do for the best.

"Have I made any difference at all, since I came home from Grannie's?

"Clara is a little better, perhaps—at least, her face is a shade cleaner; and I didn't notice more than two saucepans standing about, and—Oh! yes, the kettle was boiling this morning—I mustn't forget all that; but how rough the children are! How unreasonable Bob is at times! Two or three [85] evenings he has stayed out quite late. Father wouldn't like that—I wonder where he goes? Then, there's Lucy; nothing in the home seems to interest her. I do think it very selfish of her to spend so much time in reading, especially just now.

"When I first returned home, I thought everything was wrong; now I can see it isn't the home so much, it's the people in it. We're all spoiling it—and I'm helping to spoil it as well.

"What grand thoughts I had about making everything right all at once, and what a little I seem likely to do!"

All day Betty goes about her work in the same humble spirit, with a sense of failure strong upon her.

The excitement of father's accident is over now; they have settled down into their old grooves again. True, Betty has much extra work to do, but all the glory of fighting grand difficulties has died out of her life again.

Collecting rents is certainly a very depressing business; that is, in a poor, unthrifty neighbourhood. No, there is nothing splendid about it.

"The house is as untidy as ever," she thinks, "and the younger children so rude and boisterous— [86] and mother doesn't seem to care a bit."

Lower sink Betty's spirits as the day wears on. Now, is the real time of trial; now, indeed, she needs all her courage and resolution.

A letter from Grannie! Two letters—one to mother about father's accident, and a long loving letter of good counsel to herself.

Betty carries her treasure away to her own room; a few sprigs of fresh lavender fall from between the folded pages as she opens it. How Grannie's rooms always smelt of lavender! Her eyes fill with tears at the memories the delicate scent recalls to her mind!

"How lovingly Grannie's letter begins! Ah, she doesn't know what a failure I am making of everything!" thinks poor Betty.

"What is this? What does Grannie say?" Betty gazes eagerly at the page. "Oh! how did she guess all this?"

"I know, dear, that this is a time of real fighting," so the letter runs; "that every day brings its hard battle—the battle of standing firm against the worry and irritation of little things." Betty

sighs. "Yes, and I feel sure that every day sees a hard-won victory, too." Betty shakes her head, and one big tear steals slowly down her cheek. [87]

"You have written very little about yourself lately, but I can see from your mother's letters, and from your own, too, that the Bird of Love is beginning to speak in your voice; that my dear Betty is letting the Lord Jesus rule in her heart.

"You have much to learn yet, dear, and little to help you to learn it. Can you not go to The Army Meetings? I hear that Captain Janet Scott, a dear young friend of mine, has just gone in charge of the Corps in Duke Street. I have written to her about you. Do ask your mother's leave to go to the Meetings."

"O Grannie, I should so love to go," murmurs Betty; "but I am afraid—I'm quite sure—mother would never let me, even if I asked her!"

"Go on fighting bravely, dear; do not allow these little troubles to wear away your courage. Trust the Lord more and more. Lean on Him; fight in His strength, and a bright day of victory will dawn for you at last. Ah, Betty, it is dawning for you now! Already the true, unselfish love that will [88] make you a happy girl is beginning to shine in your heart."

"Oh! how *can* she say that?" and the tears that sparkle in Betty's eyes now are tears of joy. "Can that really be true?"

"I knew mother wouldn't let me go to The Army Meetings—I was perfectly *sure* of it!" exclaims Betty to herself the morning after Grannie's letter. Her eyes are heavy with trouble again, her heart sore with painful recollections. She has asked for permission, and been refused, and the words of mother's refusal have been hard to bear.

"How can she be so unjust, so unreasonable?" thinks Betty, angrily, as she enters the crowded district where Mr. Duncan's property lies, for she is rent-collecting again.

Grannie's letter had cheered her for awhile, but the talk with mother this morning has plunged her again into the depths of gloom. Just now everything seems dark and sad indeed.

"Oh, dear, I've the same dreary round of calls to make, I suppose, the same unhappiness to see everywhere. [89]

"What a dreadful amount of trouble there is in this world, and there doesn't seem to be any way of making things better. No. 41. Oh, yes; the woman here has a tiny, tiny baby, and she's very weak and wretched, and there's a whole troop of dirty, rough-haired little children, with no one to look after them. I can't bear to knock—how can she pay anything? Well, I suppose I must."

"Come in—the door is unbolted!" cries a cheery voice, in answer to her knock—a very different voice from that she had expected to hear.

Betty steps reluctantly into the passage.

"What is it you want, please?" says the voice again, from a room at the back. Betty explains her business wonderingly; the voice is so unlike the dull, hopeless tones with which she is usually greeted.

"Oh, it's all right, Captain," says a second voice, far more feebly, "it's the young lady for the rent."

"Do come in please, and excuse me just a moment, as I can't leave the child like this," cries the cheery voice.

Whereat Betty steps to the door and peeps in.

Round a big empty packing-case, placed in the centre of the room, the tenant's three children are [90] gathered.

The little boy, his face shining with cleanliness, and his usually tousled head smooth and glossy, is looking on, whilst a sweet-faced woman, in a blue serge dress and big apron, is washing one of his sisters in a large basin, with a plentiful supply of soap and water.

On the floor sits a third child awaiting her turn; and on the bed in the corner lies the sick woman, her baby on her arm, and such a hopeful expression on her face that Betty scarcely recognises her.

"Come in, miss," she says, "I've got a bit of rent for you this week, thanks to Captain helping my husband to some work. Here it is," and she pulls a few shillings, wrapped in a scrap of paper, from under her pillow.

"Thank you, Mrs. Smith," says Betty. "That is the Captain, I suppose?" she adds, glancing towards the washing operations going on in the middle of the room.

[91]

A plentiful supply of soap and water.

"Bless her! yes," answers Mrs. Smith, in a low voice. "And an angel from the Lord she's been to me, miss. Washed the children regular, tidied up, made my bit of gruel, given the children their dinners, and, what's better than all, she put fresh heart in me, miss, with her beautiful prayers and pleadings. Last week I felt that I wanted to give up and die. Oh, the Lord is good to send me such a friend!" [92]

"Come, come, Mrs. Smith, the Lord is always good to those who trust Him," interposes the Captain, who has overheard the last remark.

Is this Captain Janet Scott—Grannie's friend? Betty must know, and stands waiting until the washing is finished, and the Captain puts on her bonnet to go.

They pass out of the house together, but a sudden shyness has come over Betty, and she quite stammers as she says:—

"Please, are you Captain Janet Scott?"

The Captain gives her a bright look. "Yes; and who are you—one of my Soldiers? I hoped so directly I saw you."

"I am—that is, I'd like to be—only I'm afraid I mustn't," stammers Betty.

"Mustn't be a Soldier? How's that, my child?"

"I'm Betty Langdale. You know my Grannie—she lives near Moordale. She's a Salvationist, but mother won't let me be one. I've tried to persuade her only this morning to say yes, but it's no use." [93]

"Betty Langdale—of course! I'm so glad to see you, dear, and you can be a Soldier, even if the way is not yet open for you to be sworn-in. You can be the Lord's true Soldier, fighting His battles in His strength."

"But mother says she will never let me go to the Meetings."

"I am sorry, dear; but keep believing, and remember that Meetings alone do not make good Soldiers. God will help you to fight your battles at home. Fight against wrong wherever you see it. Keep very close to Jesus. Do all you can for those at home, and you can be a true Salvationist, although at present you may not join The Army."

"But mother ought *not* to stop me from attending the Meetings, ought she, Captain?"

"My dear, it is not your place to judge your mother. Your whole thought should be to win her gently, to *prove* to her your sincerity by your life.

"It is only by keeping things in their places, you know, that we have a tidy house. It is only through giving each member of our family his or her true place that we can have a happy home.

Keep true and patient, and God Himself will one day open the door for you. [94]

"Trust Him, commit your life into His hands, and He will undertake for you and make the crooked places smooth.

"I have to call here, my child; but we shall meet again soon, and meantime God bless and help you every day."

And with a bright smile and warm handshake, Captain Janet Scott goes on her way, leaving Betty with a heart filled with joy. It was surely God Himself who planned that she should meet the Captain in this unexpected way, God who had sent His own sweet messenger to Betty to give her this much-needed counsel and advice!

CHAPTER IX [95]

A PLACE FOR EVERY ONE

"Every one has a right place," thinks Betty, when her morning's work is done. "Yes, that sounds true enough, but how am I to manage in our house? I wish Captain had explained more about it.

"Now, let me think—what is my right place? It is my place to be loving and thoughtful, to strive to help every one, that's what Grannie would say. Well, I am trying to do that. 'It is *not* your place to judge your mother,' so said my dear Captain. Of course, it is not. I know that, and yet I suppose that is just what I was doing when I spoke so impatiently about her. Mother's place? Have I ever given mother her right place? Have I ever been really loving, really thoughtful for her, really obedient?

"But, then, mother has such old-fashioned notions, and such unpunctual ways, and—no, I *won't* [96] go on; I mustn't think these thoughts—this isn't giving mother her true place, this isn't keeping to the spirit of Captain's words!

"How sweet Captain is! Her big brown eyes are as clear and kind as Grannie's, and her voice is just the nicest I have ever heard. How I should love to be like her, to make all that difference when I went into a miserable house! Poor Mrs. Smith looked quite bright; and such a change in the children! If I could be an Officer, now, and go about making people happy, how delightful that would be!"

Then, with a new and true humility that is only just beginning to make itself felt in her heart, she adds:—

"Ah! but I'm not good enough. I'm too impatient, too irritable. No, no, I haven't learnt yet to be a good Soldier—why, I haven't learnt yet how to make *one* home happy. I must learn to serve with patience. I must conquer myself; then, perhaps, in the days to come, the Lord will open the way to me, and I, too, may go into sad homes as a messenger of peace and love."

"Betty!" Mother's voice, calling querulously from the first-floor landing. Betty runs upstairs. [97] Mother has a shawl round her shoulders, and looks very gloomy and upset.

"Betty, can't you keep the children quiet? My head aches dreadfully, but it's quite useless to try and get any sleep with Jennie and Pollie stamping about just over one's head. I sent them up to the attic to be out of the way, and they've done nothing but quarrel ever since—tiresome little good-for-nothings!"

"Oh, of course, they must come down at once, mother. Shall I send them out for a walk?"

"No, indeed, they're so dreadfully rough, throwing stones and shouting themselves hoarse like a couple of street boys. I don't know what I've done, I'm sure, to have such troublesome children."

Betty fetches her two younger sisters down from the attic, and sends them out to play in the small garden-yard at the back of the house. She has a great deal of difficulty, for they are both so headstrong and unruly that they will hardly obey at all. At last she persuades them to settle down to a game of horses, and goes back.

But five minutes have barely elapsed when mother's voice is heard again. [98]

"Betty, what are those children doing? I declare their noise is making me quite ill!"

Dismal shrieks from the back of the house confirm her words. Betty flies to a window and looks out.

Pollie, screaming with terror, is flying from Jennie, who, with face distorted with passion, is darting after her—flourishing a big stick, and yelling like a mad girl.

Betty's heart sinks at the sight. How shameful, how humiliating that her sisters should behave like this! How untaught and untrained they are!

She runs out breathlessly. She seizes Jennie by the arm. Jennie kicks and screams furiously.

"I will whip her, I will! She's a bad, wicked girl. She said she would stand still if I would let go of her arm, and then she ran away!"

"'Cos she was going to put a big strap in my mouth, and drive me about," sobs Pollie, "and I won't have it, I won't!" and, relying on Betty's protection, she strikes at her sister in her turn.

[99]

Pollie flying from Jennie.

"Pollie! Jennie! Oh, how can you behave so badly? You rude, naughty girls! Why, you're every bit as bad as the rough boys who play in the street. Aren't you ashamed to behave so wickedly? Don't [100] you know that the Lord is very sorry when He sees little girls selfish, and rude, and passionate? You know quite well that poor mother's head is bad, and yet you make all this noise! Why don't you try to play quietly together?"

"Nothing to play at," answers Jennie, sulkily. "I'm tired of games; and, besides, games are silly."

"Then take your knitting, or hem one of the new dusters."

"Shan't; it's holiday time, and I don't mean to do any work. If Pollie wasn't so silly I could play with her all right—screaming and making all that fuss about nothing."

"Well, if you can't keep quiet, I shall have to put you to bed—now remember."

But to herself Betty thinks, "Now, what would be the right thing to do for them? Teach them better, I suppose; teach them to be kind and gentle, teach them to be unselfish, to think less of themselves and more of others."

The thought is still with her when she returns to her household duties. Suddenly a happy idea strikes her.

"Ah! I remember how Grannie told me that when she was a girl she used to invite a number of [101] her little school-friends to her cottage on half-holidays; each girl brought a small piece of work with her, a tiny petticoat to sew, a sock to knit, or what not; and they would sew and chat away happily for hours, fancying themselves a real sewing society.

"The work was not for themselves—Oh, no! Twice every year all the little garments were collected and given to the poorer children of the village. Now, if these rough, headstrong sisters of mine would only do that! Is there nothing to make them follow dear Grannie's example?"

All the rest of that day Betty is thinking over her plan, and at night, ere she goes to rest, she lays the whole matter before the Lord in very earnest prayer. She is beginning to understand something at last of the real strength, and comfort, and light, which follows all heart-felt prayer.

Next morning she awakes with the determination strong within her of commencing that very day to win her little sisters to better things.

The children's summer holidays are just beginning; now is the time to interest them, to teach and help them; to put higher thoughts into their minds, to give their hands unselfish work to do. [102]

It is a hot afternoon, Jennie and Pollie have been playing together aimlessly, breaking out now and again into noisy bursts of passion. They are too tired to play any more now, and hot and sulky besides.

Betty calls them to her.

"Jennie, Pollie, I want to talk to you about a new way of spending your holiday afternoons; a really beautiful way. Come into the garden, and I'll tell you all about it."

The "garden" is only a back-yard, with one dusty tree leaning over the paling, and a few unhappy-looking flowers. How different from Grannie's garden, with its masses of sweet-scented, old-fashioned blossoms; its pure air and clear sunlight!

Well, well, Betty must not think of that just now. At any rate, the air is fresher here than in the house.

"Is it a new kind of game? Oh, Betty, do make haste and tell us!"

"Listen, girls. Hundreds and hundreds of years ago there lived a dear, good woman—a *very* good woman."

"What was her name?" demands Pollie.

"Dorcas. She lived in a little town by the seaside, in a country far away. Now in this town were [103] many poor widows, who could not afford to buy clothes enough to keep them warm; and when Dorcas saw this she set to work, and cut out nice coats, and stitched away, and I daresay she called her neighbours in to help her, and very soon those poor widows had new garments all round. How grateful, how delighted they were! They couldn't say enough to show their thanks."

"How do you know? Aren't you just making it up, Betty?"

"No, indeed; we read about Dorcas, and the poor widows, and their coats, in the Bible itself. Now, why don't you two girls invite two or three of your school friends in one afternoon, and pretend to be Dorcas and her neighbours? I'll be Dorcas, if you like, and we'll make little garments for poor widows and fatherless children, and chat together, just as Dorcas and her friends did, hundreds and hundreds of years ago."

"Who'll be the widows?" asked Jennie, much interested.

"Oh, real widows and orphans; just like those Dorcas worked for. Then, perhaps, we could have tea out of doors, and I'll mix some of those nice buns which Grannie showed me how to make. We [104] would drink our tea out of mugs, because, in the days when Dorcas lived, no one had cups and saucers."

"Oh, that would be lovely!" cry the girls. "Who shall we ask to come, Betty?" adds Jennie alone.

"Anyone you like—that is, any nice girl."

"Millie and Ida Davis are both nice as nice. Then there's Flo——"

"We mustn't have too many at first. Suppose we each invite one friend? I choose Minnie White for mine."

"Oh, Minnie White's always so prim and proper; just because she's an Army girl; not a bit of fun in her."

"You're quite wrong, Jennie. Minnie is as full of real fun as she can be. She doesn't like rough ways, and senseless jokes; but I only wish you looked one-half as happy as she does! Well, dears, choose the best and most unselfish girls you know; this is to be a very special kind of meeting, you see."

"Oh, of course; *we* don't want any nasty, horrid girls like Kitty and Lena!"

"Now, Jennie, do you think that Dorcas would *ever* have been put in the Bible, if she had talked [105] like that about her friends? Why, girls, you'll spoil the whole thing if you don't try to be like her! You're going to copy her, aren't you?"

"Course we are!" assents Pollie.

Betty mixes the cakes that very evening. She is not a good cook—does not like cooking, in fact; but somehow she is feeling very happy.

"The cakes must be as nice as I can make them. Ah! I must be sure to take a peep to-night into that book of father's, about God's brave Soldiers, in the far-off days when Dorcas really lived; then I shall be able to talk about it all to the girls to-morrow and interest them.

"If I could only help Jennie and Pollie to understand; if I could really bring them nearer to the Lord; Oh, what a happy, what a truly blessed thing that would be!"

The next afternoon is hot again, but there is shade in the dingy garden. A semicircle of chairs has been arranged, and Jennie and Pollie, looking unusually clean and tidy, with sweet-faced Minnie White, and Millie and Ida Davis, are industriously stitching away. It is a critical moment, for "Dorcas," that is, Betty, has just left them alone. [106]

"What horrid clumsy stitches you are putting in that handkerchief, Pollie," cries Jennie.

"They're quite as good as yours!" snaps Pollie.

"They're not!"

"They are! I'm sure they are!"

"Oh, dear, please don't!" pleads little Minnie White. "Jennie's stitches are the best, but then Pollie's are quite as good for her age. And we must all be very loving and kind, mustn't we? or we shouldn't be the least bit like Dorcas and her friends."

Wise Betty to include little Minnie in her first back-yard meeting!

"Oh, look, here's Betty, I mean Dorcas, with the tea! How good the cakes smell—how thirsty I am! Oh, isn't it just lovely to have it out here?" cry the girls.

And Jennie and Pollie clap their hands too, and are as happy as the rest.

CHAPTER X

[107]

A QUARREL

"It has been much easier than I thought," says Betty to herself, a week or two after her first back-yard meeting. The fourth has just been held, and the girls have taken to it wonderfully.

"Jennie and Pollie are improving steadily. How blind I have been! They were naughty and rough just for want of some interest in life—for the need of something to do. Jennie has hemmed two little pinafores already, and Pollie one; and the other girls have all done well—especially Minnie White. Ah, Minnie is a darling, a true Junior Soldier! Her example is just splendid for my sisters, and I am glad to see they are getting quite fond of her. This was a good idea of mine. I must tell Captain Scott about it. How pleased she will be! I really am managing much better. I really am beginning to make home happy and nice. What's that? Seven o'clock, and the accounts not [108] touched yet! Mr. Duncan does work me hard. Oh, how glad I shall be when dear father comes home again! His leg is really getting stronger now, that's one comfort. What a grand day it will be when he leaves the hospital!"

Betty opens the account-books, and sighs as she looks down the long columns of figures.

"I only wish Bob would help me as he did at first. Where does he spend his evenings? I must say I do think it selfish of him to be from home so much, considering everything. Why, I believe that's his knock now! Perhaps he means to help me this evening, after all."

And she runs to open the door.

"O Bob, do come and look over the accounts!" she begins; then, catching sight of a long black case in his hand, "Why, Bob, what have you there?"

"Violin," says Bob, briefly, but with an air of great importance.

"A violin! Dear me, what use can that be to you?"

"I can learn to play like other people, I suppose?" answers Bob, tartly. "There, I haven't time to stand chattering! I am to try this violin to-night, and let the fellow it belongs to know if it suits [109] me."

"Let what fellow know? O Bob, you surely haven't promised to *buy* that old fiddle?"

"Old fiddle, indeed! Mind your own business, miss, and leave me to mind mine!"

"I've enough to do, that's certain; and I suppose now you don't mean to help me with the accounts one bit?"

Bob only replies to this with a kind of grunt, and turns into the little front parlour, where the family generally sit now that the weather has grown so much hotter.

Betty follows, and sits down wearily to the account-books. Bob is evidently in an unreasonable frame of mind. Where did he get that violin? Has he promised to pay for it? If so, how will he obtain the money?

Meantime, Bob unrolls a sheet of music, marked, "Exercises for the Violin," props it upright on the table with the help of a few books, draws the violin and bow from the case, and places the instrument in position under his chin with what he considers quite a professional air. Then he takes up the bow and draws it lightly across the strings. [110]

A horrible squeak is the result. Bob looks rather blank; Betty shudders. She has a keen ear for music, and such a discord gives her real pain.

"Out of tune," mutters Bob, and he screws up one of the little pegs to tighten the string; then he tries again. Another squeak, louder and more utterly jarring than before.

He repeats this process several times. Betty is tired and worried; she endures in silence for awhile, but suddenly her patience gives way altogether.

"Bob, what *are* you trying to do?" she cries sharply.

"I am tuning the violin; can't you hear?"

"Tuning! Why, you make a more abominable noise every time you touch it. What could have induced you to bring that wretched thing into the house?"

"That's it, abuse a thing you don't understand! It's a very good violin, only the strings are a bit worn. Of course, if I decide to have it, I shall get new ones."

"Worn—I should think they are! Look here, Bob, you don't mean to tell me that you're really going to buy that old thing?"

"I told you before, that is none of your business. If I choose to buy it, I shall, so don't give advice when it isn't wanted." [111]

"But it *is* my business!" cries Betty, now thoroughly roused. "Who is to pay for it, I should like to know? Haven't I to work for the money to live on?—am I not trying to work for it now? And instead of helping me, as you ought, you make my head whirl round with that horrid old fiddle!"

Bob jumps up in a fury, and flings the violin into its case. "So this is the way a fellow is treated when he comes home to practise! It'll be long enough before I trouble you again, my lady, I can tell you! I've plenty of friends who understand music rather better than you do, and they tell me that I ought to learn, and would soon play very well. You used to say you wanted me to learn yourself. Now I see just how much your words are worth!"

And he closes the case with a loud snap, and flings out of the room.

In a moment Betty realises what she has done. She flies after him.

"Bob—Bob—stay one minute—I——"

The street door closes with a bang. Bob has gone.

Betty stands there, her head in a whirl. How did the miserable quarrel arise? Just after she had been feeling so happy about her success with the girls, too. Oh, what a wretched, wretched ending to the day! [112]

Tired though she is, Betty cannot go to bed until Bob comes home. At last she hears his step, and flies to the door.

"O Bob, I didn't mean——" she begins eagerly, directly she sees him. But he pushes past her without a word, and, running upstairs, shuts himself in his own room.

Betty goes to her own room, too; but not to sleep. What can she do to make Bob understand how sorry she is for her hasty words, how much she wants to help him, how dearly she longs to win his confidence?

She goes over the brief scene between them, sentence by sentence, as nearly as she can remember it.

"Bob was certainly overbearing and unreasonable," she thinks, her anger reviving a little as she recalls his words. "Oh, but it was my place to help him to be better. I have promised to be the Lord's Soldier. I should have been wiser and stronger than he—and I wasn't, not one bit! I lost my temper. I made no effort to check myself." [113]

These are sad thoughts for poor Betty; but it is often through just such a sense of failure and shortcoming, through just such self-reproaches as hers to-night, that the Lord renews our strength. No spiritual blessing is so full of power as that which follows a time of humiliation. In distrusting ourselves we learn to put a more perfect trust in Him.

Bob still wears an air of deep injury at breakfast next morning. He answers all Betty's rather timid remarks with "Yes" or "No," and seems even to take trouble to show that all confidence between them is at an end.

Sick at heart, Betty starts out on her weary round of rent-collecting. Her sorrow is heavy upon her, and she walks with drooping head and unheeding eyes.

"Bob is wrong to bear malice like this," she thinks. "If he won't listen to anything I have to say, how can I ever make things right between us again? Would it be right for me to go and ask his pardon? It is plain that unless I do something he means to have a grievance against me. Oh, dear, I just feel no heart for my work or anything while things are like this! Lord, do lift the burden, do show me what to do! Do help me to put a stop to the mischief my foolish words have caused." [114]

"The Captain!"

Suddenly turning a corner, Betty's eyes fall upon a little group gathered round a doorstep not twenty yards away.

Three or four shabby little children and Captain Janet Scott. The Captain talking to them, with all that tenderness and loving sympathy that they have never had from their own mothers, poor mites, and for which their baby hearts are craving; the children looking up into her face with eager eyes.

The Captain! Just an accidental meeting in a dull and dirty street; but to Betty it is as though the Lord had sent one of His own bright angel-messengers straight from Heaven to help her!

She runs towards her eagerly; the Captain looks up, and turns to greet her young friend with a welcoming smile.

"Betty Langdale! My dear, I have been hoping every day to meet you."

"O Captain, I am so miserable! I've been so foolish, so wicked; I've made a dreadful mistake, and I don't know how to put it right. Do, *do* tell me what I ought to do!" [115]

Captain Scott takes the girl's trembling hand, and looks attentively at her pale face and the dark rings under her eyes. Then she kisses the shabby little children all round, promising to come again soon, and, turning again to Betty, slips her hand through the girl's arm, and begins to walk slowly up the street.

"Tell me your trouble, dear. Perhaps it is not so bad as you suppose," she says, gently.

"Oh, but it is!" and Betty pours out the sad little story of her quarrel and its consequences. She does not spare herself; as nearly as she can recollect she repeats her exact words.

"You have been to the Lord about this, Betty?" asks the Captain, gravely.

"Oh, yes, I've prayed and prayed, and sometimes it seems as though I ought to beg Bob's pardon; but then, you know, he should *not* buy a violin just now, no matter how cheap it is—we can't afford *anything*, and he was wrong to worry me when I was doing the accounts, wasn't he?"

"Certainly he seems to have acted rather selfishly and unreasonably. But, Betty, you must remember that he does not know this. If you really mean to help your brother, you will have to [116] teach him to understand many things that are dark to him now. Then, too, dear, you must learn to put yourself in his place. He had evidently been dwelling a good deal on the thought that you would think it very clever of him to learn the violin. Boy-like, he had most likely forgotten the family troubles for the moment, and was trying to 'show off' before you. You had once said you wished him to learn, and no doubt he now thinks you very unkind and changeable because you discourage him."

"But, Captain, just think—father in the hospital, all the accounts and rent-collecting to do, no money scarcely——"

"Yes, yes, but Bob has not thought of all that. He has never heard the Lord's voice calling him. He lives in a world of his own. You must learn to get into his world, to read his thoughts, to make him feel that in you he has a real friend. Step by step, dear, you must lead him to his Saviour."

"But he won't listen. He'll hardly answer when I speak!"

"My dear, it is that very barrier between you which you must find a way to break down." [117]

"Oh, Captain! how? How *can* I make Bob understand that I want to help him?" asks Betty almost despairingly.

"Perhaps you could show some interest in his music. Do you play at all yourself?"

"The piano—just a little."

"And, evidently, you have a good ear. Couldn't you offer to show him how to get his violin in tune?"

Betty shakes her head. "I'm afraid he's much too vexed to let me try. Oh, wait! I've thought of something. Couldn't I buy him a new violin-string? I believe one snapped just before we had that wretched quarrel. It would only cost a few pence, I should think."

"Well, my child, I must leave all that to you. Do what you can to make up for your share in the dispute; only be sure to show Bob that he must not act selfishly; that he certainly ought to deny himself any amusement, however good in itself it may be, that would take money which is needed at home.

"Speak quietly to him, dear. Remember the Lord's words: '*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*' [118]

"Ah! Betty, this is your first real attempt to lead some one you love to think of higher things. God grant you may become a real soul-winner one day!

"Be very prayerful, very loving, very wise. Use all the faculties the Lord has given you, give your whole self to His service, and trust Him! God bless you! I shall pray for you and for your brother too," and Captain Janet clasps Betty's hand warmly and leaves her.

What a change the Captain's words have wrought in Betty's thoughts! She is no longer conscious

of a heavy burden, for all her heart is filled with courage and eager hopefulness.

A soul-winner! Does Captain really think she may be that one day? Oh, how beautiful—how wonderful! A flood of joy, pure and sweet, rushes over her heart at the thought. Never, even with dear Grannie, even among the breezy moors, and blue hills, and clear skies of Grannie's home, has she felt a delight so intense. It is, indeed, as though she had caught a glimpse of Heaven.

Ah! what does it matter though she does live in a dull, city street; though her days must be spent in common-place work? It is the Lord alone who can give true happiness, and to none who serve Him in spirit and in truth does He deny His gift. [119]

"Bob, is this the right kind of string? You wanted a new one, I know. The woman at the shop said it would most likely be the E string that required renewing."

Bob, taken completely off his guard, looks up eagerly from his tea and bread and butter. "Yes, that's it; that's just what I——" He stops short, suddenly remembering his determination never to speak of his violin to Betty again.

"It *is* right? Now I call that fortunate," goes on Betty, quietly. "I expect you know how to put it in, don't you, Bob?"

Bob melts still further at this. "Oh, yes; Mr. Wright, one of the teachers at my school, showed me how to put strings in. It's easy enough."

"Ah! but I've heard father say that it's very difficult to get a violin in tune after fitting in a new string."

Bob's face clouds over again; but Betty hastens to add, "Couldn't I help you a bit with the tuning? Couldn't I sound the notes on the piano while you screwed up the string—surely, that is the way people generally do tune violins?" [120]

"Yes; but——"

"But what, Bob, dear?"

"You've got those accounts to do, or something."

"Oh, I've done for to-day. Come, I shall enjoy it, not the music, just yet, perhaps, but I should enjoy helping you, Bob."

Bob makes no answer to this; but directly tea is finished he runs upstairs for the violin-case, and the brother and sister are soon seated together before the shabby little piano.

For the next half-hour there is little heard between them, save—"Too sharp, Bob." "A little lower still." "I say, Betty, give us the octave of that note," and so on. At last the instrument is really in tune, and then the pair try an exercise together, with fairly good results. Bob is delighted.

"Why, Betty, this is first-class! Mr. Wright said I ought to get some one to play with me."

"I should just love to do it, Bob."

There is a long pause. Betty feels she ought to say something more, but doesn't know how to begin.

[121]

"A little lower still."

"I say, Betty"—Bob is speaking in quite a different tone of voice now—"I say, you didn't really think I meant to *buy* the violin, did you?" [122]

"Why, Bob, didn't you say so?"

"No; I said I'd take it if it suited me. Charlie Wright—my teacher's boy, you know—wanted to change it away for my old camera."

"O Bob, I'm so glad—so very, very glad. Oh, why didn't you tell me before?"

"I meant to; but you took a fellow up so."

"Ah! I see just how it all happened. You must remember that I feel so anxious about every penny while father is away, and, Bob, I do want us all to think for one another, and—and"—Betty makes a great effort—"and try to live just as the Lord would have us live, Bob."

Dead silence. Betty's heart beats rapidly. Then come the most unexpected words she has ever heard in her life.

"You *do* try."

"Bob! O Bob, don't say that. I don't deserve it!"

"Yes, you do, Betty. Do you think I haven't seen you trying? Come, come, old girl, don't cry."

"No—no, Bob; only I'm so happy. I——" Betty cannot trust her voice just now to pronounce another word.

CHAPTER XI [123]

FATHER AT HOME

"Father coming home?" cries Betty, as Mrs. Langdale folds up the letter, from which she has just read an extract, "O mother, how beautiful, coming home the day after to-morrow!"

"How jolly!" shouts Bob. "Three cheers for father!" "Jolly, jolly, three cheers!" echo the younger children; and mother says:—

"Well, it *is* good news. Such a dreadful time it has been. I declare I've not felt quite myself one single minute since he went away. And, then, the money, too; not that he'll be well enough to go

on with his work for months to come."

To Betty, however, the one joyful fact is enough.

"But to have father home again! It seems almost years since that night when he lay on the couch, so white and still. I say, mother, do let us give him a real welcome home—do let us make him see how glad we all are!" [124]

"Why, Betty, what a girl you are! You really should think before you speak. You know very well that we haven't a penny to spend on anything."

"Of course, I know. But, mother, that isn't what I mean. Couldn't we *do* something? For instance, I'm sure dear father likes to see things neat and nice. Couldn't we have a real big, spring-clean all over the house?"

"A 'spring' clean in summer, you silly child!"

"Well, you know what I mean. Let's have the curtains down, and the carpets up, and polish the furniture all over."

"That's a jolly good idea of yours, Betty," cries Bob, enthusiastically. "And I tell you what, you've helped me ever so much lately, now I'll just turn round and help *you*. I'm off to get the small pincers from father's tool chest. Won't I have the carpets up in no time! If we all work together we shall soon get the job done."

Betty gives her brother a grateful look, but mother says:—

"I don't think your father will care a bit whether the house is tidy or not. He has never said a word to me about the place all the years we've lived here." [125]

"Oh, but think! Coming straight from the hospital. We must make everything bright and cheerful. Poor father! Mother, do you feel well enough to wash and iron the curtains?"

"Yes, I'll do them; and Clara must clean the windows. But, really, I don't see the use of all this fuss and upset."

"I'll wash all the ornaments and clean the pictures," says quiet Lucy.

"O Betty, may we darn up the holes in the chair-covers?" cry Jennie and Pollie, mindful of their work as Dorcas and her neighbours.

"I'll black everybody's boots," volunteers Harry. There is a general laugh at this, but Bob calls out that he needs Harry's help with the stair-carpets immediately.

So Betty has a houseful of volunteer helpers, and pretty difficult she finds it to manage them all. But she is blessed with a clear head, and, as every one is working for love, and really tries to do his or her best, a great deal of work is got through in the course of the day.

Clara comes out splendidly. "Master coming home? O miss, that *is* news! Brighten up the house? I should think we would brighten it up, just as neat as a new pin all over." [126]

What a topsy-turvy house it is all the rest of the day! Bob and Harry beating carpets in the back-yard as though their lives depended on it; Lucy perpetually polishing glass, and washing china. Jennie and Pollie busy with their needles; mother ironing in the kitchen; Clara sweeping, scrubbing, and black-leading; Betty all over the house, encouraging, directing, and doing a bit of everything by turns.

Bread and cheese for dinner, and a cup of tea at tea-time, taken in the stuffy little kitchen. Yet not a single grumble from any one—even from Bob, who *is* a trifle particular about his meals, as a general rule!

How utterly tired out Betty is when at last she gets to bed! Tired out, but happier in her home than perhaps she has ever been before. Bustle, confusion, dust, hard work, yes; but brothers and sisters all helping each other, all working together, all eagerly looking forward to seeing dear father.

The same thing goes on all the next day, but now the confusion is fast changing into order, and when the following morning arrives—the morning of the eventful day that is to see father's return —the house is cleaner and fresher than Betty ever remembers to have seen it. [127]

It is four o'clock in the afternoon. Bob, his hands in his pockets, is going from room to room, surveying his share in the work with great pride. Lucy is arranging a few cheap flowers in a glass, the children are all on tiptoe with excitement. Betty has gone to the hospital to fetch father home!

"There they are, mother. Quick, here's father!"

Father; crutches under his arms, one foot held away from the ground by a long sling passing over his shoulders; but father, for all that; his eyes shining with love, as his noisy boys and girls rush towards him, followed by Mrs. Langdale.

"Gently, gently, young folks, or you'll tumble father right over."

"Well, it's good to be at home again. Why, mother, how cosy everything looks. One needs to be

away from home for a time, I suppose, just to find out how good it is!"

"It was all Betty's doing," cries Bob. "We all worked at the cleaning-up, but she started it." [128]

Father sinks into the low couch. His leg is still very stiff and painful; but he smiles happily, and gazes all round with such a contented look in his kind eyes that even Mrs. Langdale is struck with it.

"Well, I declare, I do believe you were right after all. Your father does seem quite pleased with everything, and I thought he never noticed how the house looked at all!"

CHAPTER XII [129]

LUCY

For some days after father's return Betty has eyes and ears for scarcely anyone else. To see his dear face, to listen to his dear voice, is such a true delight to her!

Then, too, his presence relieves her from a great responsibility. True, he is much too lame, as yet, to collect the rents, or to call on Mr. Duncan; but he takes all those tiresome accounts off her hands at once. It is as though an actual weight had been lifted from her shoulders, for she has felt the anxiety of keeping Mr. Duncan's books a heavy burden indeed.

But though Betty is deeply thankful to be rid of it all, she is beginning to realise how good this responsibility has been for her.

"I used to make such a fuss over little things," she thinks. "Why, I was quite upset if the girls came in with torn frocks, and dirty faces, or Clara did not clean the kitchen properly; worse still, I used to behave quite rudely to mother if she forgot to arrange the dinner in good time, or made [130] me close a window when I thought it ought to be open. How irritable, how unreasonable I was! How hasty and inconsiderate!

"Ah! yes. I see now that God *had* to send me all these worries; I couldn't learn how to bear little troubles, until I had been through big ones. Dear Captain said that in a happy home every one had his or her true place. It was certainly never my place to speak to mother as I used to do.

"Yes, I believe mother has really loved me better than I deserved. Poor mother! Her life is much duller than mine; she has never had such a friend as my dear Captain Scott; she has never been in the country to stay with darling Grannie; she has just lived on at home, year after year.

"Why, it wasn't until I spent that lovely time with Grannie that I saw how much nicer things could be made here, and now I really believe they *are* nicer. I'm sure every one seems more cheerful lately. Jennie and Pollie have greatly improved; I'm so thankful to see that they have really taken little Minnie White as a close friend; she is a true Army Junior, and will do them a world of good. [131]

"Harry doesn't seem *quite* so rough, and as for Bob, well, he's a perfect dear about those violin exercises now. I'm sure that half-hour we have together over the piano is one of the sweetest in the whole day; and, really, 'Exercise No. 4' is beginning to sound quite pretty.

"The only person in the house I can't altogether make out is Lucy; she certainly isn't all a sister should be, somehow. She does her share of the work, I suppose; but I declare I know more of Bob's thoughts than I do of hers—she lives in a perfect world of her own.

"She reads too much; I never knew such a girl for reading—always over some book or other. I mean to speak to her pretty plainly about that, directly I get an opportunity."

Alas! opportunities for speaking "pretty plainly" come only too easily.

The next day is washing day. Clara Jones's mother comes in to help; mother spends the whole day in the kitchen, and, of course, Betty has plenty to do.

By dint of almost superhuman exertions, Betty manages to inspire Clara and her mother with a desire to get the work cleared up before tea, instead of dawdling over the tubs until late into the [132] evening. Her efforts are successful; by half-past four they have actually finished, and Betty looks forward to a rest, and cup of tea. She will ask Lucy to make it directly.

"Lucy!" she calls. No answer. "Where can that girl be? 'Lucy!' She must come—she ought to come; this is really too bad!"

She runs upstairs, still calling, "Lucy, Lucy!" She peeps into every room; there is no Lucy to be found.

At last a thought strikes her. "Surely she hasn't hidden herself away to read in the attic?" Betty's anger rises. Lucy is in the attic, sitting all huddled up in a chair, poring intently over a book; books, and pen and ink, on the floor beside her.

"Lucy, what on earth are you doing here? And to-day, of all days! I've been searching the whole

house to find you; we all want our tea, and you are calmly amusing yourself with a book!"

"Tea? It isn't tea-time yet, is it?" stammers Lucy, her pale face flushing painfully red, as she pushes her book out of Betty's sight.

"You know I always like tea early on washing-day," cries Betty, still more sharply, "and I must say, I do think it most selfish and thoughtless of you to go away by yourself like this, when we are all up to our eyes in work!" [133]

"I didn't know; I thought the washing was finished," says poor Lucy, her lip beginning to quiver.

"That's nothing to do with it; we're all tired and want our tea; but you never gave that a thought; all you seem to care for is to get away by yourself to read some silly story-book. Such shocking waste of time! Such unsociable behaviour! I only hope you are not reading novels. I am sure it looks as though you come up here sometimes because you are afraid to let father and mother know what you are doing!"

Lucy's head droops lower still, but she makes no answer.

"Well, now, *is* it a novel?"

"No-o."

"Then let me see it at once."

"Betty, I'd rather you didn't; that is, not just now; some other day, perhaps——"

"Oh, it doesn't make any difference; whatever it is, you've no business to waste your time in this way. Do, for goodness' sake, leave books alone for a while, and attend to your work!" [134]

That night Betty goes to sleep with an uneasy sense that the day has not been altogether well spent, in spite of the success of her washing schemes.

Awakening, some hours later, with this uncomfortable feeling strong upon her, she begins to ask herself what has been wrong? Conscience soon tells her that she has been unkind to her sister.

"I *did* speak sharply, and I certainly felt very vexed; but, then, it was aggravating, and there is really too much to do in our house for that sort of thing.

"Of course, I know that Lucy is not so old, or so strong, as I am; but she should have remembered how much I like an early cup of tea on washing-day, and——. What was that? Lucy, did you speak?"

Betty breaks off her meditations hastily, and raises herself on her elbow. Is Lucy asleep on the pillow beside her—surely, she spoke just now?

She is speaking, or, rather, muttering, in her sleep. How strange! Can she be ill?

Then Betty remembers, with a faint thrill of alarm, that Lucy ate neither tea nor supper; and, when mother asked the reason, she said her head ached.

For a long while she lies awake, listening to her sister's uneasy whisperings. "Oh," she thinks, "why was I so unkind to her—suppose she should be really ill?" [135]

Lucy is really ill. After a troubled night of feverish dreaming, she awakes to a consciousness of great pain and stiffness in all her limbs. A doctor is sent for; her parents' worst fears are realised, Lucy is stricken down with rheumatic fever.

She is very quiet and patient, and tries hard not to complain. Her mother nurses her, relieved by Betty now and then.

Love has taught Mrs. Langdale to be a good nurse; love makes her forget her own small illnesses and worries, and think only of her poor little daughter's suffering.

The remembrance of her unkind words gives Betty bitter pain. Lucy was ill when she scolded her. Oh, if she had known!

After a while, as Lucy grows better, Betty begins to excuse herself again. "She *did* read too much; I was right in that, and reading is waste of time—only I wish I hadn't been so cross with her."

Slowly the pain grows less, slowly the fever cools; but, alas! for poor Lucy, the doctor says he fears that this illness will leave lasting bad effects behind it; that, though she will soon be fairly well, she will never be quite as strong again as she has been. [136]

One afternoon, Betty is sitting with her sister, while Mrs. Langdale rests. Lucy has just finished her basin of bread and milk, and Betty thinks she is asleep, until she hears her sigh softly to herself, and then make a restless movement on her pillow.

Betty is at her side in an instant.

"Do you want anything, Lucy?"

"No, thank you, Betty," she says, in her weak, patient voice. But Betty sees that two large tears are rolling down her cheeks.

"O Lucy, you mustn't fret, that's ever so bad for you, and, besides, you're getting well so fast. Shall I read to you? You were very interested in some book just before you were taken ill—tell me where to find it."

"No, no, Betty, not that book; it's of—no—use—now." Lucy's lips quiver so painfully, that she can hardly pronounce the words, and she buries her face in her pillow.

"Lucy, don't! Oh, please, don't! I was horrid to you that day, and I've been sorry ever since. Do let me read, if it's only to make up a little." [137]

Her arm around her sister's neck.

"But, Betty, it's of no use. I can never, never, never do it now. I heard the doctor tell mother this morning that I should always have to be careful, or I should be just as bad again, and—and—it's only really strong people who can do—what I wanted to do." Lucy's voice dies away into such a faint whisper that her sister can only just catch the last words. [138]

"Do what?" asks Betty, in great surprise. Then, suddenly, an idea strikes her. "Ah! Lucy, were you studying for something all the time—not just reading to amuse yourself—were you learning about some work you wished to do?"

"Yes, Betty."

"And all these months I have never thought of that. Oh, what was it? Come, tell me, Lucy, dear."

"I—I wanted to go to the poor heathen women in India, some day, you know. I had read how they suffered, and—and it seemed that God was telling me to go. So I got all the books I could about India—to be ready when the time came—and I read, and read, and even began to learn their language."

"Why, Lucy, how *could* you do that?" exclaims Betty, in the greatest astonishment. [139]

"My music teacher's elder sister came home from India a little while ago, and she told me what books to get from the Library."

"And you did all this, and I never guessed. How stupid—how blind I have been!"

"No—no, Betty. I ought to have confided in you; but, somehow, I couldn't speak of it. I felt it too much, and now it is all at an end," and her sobs break out afresh.

But Betty leans over the bed, and lovingly draws her arm around her sister's neck.

"O Lucy, I feel that you forgive me for my unkindness, but I cannot forgive myself. When shall I get out of the habit of judging too hastily? I can see quite well now that you couldn't tell me your plans, because I was always so full of my own affairs."

"Betty, Betty, that wasn't the reason. You work so hard for all of us—how could I bother you with my hopes and fears?"

"Ah, Lucy! I never met anyone with so much to do, or so many folks to care for as my dear Captain. Yet no one thinks *her* too busy to listen to their troubles. I must learn to be more like her —to empty my heart of self—then, dear, you will never hesitate to tell me everything."

CHAPTER XIII

[140]

COMRADES

"Clara, what *is* the matter with you? You seem to be always fretting about something lately. Now I really must know. Is there anything wrong at your home?"

"No—o," comes in muffled tones from Clara. She has her head turned away, and takes care Betty shall not catch a glimpse of her face.

Betty steps quickly across the kitchen, and lays a hand on the girl's shoulder. It quivers under her touch; yes, Clara is certainly crying.

"Clara, you must tell me what it is. I can't have you going about the house with this miserable face—just when you were beginning to get on so much better, too."

"Beginning to get on better! O miss that's just where it is!" cries Clara, with a sudden burst of tears. "I *can't* get on better. I try and try, and make no end of good resolutions—cart-loads of [141] them—and then I go and break them all again directly. Seems as though my head was no better than a sieve—I can't remember; it's of no use—Oh, Oh, Oh!"

"Clara, Clara, don't, there's a dear girl. And you have been doing better—ever so much; father was saying so to me only yesterday."

"But you don't know how hard it is—you don't know how dreadfully I forget; and then I think, 'Oh, what's the use of trying? I'd far better give it all up, and just muddle along as I used to do.'"

But Betty thinks, "Ah, that's just how it used to be with me, before I went to Grannie's, before I went to The Army Meetings near Grannie's home, and gave my heart to God. I have felt like that sometimes since; but only for a little while, for the Lord has always helped me through the bad times. It is only the Lord who *can* help us through. I ought to tell Clara that—I *must* tell her!"

There is a moment's pause. Betty is nervous, and doesn't know how to begin. She makes an effort.

"Clara," she says softly. "Clara, have you ever tried to understand those words in the Bible, '*Thou* [142] *wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee*'?"

Clara looks up suddenly; her eyes round with wonder. "Why, Miss Betty, whatever do you mean?"

Betty makes a greater effort. "I used to feel as you do," she says. "I used to find I couldn't keep the good resolutions I made; I used to fall into dreadful fits of hopelessness, of wanting to give up trying any more; and then I went to Grannie's—my Grannie is a Salvationist, you know—and she took me to The Army Meetings. And one night, all of a sudden, I saw quite clearly how wrong I had been. I had been trying to live a good life, trusting in my own strength; and no one can do that. It is only by coming to the Lord Jesus that we can be truly good; for it is only Jesus who can wash our sins away, and change our hearts, and make us like Himself."

There is another silence. Clara has taken up a corner of her apron, and is picking at it industriously.

"You think, miss," she says, nervously, after a while, "that—that if I went to The Army Meetings I might find it easier to do right?" [143]

"I'm quite sure of it, Clara! O Clara, pray for a changed heart, ask for it, claim it! With the Lord for your Saviour, you'll soon conquer all the little difficulties that distress you now." Betty is nervous no longer. She has broken the ice and her words flow freely.

"And, Clara, salvation gives you such a lovely kind of happiness—I can't explain it—but very often you'll feel just the happiest girl in the whole world. How can people help being happy when they know they are on the Lord's side, when they know that He saves them, and loves them, and will take them to live with Him at last?

"There—there, I must go now, Lucy needs her dinner; but, Oh! Clara, do think of what I've said; do pray about it; do ask the Lord to show you what to do."

"She—she knows *you*, miss," says Clara softly.

Betty looks up from the toast she is making for Lucy's tea. Some time has passed, and Lucy is almost well again, but Betty insists on waiting upon her as much as ever. [144]

"Who knows me?" she asks. "What are you talking about, Clara?"

"The—the Captain," answers Clara, shyly. A light breaks over Betty's mind.

"You mean my dear Captain! I'm so glad—so very glad—and so you're going to the Meetings regularly?"

"Yes, miss."

"Isn't Captain Scott sweet; isn't she just like one of the Lord's own angel messengers!" cries Betty enthusiastically.

"Yes, miss."

"And she's helped you already, Clara; you're feeling ever so much happier—I can tell that by your voice."

Clara turns slowly round, and points to an Army shield of silver, showing white against her dark dress. What a changed Clara! The tousled hair is smooth enough now under the neat cap, the dress is tidy, the apron clean. But it is not at hair or at dress that Betty is looking, not even at the shield-brooch. No, it is on the smiling face that Betty fixes her eyes.

For the old, sullen, discontented expression has gone, and the plain little face is so bright with joy and triumph that it is sweet to look upon.

[145]

What a changed Clara!

"Clara!" she cries, and drops the toast, and throws her arms round the little servant's neck. "So we're both Soldiers now—we're comrades," she whispers. "Ah, you know now just the difference salvation can make—don't you, Clara?" [146]

"Oh, yes, miss indeed I do!"

"God bless you, Clara!"

"God bless you, miss! it was all through you," whispers Clara, shyly.

CHAPTER XIV

[147]

BETTY'S BIRTHDAY ONCE MORE

Betty's birthday has come round once more.

Autumn and winter have passed since Lucy's illness, and Clara's conversion. Save for a slight limp, father's knee is well again, and Bob's progress with his music is quite wonderful. But the most wonderful thing that has taken place in the whole year, is the change in Betty herself. She *was* one of the most discontented girls to be found anywhere, now she is one of the happiest.

Directly she wakes up this morning she sees that her room is full of bright spring sunshine, and straightway begins planning a little treat for her brothers and sisters.

"Jennie and Pollie have a half-holiday to-day. How fortunate! We'll all go out together this afternoon. A walk in the park among the spring flowers would be just the thing for Lucy. If I [148] could only get mother to come too——"

"Many happy returns of your birthday, my dear, dear Betty!" Lucy's arms are suddenly flung round her neck, Lucy's lips pressed to her cheek. Her birthday! In her planning for other people's pleasure Betty had actually forgotten the day altogether.

It is delightful that Lucy has remembered it, though; and with a little laugh of genuine joy Betty returns her sister's kiss, and then devotes herself to the business of dressing.

Betty rather makes a point of being the first downstairs in the morning; then she is sure that father's breakfast is just as he likes it, and the children's porridge properly made. But this morning, as she passes Bob's door, she notices that the room is empty. Bob up already! Mother's room-door standing wide. Are they *all* up before her? Oh, she must have mistaken the time! No, seven o'clock is only just striking. What can it be?

She hurries downstairs, and now Lucy is close behind her.

Yes, they *are* all up. The sitting-room is full of people. Father, mother, Bob, Harry, Jennie, Pollie, even Clara! For one instant Betty stares at them in utter bewilderment, and then they all make a [149] rush at her, and she understands.

"Many happy returns of the day! Many happy returns of the day!" and father and mother are kissing her, and the boys have hold of her hands, and the younger children are shouting and dancing wildly about her.

Surprise and delight quite take Betty's breath away; indeed it is not until they all draw back a little, and begin holding up various pretty gifts, that she can find a voice to utter a single word. Even then she can only gasp out:—

"Father, mother—Oh, to think you should all remember my birthday like this! I shall never forget this morning—never!" and there are tears of love and joy in her eyes.

"*I* shall never forget how bravely my lass took over my work while I was laid up in the hospital," says father, proudly, as he fills her arms with flowers.

"*I* shall never forget how patiently and unselfishly my little daughter works in the home," whispers mother.

"I'm not the sort of fellow to forget a good sister when I've got one, I should hope," says Bob, in his manliest voice. "Look, Betty, I've got you a little present; it isn't half bad, though, is it?" and [150] Bob pulls out a showy photo-frame for which he has been saving up his pocket-money for some months past.

"Betty, Betty, we've hemmed you four handkerchiefs—and, Oh, we've had such a trouble to get them done without letting you know!" cry Pollie and Jennie. Even Harry has bought her a bag of chocolates; and here is poor little Clara, with a pair of mittens knitted by herself. "Do take them, miss—please. You said we were comrades, you know, and your hands do get so cold sometimes."

So they surround her with birthday gifts, and warm, loving looks; and Betty's heart is full of joy—almost too full to let her speak.

Last year Betty thought of little save herself—of her own woes, her own difficulties, and her birthday was almost forgotten. This year she thinks for others, she forgets herself. Betty—what would they do without dear Betty? There is no fear that her birthday will be forgotten any more by any of them!

[151]

Betty thanks Him with a grateful heart.

Of course, Grannie's letter and parcel arrive by the next post. Betty manages to steal away to her room for a few moments to read the letter all alone. After a loving greeting, Grannie writes:— [152]

"Last year I was anxious about you, my Betty; last year I sent you that little story of the Love-bird, hoping that it might open your eyes to the power love should be in the home. I knew that the light had come into your heart, but I feared that it had not yet found its way into all the corners and crooks of your character. You could not be happy, you could not really help those at home, whilst one little spot of darkness remained. No, you could never *live* the love we spoke about the morning you left me, until your heart was all pure love. For, Betty, my dear, I know well that your life is full of many trials.

"And now I am anxious no longer. With what a thankful heart I write the words! Yes, now indeed, I see that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns alone in your heart; now I know that you are happy, and making those around you happy also. Thank the Lord, Betty, for the blessing He is sending on your work in your home!"

And Betty does thank Him with a grateful heart. She feels indeed like the Psalmist, that her cup runs over with blessings; her home seems to be now most beautiful. [153]

"Betty, what would you like best in all the world—that is, of all the things I could give you?" whispers mother that night.

Betty knows the answer to that question well enough. "To—to be allowed to go to The Army Meetings," she says, in a husky voice, her heart beating thickly.

"I thought so. Well, father and I have decided to let you go, if you still really wish it."

"You'll let me go? Oh, mother—mother!" and Betty's hands are tightly clasped about her mother's neck.

THE END

Samuel and David. Companion to above. Cloth and Picture Boards.

Toddlers. A book for the Tinies. Cloth and Paper Boards.

Rude Rosa. A Story for Girls. Cloth.

Rosa's Resolve. A Sequel to above. Cloth.

Novelties, and How to Make Them. Cloth.

By COMMISSIONER MILDRED DUFF and NOEL HOPE
Cloth

Where Moses Went to School; or, Scenes in Ancient Egypt.

Where Moses Learnt to Rule; or, Scenes in the Wilderness.

Hezekiah the King; or, The City Defended by God.

Esther, the Queen; or, Life in Ancient Palace of Shushan.

Daniel, the Prophet; or, The Boy with a Purpose.

The Bible in its Making: The most wonderful Book in the World.

Mart, The Mill Girl. A Story for Girls.

Fenella's Fetters; or, Unseen Chains. The Story of a Wayward Girl.

The Lawson Girls; or, Tinder and Flint. The interesting history of the inmates of Laburnum Cottage.

Jolly, the Joker. A Life-Saving Scout Story.

Gertie, a Life-Saving Guard.

Keziah in Search of a Friend. A Story for Girls.

Out of the Straight. A Workshop Story. Paper Boards.

The Don't-Know Family. A Tale for Everybody.

A New Tommy-Don't-Know. A Sequel to above.

Jack and His Friends. A Tale of Cat and Dog Life.

Face it Out; or, Straight Roads are the Shortest. A Story for Boys.

Crotchets and Quavers; or, The Making of the Brixwell Young People's Band. A Book for young Band Members.

Betty's Battles. An Everyday Story.

Jabez the Unlucky. A Tale of the Jungle.

The Little Slave Girl. Told by Mammy Sara herself to the writer. By EILEEN DOUGLAS. Paper Boards.

THE WARRIORS' LIBRARY

Full Cloth, 1s. 6d. Half Cloth, 1s.

No. 1. **Catherine Booth: A Sketch.** A brief Life-Story of The Army Mother. By Commissioner DUFF.

" 2. **A School of the Prophets.** A Sketch of Training College Life. By a Scholar.

" 3. **Our War in South Africa.** Our early work on the Dark Continent. By Commissioner RAILTON.

" 4. **The Warrior's Daily Portion. No. I.** Extracts from the Founder's Writings, arranged for one month. By Brigadier EILEEN DOUGLAS.

" 5. **The Way of Holiness.** How to obtain Full Salvation. By Colonel BRENGLE, D.D.

" 6. **Kingdom-Makers in Shelter, Street, and Slum.** Describing the work of our

Slum Officers amongst the poor. By MARGARET ALLEN.

" 7. **Three Coronations.** Sketches of the Lives of Major Deva Vadivu, Staff-Captain Stabb, and Mrs. Major Smith. By Commissioner DUFF.

" 8. **The Life and Work of Father Oberlin.** The Sanctified Pastor of Alsace. By Commissioner OLIPHANT.

" 9. **Farmer Abbott.** An Old-time Soul-winner. By MARGARET ALLEN.

" 10. **The Warrior's Daily Portion. No. II.** A Companion to No. 4 of this Series. By Brigadier EILEEN DOUGLAS.

" 11. **Hedwig von Haartman.** The Life of our Finnish Pioneer. By Commissioner DUFF.

" 12. **Gerhard Tersteegen.** The Life of a Singing Soul-winner. By Commissioner OLIPHANT.

" 13. **Colonel Weerasooriya.** The Life of a prominent Singalese Warrior. By Commissioner BOOTH TUCKER.

" 14. **Bernard of Clairvaux.** The Abbot with a passion for God. By MARGARET ALLEN.

" 15. **Harvests of the East.** Bird's-eye Views of Work in Eastern Lands. By MARGARET ALLEN.

" 16. **A Kindled Flame.** Story of Hilda—a Princess who gave herself to God. By MARGARET ALLEN.

" 17. **Elizabeth Fry.** The Quaker Friend of Prisoners. By Brigadier EILEEN DOUGLAS.

" 18. **Children of India.** Vividly illustrating Child-life in India. By HAROLD BEGBIE.

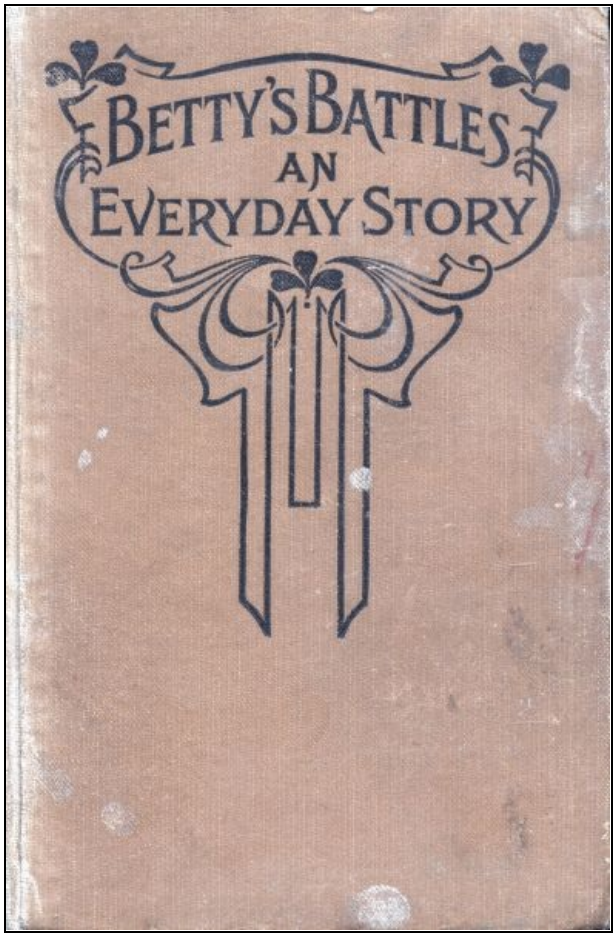
Full list with prices on application to

SALVATIONIST PUBLISHING & SUPPLIES, LIMITED
117, 119 & 121 Judd Street, King's Cross, London, W.C. 1

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

The correction made on page 20 is indicated by dotted lines under the correction "the bed".



1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR

NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation’s business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation’s website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable

donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.