

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Nearly Bedtime: Five Short Stories for the Little Ones, by H. Mary Wilson

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Nearly Bedtime: Five Short Stories for the Little Ones

Author: H. Mary Wilson

Release date: May 31, 2011 [EBook #36293]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Delphine Lettau and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NEARLY BEDTIME: FIVE
SHORT STORIES FOR THE LITTLE ONES ***

NEARLY BEDTIME.

FIVE SHORT STORIES FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

BY

H. MARY WILSON,

AUTHOR OF "CRIP," ETC.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE
OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION APPOINTED BY THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C.;
43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.
BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.
NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG AND CO.

"Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

"I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet;
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

* * * * *

"A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!"

LONGFELLOW.



PREFACE.

My motive in putting together these few short stories is twofold. I wish to help some elder sisters who have, like myself, occasionally found it difficult to keep the little ones happy when sleepiness is beginning to assert its claims—with pride in attendance to scorn any hint of weariness. For this reason the stories are quite short—of different lengths—and the time that they take in reading aloud is noted in the index. But I wish also, if I can, to add a little to the genuine happiness of that pleasant time when "big and little people" for a while are equals—before nurse comes to the door and says—

"If you please, miss, it is the children's bedtime."

Of course, when the summons does come, they all say "Good night" without any grumbling, and run away with bright faces, like my little Maggie, Dora, and Douglas.

KENLEY, 1888.





CONTENTS.

	THE TIME IT TAKES TO READ.
GENTLEMAN PHIL.	12 mins.
BOXER.	9 mins.
IT WAS ALL THOSE HORRID BELLOWS!	5 mins.
GULL'S "TWINSES."	15 mins.
THE B. D. S.	7 mins.



NEARLY BEDTIME.

GENTLEMAN PHIL.

"He is gentil that doth gentil dedes."—CHAUCER.

The birds have been awake, chirping and twittering for more than an hour, and the sun has stolen the first cool freshness from the clear dewdrops, as a pair of small feet come scudding across the lawn and down the gravel path.

Phil is up betimes to-day. He had opened his eyes as he heard cook's heavy, deliberate tread on the stairs—she is stout and old, and he knows her step well—and then he knew that it must be quite early, about half-past five.

Very gaily he tumbled out of his bed, and struggled into his white summer suit.

He grew rather mixed over the buttons. There seemed so many along the top of his small knickerbockers! What could be the use of them all? *One* was quite enough to hold the things together, and he made up his mind to ask nurse to cut off all the others.

Not *now*, though! Oh no! He only peeped into her room through the half-open door, with a mischievous smile on his sweet bonny face, and looked at her still sleeping figure, until she stirred a little. Then he promptly drew back his head, and snatching up his garden shoes, ran noiselessly down the stairs.

He watched from behind the hall curtain until cook had opened the garden door, and gone to fetch her pail.

Now came his opportunity! Pulling on his shoes, he was quickly scuttling over the grass, looking very like a small white rabbit, as he disappeared among the trees and shrubs.

I don't think that my little motherless, six-year-old friend knew that he was doing anything naughty when he escaped in this way from the vigilance of his lawful guardians.

There was an honest, unselfish desire in his heart which had prompted this deeply laid plan, and he had been waiting for several days, with a patience rarely seen in a child his age, for an opportunity to carry it into effect.

As he trotted past his own strip of garden, at the further end of the Rose Walk, he was thinking to himself—

"Of course, nobody must see me do it. Gentlemen never do things because they want to be thanked. I should *hate* it so if she said 'thank you,' even once."

And away went the fat legs down the kitchen garden, and across the paddock, towards Farmer Greeson's corn field, where the golden grain stood helplessly in closely packed shocks.

Poor Farmer Greeson thought it very hard that Club Day should come just in the middle of his "harvesting;" that his precious wheat must stand a whole day waiting to be carried; and that another field must wait uncut while the club enjoyed itself. But, then, the old man was obliged to remind himself that the harvest was much later than usual this year. Unsettled weather and frequent storms had upset so many farming operations.

Ah! But what was a lost day to Farmer Greeson was Phil's golden opportunity.

He had listened to the servants' talk about their holiday, and though he did not quite understand what "Club Day" meant, he was quite sure that he need not be afraid of intruders upon his darling scheme at this early hour, and so he climbed the farmer's gate, and dropped with a merry "hurrah" on to the stubbly ground.

An hour later still finds Phil alone in the field, stooping over the ground and moving slowly along. He looks like a tiny old man, with his bent form and his hat pushed to the back of his head.

Phil is gleaning.

Steadily and laboriously he gathers up the scattered ears of corn.

He finds it harder work than he thought, and he stops now and then to take out his handkerchief and wipe his hot face, with a quaint imitation of the labourers he has so often watched. Then he stands with his arms akimbo, to rest before setting to work again with determined energy.

There is quite a large bundle of gleanings lying on his outspread handkerchief. He has brought his best and largest to hold his gains; and now the heap of corn almost eclipses the border of kittens and puppies, with arched backs and bristling tails, that Phil thinks "so jolly."

Hark! What a delicious peal of laughter.

The little gleaner has stopped again to straighten his back, and is watching the merry gambols of two brown baby rabbits that, quite unconscious of Phil's nearness, are playing round one of the shocks, as if they thought it had been put there solely for their amusement.

Round and round, in and out, they scamper, until Phil's laughter breaks into a shout, and he claps his hands in keen delight.

This brings the entertainment to an abrupt end.

Off fly the terrified animals—their fun and frolic turned to fear by that very human and boyish cry; and the child's merriment dies too.

He begins his labours again, saying to himself, "Well, you bunnies are awfully easily scared! It's a good thing gentlemen can be braver than that."

And so the sturdy legs trudge backwards and forwards across the field.

The sun shines warmly, and Phil's face grows hot and red. Phil begins to feel hungry too.

"If I was a big man, I think I should have a nice lot of bread and cheese! I wish I *was* a man. But I can be a gentleman *now*, father says so."

He stands with his head on one side and his hands in his pockets, looking down thoughtfully at his gleanings. He is sure that he has got enough now; but he is not quite so sure that he can carry them all at once. However, he boldly grasps the corner of his gay handkerchief lifts the bundle, and staggers under its weight across the uneven ground.

Through the little gate on the other side of the corn field, with his back turned to his own home, Phil pushes his way, and passes into the cool shadows of the lane, just as a servant-maid enters the field by the other gate.

If you wanted to escape observation, you did not enter the lane a minute too soon, little Phil.

Look at the earnest purpose in his blue eyes, and the brave determination with which he sets his teeth and struggles on with his load. A little further and he reaches an old broken gate, standing open and leading to a neglected garden.

Phil stops for a moment and listens. He hears nothing.

Yes; an old hen is clucking with motherly satisfaction over two long-legged chickens that are racing for a fat green caterpillar. That is all.

So Phil is satisfied, and plods up the narrow garden footway until he comes to a standstill at an old cottage door. He has to put his precious bundle on the ground while he stands on tiptoe and raises the latch.

"Who's there? Is any one there?" says a quavering old voice, and the child nods his curly head and smiles, but says nothing.

Pushing the door open very softly, he enters the one room of which the cottage consists. On a bed in a corner lies a very old woman; her thin hands clasped patiently on the counterpane, and her sightless eyes covered with a broad white bandage.

"Ah, daughter, I've had a long, long night; and I'll be glad of my cup of tea. But you're main early, ain't you, dearie? I don't feel the sun upon my face yet!"

How difficult it is for Phil to hold his tongue, as he crosses the cottage floor and stands for a moment by Dame Christy's bedside, looking at her

with a whole world of pity in his bonny eyes.

This is by no means the first time that he has been in this humble home; but never has he come as the silent smiling visitor he is to-day.

He puts his bundle on the bed by the old woman's side, looks wistfully at the bandaged eyes, and then creeps slowly and softly across the room and runs out into the sunlight—down the lane.

With tired arms swinging from a sense of relief, with bright curls tossing, and dusty feet plodding over the ground, Phil enters the corn field, and runs—into the outstretched arms of Jane, the housemaid.

And this is the greeting she gives him—

"Well, you are a naughty boy, Master Phil! Nurse is in a rare taking, thinking you've gone and drowned yourself or got a sunstroke or something. You deserve to be kept in bed all day, you bad child! And I wish your pa was at home to whip you as well."

Poor little Phil trudges back by the side of the scolding maid, feeling sobered and crestfallen. It has come upon him like a rough awakening from a sweet sleep that what he has done may look like naughtiness in the eyes of others.

Would they understand if he told them all about it?

But, then, if he told, it would spoil it all—for "gentlemen did kind things, but never talked about them." Those were the very words father had said. Father must know. He had been a gentleman all his life.

Choking down a rebellious sob of disappointment, the child faces nurse's wrath with a brave heart. He says, "I'm very, very sorry, nursie," so humbly, when her half-angry, half-tearful scolding is over, and his winsome face looks so sweet in its unusual gravity, that her loving old heart melts at once.

She hugs and kisses "her boy" again and again; telling him "not to go and get into mischief like this, and never to give her such another scare."

Three days later Phil's father comes home.

Nurse finds an early opportunity for telling him the story of his little son's escapade, adding, however, a sequel of which Phil knows nothing. For on the previous day, Dame Christy's daughter had sent up a message to the nursery, "Might she trouble Mrs. Nurse to step downstairs for a minute?"

And on her entering the housekeeper's room, she had displayed a large handkerchief, having an artistic and warlike border of quarrelsome cats and dogs. With tears in her eyes the young woman spoke of the dear little master's gift and the hard labour it must have cost him.

"And we should never have knowed who did it, but for this, which told the tale. For he came and went so quiet, that mother she thought it must have been a dog as had got into her room, never speaking a word, and coming right away without any one knowing! His handkercher I knowed directly, 'cause he showed it to me only the other day. He's a rale little gentleman, isn't he now?"

Nurse had wisely begged Dame Christy's daughter not to mention, or let her mother speak of the gift, but to leave the child in happy ignorance that his good deed had been discovered. She instinctively felt that "her boy" who would "do good by stealth" would "blush to find it fame."

But now she tells her master all about it, dwelling with pardonable pride

on the "sweet nature of the bairn."

That same evening Phil's father stands by his boy's crib and looks down at the bonny face as it lies on the pillow, while he strokes the curly crop with a loving hand.

The blue eyes are just a little bit sleepy. Nurse has tucked him up for the night, and drawn down the blind. But they are not too sleepy to shine with love and admiration as they look up into the kind face bending over him.

"So, my little son gave nurse a fright the other day?"

"Please, father, I'm *very* sorry."

The child's lips quiver, but the soft eyes still look trustingly upwards. "I was *really* trying to be a gentleman—and—and you said gentlemen didn't tell when they tried to be kind, didn't you?"

And now father quite understands the motive which has closed his child's lips—the tender sense of manly honour, which, even in its early growth, is strong enough to influence the heart of his boy.

That Phil is already "learning the luxury of doing good," and beginning a chain of those "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love," which form "the best portion of a good man's life," fills his heart with a glow of thankfulness.

He stoops, and kissing the pleading, wistful face, says—

"Yes, Phil. Yes, dear little lad, I *did* say so. You need not tell me any more unless you like. I quite trust you. Remember always that you are a gentleman—or better still, try and follow in the steps of that Perfect Example of a loving and gentle Man—and you will make father very happy."



BOXER.

"The poor dog, in life the firmest friend—
The first to welcome, foremost to defend—
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone."

BYRON.



he electric-bell in the guard's van suddenly began to tinkle. Something was wrong with one of the passengers. The train slackened speed, and then stopped altogether.

One by one the passengers' heads appeared at the windows. Such a variety of heads, too! Some wrapped in handkerchiefs, some with hats all awry, some wearing neither hat nor cap, and all looking ruffled and rubbed up, as if a minute before their owners had been snoring in peaceful forgetfulness that they were not in their own quiet beds at home.

This, very likely, was the case, for it was five o'clock on a warm summer

morning, and the train from the North had been tearing along with its burden of drowsy passengers ever since nine o'clock the evening before.

Was it any wonder that this abrupt stoppage—here, where there was not even a platform in sight—somewhat disturbed and irritated the travellers?

"A most irregular proceeding!" cried one indignant gentleman who, in his anxiety to see what was wrong, had pulled the blue window-blind over his bald head.

"It's always the way," cried another fretfully. "Just my luck! Delaying the train, just when I particularly wished to be in town early."

"Perhaps the train is on fire! Oh, guard! guard!" screamed a frightened old lady a few doors further down. "Help me out! This is dreadful!"

But the guard, a kindly, warm-hearted Scotchman, was far too busy to attend to any one but the poor heart-broken young mother, who was clinging to him in her first paroxysm of grief and fear.

"Noo! noo!" he was saying. "Dinna be greeting sae sairly, mem! We'll all be doing our best to find the bit bairn. Jack has gone to tak' a look along the line. But the train's o'erdue, and we maun get to yonder station before we can have asseestance."

Then the news was carried the length of the Scotch express.

A little child had fallen out of the train while his mother was asleep. The lady's dog had gone too!

All the heads disappeared, with different expressions of sorrow for the poor young mother, and that was all.

Not quite, though!

One bright face reappeared. A girlish hand unfastened the carriage door, and in another moment a young lady had scrambled down to the six-foot way and, with her handbag and a bundle of wraps, was making her way to an open door, from which came the sound of bitter, hysterical weeping.

"Guard, I have come to see if I can help in any way. What are you going to do?"

"There is but one way, mem. Yonder comes Jack. He's seen nothing, I'm fearing. We must put the gude leddie down at the next station, and she maun get an engine there and go seek the puir bit bairn."

"Very well, guard. Then I will stay with this lady until we stop." And as the old man thankfully returned to his duties and the train was quickly put in motion, she sat down and put a pair of sisterly arms round the distracted stranger.

"Let us think what we will do," she said in her kind cheery voice, "and let us remember that the angels have been about your little one all this time. It may not be as bad as we think."

"We? Who are you?" asked the dazed, bewildered mother. "I don't know you."

"I am Hetty Saunders. I am going to London to spend the last days of my holiday with my brother. But I can spare the time to help you a little, you know. Let us forget that I am a stranger."

And with true womanly capableness she took the management of affairs into her own hands, drawing Mrs. Hayling on to tell her all she would about her little Willie—and something, too, of Boxer, the gentle, clever Scotch collie.

Half an hour ago they had both been with her. Where were they now?

Let us go back and look at the other side of this little story—Willie and Boxer's side.

They were both of an inquiring turn of mind. This was only their second railway journey; and it was not, therefore, very wonderful that Willie's fingers and Boxer's sharp, inquisitive nose, seemed determined to examine everything.

You can guess that it was with no small relief that Mrs. Hayling saw her little son's round blue eyes grow dim with sleep, as she tucked him up—for the sixth time at least—in the thick railway rug, and told Boxer to lie down beside him.

But it was quite a long time after Willie's mouth opened, to let out some not unmusical snores, that Mrs. Hayling's thoughts were hushed into quiet dreams.

Mothers have so many things to think about and puzzle over!

About four o'clock her little son suddenly opened his eyes, and as suddenly remembered where he was.

He was wide awake!

Boxer did not like the vigorous shake that his little master gave him. He roused himself, it is true; but when Willie climbed on to the seat and looked out of the window, he curled himself round for another nap. Why did not his little master do the same?

"Boxer, I'm 'samed of you! How lazy you are! Come and play wid me."

And the fat arms dragged the dog up again and held him in a tight embrace, from which there seemed no escaping.

"Mother is fast as'eep! We'll play widout her, *dis* time," and Willie fixed his eyes longingly upon the window-strap. Then he looked back again at his mother's white tired face.

He was thinking to himself, "Mother said, Willie mustn't play wid dat fing —and—and me wants to."

Poor mother! why do you not wake? See! your little child is getting nearer and nearer to that forbidden plaything.

He leant against the door and held the window-strap in one hand, while his little face grew grave and ashamed. It was not quite so nice to be disobedient as Willie thought it would be.

Mother, mother! why do you not wake? There is something wrong with the fastening of the door, and even the child's light weight has made it shift a little.

He was peeping down with eager eyes into the depths out of which the window-sash had been drawn.

"I'll send dis strap down dere, and fis' somefing up. S'all I, Boxer?"

The dog stood close beside him, wagging his bushy tail and looking up with two bright loving eyes.

And then the train gave a sudden lurch, the door flew open, and as the child fell forward with a little cry, Boxer sprang after him and seized him by his sailor-collar. Powerless to save his little master from falling, he yet dragged him sideways to the ground, and received the full force of the fall,

as they rolled over and over down the long green bank.

And yet mother did not wake! No! not until that motionless bundle—the child and the dog—had been left many miles away.

"Boxer! wake up! It's time for bekfust."

Boxer did not move.

"I said I was 'samed of you. *Now* I'm 'sameder. You *are* a lazy dog!"

And then Willie's eyes opened wider, and he turned over on his bed. His bed? Why! it was soft green grass! and that was not a bed-curtain up there. It was a tree, and branches of whispering leaves.

Slowly the truth crept into the child's mind, and very slowly it drove two large tears into his blue eyes. Where was mother—dear, dear mother?

He sat up and looked round him. "Mother! mother! I'm very, *very* sorry!" he cried; the remembrance of his disobedience being full upon him. But his voice ended in sobs, as he buried his face in the grass again. "Oh, mother! Willie *does* want you so!"

Mother was coming. Her strained, anxious eyes had already discovered the little figure lying stretched upon the ground.

In another moment the pilot-engine had stopped, and she had clasped her darling in her arms—alive—unhurt—and was covering him with kisses, while thankful tears ran down her cheeks.

It was left to Hetty Saunders to stoop down and stroke Boxer's motionless figure, and in that touch to learn how the dear doggie had lost his life for his little master.



IT WAS ALL THOSE HORRID BELLOWS!

A STORY TOLD BY A LITTLE GIRL.

I heard Dick—he's my biggest brother—learning his "Rep" the other day. I don't quite know what "Rep" is; but he was saying some words over and over again, and some of them stuck in my head. I can remember them now.

I don't often remember things; but that is because I've got a head like a sieve—nurse says so.

"What's in a name?" he read out of the book—and then something about a rose smelling sweet. *That* part doesn't matter.

If Dick had asked *me* "What's in a name?" I could have told him quite

well. But Dick didn't ask me, and so I will tell you instead. I think there's a great deal in a name—at least, in a nickname. There are all kinds of spiteful little prickles that hurt ever so much more than others, because they stick in our *feelings*.

I think I must have got a whole lot of that kind of thorn in me just now, for I *do* feel sore.

Every one has begun to call me Matty, and I can't *bear* it!

Did you say Matty was rather a pretty name?

Perhaps it is, if it is the proper short for your name; I mean, if you were christened Matilda. But *my* name's Ginevra!

Now, do you understand that they all call me Matty just to tease me, and I *hate* it. I do.

I've got as far as adjectives in grammar, so I know that the long horrid word which they put before Matty sometimes is an adjective. I'm not going to write it down here—no, not for any one—because it is such a nasty, unkind word. But it begins with an M. The next letter is an E, and then comes D, and there are seven more letters, I think.

And this is all because the other day it was raining very fast, and there was nothing to do!

There never is anything to do on a wet day; I mean, nothing interesting. Dick plays with me sometimes; but he was reading a story, with dreadful *fighting* pictures to it, in the *Boy's Own Paper*, so I knew he wouldn't want to come. And Teddie had gone to sleep in the armchair.

Wasn't that a stupid thing to do?

Well! I was obliged to get something to do—wasn't I? And it wasn't my fault that Ann left the dear little drawing-room bellows behind her, when she came to make up the fire, was it?

You can do nice, funny things with bellows.

I've tried.

But Dick didn't like me to blow down his neck; and Teddie got quite cross when I sent a puff of wind into his ear and woke him up. He needn't have thrown the footstool at me, need he?

I went out of the schoolroom after that, and such a *nice* thought came into my head.

I would be a wind-fairy.

I would be a *naughty* wind-fairy first, and go and blow everything out of its place—all untidy and crooked; and then I could change, and be a *good* wind-fairy, and go and blow all the things straight again.

So I went into all the rooms.

It *was* funny!

I blew the antimacassars on to the floor, and the visiting-cards out of the china-plate.

That was in the drawing-room.

The best fun was in the nursery, where all the clean handkerchiefs and collars and cuffs were on the table. They went puff, puff, all over the floor, just like big snowflakes, and I could hardly help stepping on them.

The bedrooms were not so much fun. So I finished by going to the dining-room, as soon as Ann had gone away, after setting the tea.

Nobody will believe me when I say that I really *was* going to put everything tidy again! But I never got so far as being the good wind-fairy. Everything always goes just the wrong way!

First of all, the servants finished their tea sooner than they generally do, and nurse went straight back to the nursery. She might have waited—mightn't she?

And wasn't it unkind of Mrs. Rose to come and call, and to have to be shown into the drawing-room? She is our doctor's sister, and she is so stiff and white that we call her Mrs. *Primrose*. That's *her* nickname. But it never pricks *her*, because she never hears it.

I wonder if nurse is right when she says, "It is going against the Catechism to make nicknames for grown-up people"?

Well! I didn't know that if you blew a flame with the bellows it would make it run about everywhere. Did you?

I was only trying to make the spirit-lamp burn faster under the kettle.

I was just beginning to be the *good* wind-fairy then. And the silly flame ran all over the table-cloth, and there was such a flare-up!

I *was* frightened.

The tea-cosy was burnt. So was the table-cloth. Ann had 'stericks. I think that is what nurse called them. Mrs. Primrose came running in with mother from the drawing-room, and she fainted.

That was all!

At least, I was sent to bed, and now they call me Matty. Don't you think it is unkind of them? Ginevra is such a pretty name too!

I didn't *mean* to be naughty. And I do wish mother would make me understand all about it; but Teddie is ill, and, of course, she can't leave him until he's better. I shall have to wait, I suppose. But I can't be happy again until I have had a nice talk with mother. She makes everything so *understand-ible*.

What did nurse mean when she said, the other day, "There's one comfort; Miss Ginevra's character is still unformed"?



GULL'S "TWINSES."

"Children of wealth or want, to each is given
One spot of green, and all the blue of heaven!"

ind! mind! I say, Tom, you're frizzing that 'erring black!"



"I ain't."

"My eyes! don't it smell fine? Oh! I do wish father'd come. He's allus a long time when the supper's 'ot;" and Bob, as he spoke, heaved a sigh of such prodigious depth that it might have come from his boots—if he had possessed any, poor little man!

These two small boys, Tom and Bob Gull, were six years old.

"We is only twinses," Bob would say.

Perhaps he said "only" to make us understand that they were just alike in the matter of age, but that there the likeness ended.

Bob, the merry and talkative, was the one who led Tom, the quiet and silent. Bob's twinkling, puppy-like eyes—which peeped at you through a tangled fringe of brown hair—were the exact contrast to Tom's shy blue eyes, shaded by long, fair, girlish lashes. And Bob's jolly little round figure seemed to say, "Anything, be it meagre soup or even dry bread, fattens *me*;" while Tom's thin little limbs gave one a thought of unconscious cravings for appetising food.

The room where they were watching for father was a third floor front in Pleasant Court, not far from Waterloo Junction. Like many such "living-rooms," it can be best described by telling you that everything in it which should be large was small, and the other way about.

For instance, the fireplace was small and the crack under the door very large. The cupboard was very roomy, but the things kept in it very much too small and scarce. The bed was wide, but the blanket and counterpane sadly narrow.

Was there nothing that was as big as it should be?

Yes, indeed! In spite of these unsatisfactory surroundings, there was as large-hearted a love to be found in the small family which these four walls sheltered from the cold outside world, as any one could wish to see.

"I don't believe father's *never* coming;" and Bob sighed again.

By this time the herring had found a cindery resting-place on a plate before the fire, and the twins were sitting side by side, with their bare toes on the fender and their eyes fixed upon the door, watching eagerly, like two little terriers.

But the sigh was answered by a distant sound, the plod—plod—plodding of weary feet up the two flights of uncarpeted stairs.

Then there was a grand commotion! The cushionless armchair was dragged nearer the fire; the old slippers dropped sole uppermost into the fender. And then Bob and Tom clung with a vice-like embrace each to an arm of the tall, gaunt, kindly eyed man who had opened the door.

"Father, father! the 'erring's done just lubly. I *am* glad you're come at last!" This from Bob.

The father's hard, rough hand rested upon his tangled crop, but his eyes were looking into Tom's upturned face.

"And Tom, eh?" he asked.

"Jolly glad," answered the child readily.

Then the three sat down to their evening meal.

Would you like to know what it consisted of?

Tea, of a watery description, but *hot* (Bob took care of that) and *sweet*—

at least, father's cup, owing to Tom's kindly attentions with a grimy thumb and finger. The herring. This, of course, was the chief dish. Several tit-bits, trembling upon father's fork, find their way into the "twinses'" mouths.

Lastly, bread and dripping.

Gull had tried to teach his motherless lads "to do as mother used." So there followed a systematic cleaning and arranging of the small supply of crockery.

Tom was the first to find a seat upon father's knee as he sat by the fire; but Bob soon climbed opposite to him, and together they looked with expectant eyes into father's face.

And father rubbed his head ruefully as he said, "Eh! I've got to tell the little lads summat to-night, have I? But there's nothing new been done, as far as I knows. It's the old dull story, bairnies. The fewest tips when the weather's the bitterest."

Gull was an outside porter at Waterloo Junction; and a slight lameness, caused by rheumatism, often cost him dearly. If his step could have been quicker, it would many times have taken him in the front of the younger porters, who darted forward and seemed to get all the jobs. The sixpences came very slowly into his pocket.

To-night he felt more than usually *down*, as he expressed it; and when he felt Tom's little bare toes slipping for warmth under his strong brown hand, tears crept into his eyes, and had to be rubbed away with the back of his sleeve.

Bob was very quick to notice this.

"I say," he cried, "you've been and gone and got something in your eye!"

"Smuts," suggested Tom.

"Oh, let me get them out, father! *Do!* I'll be ever so gentle." And Bob suited the action to the word by raising himself on his knees to a level with Gull's face, and thrusting a screw of his old jacket into the corner of the suffering eye.

The operation ended in merry laughter, and the boys never knew that the smuts were really tears forced to the surface by an overburdened heart.

"Father was just *real* funny," that evening, as Bob whispered to Tom, when half the blanket covered them, later on—"just *real* funny, wasn't he?"

And Tom answered sleepily, but happily, "Yes, jolly."

Meanwhile, the tired bread-winner sat alone by the fire, with all the fun faded from his face as he wondered "how long bad times lasted with most folks?" It was not until, with the childlike simplicity that was part of his nature, he had knelt and repeated the short and perfect prayer with which his little lads had made him so familiar, that any look of comfort or hope returned to his care-lined face.

A little anxiety, but a very pressing one just now, came with the thought that the four dear little feet, which had been treading the world for the past weeks chilled and barefooted, would very probably have to curl up piteously on the cold pavement for some time longer. To get two pairs of small boots, and hope for money to pay for them by-and-by, never entered Gull's head. He had always paid his way without owing any man anything, as his father had before him.

Poor father! and poor little twins!

Yet wishes are sometimes carried quickly to their fulfilment; for a divine Lord changes them into prayers as they go upward.

The following evening, just at the hour when his boys were again straining their ears for the first sound of his footsteps, Gull was standing against one of the lamp posts outside Waterloo Station. He was peering anxiously into the face of every passenger who entered the station, every traveller who drove up from the busy streets, every business man who hurried in from the City.

Gull's lips were hard set. His eyes had a strained, anxious look; his expression was that of a warrior who was fighting a battle against heavy odds.

All day long there had been an inward struggle. Hour by hour the fight had been prolonged. Would honesty win the day? Was Gull leaning upon a strength mightier than his own?

He kept one hand buried in his pocket, always fingering there a *something* which was the cause of all this mental disturbance. His other hand buttoned and unbuttoned his overcoat with nervous restlessness.

And as he watched, two gentlemen came towards him under the gas lamps. They were walking arm-in-arm, and talking earnestly about shares and stocks, and all those mysterious and fascinating things, that a certain Mr. Weller said "always went up and down in the city."

When Gull saw them he started forward, and looked searchingly into the face of the elder of the two. Then he followed them closely into the station—shuffling along lamely but resolutely.

Twice he put out his hand to touch this gentleman's sleeves, but something stronger than his will seemed to hold him back.

At the platform gate the ticket collector spoke to him.

"What! are you going by the 6.5, Gull?"

"No," he answered; "but I'm bound to have a word with yon gent before he goes."

"If it's a tip you're after, you're on the wrong tack, mate. I know yon gentleman too well." But he let Gull through the gate.

Mr. Kingsley, the elder traveller, was settling himself in a first-class carriage, and leisurely enjoying the delightful employment of lighting his first cigar after a long day's work, when Gull opened the door and looked in.

"Beg pardon, sir," he began, "but did I carry a box for you this morning to the South Eastern, sir?"

Mr. Kingsley looked him well over before he answered, with a twinkle of amusement in his little bright eyes—

"What if you did, man? Wasn't the sixpence heavy enough?"

Gull knew now that he had found the man he wanted. He drew his hand from his pocket and held a bright half-sovereign towards Mr. Kingsley.

"That's what you give me, in mistake, sir," he said huskily, adding, "I'm glad I remembered who 'twas as give it to me."

Again Mr. Kingsley looked the porter well over. Then he turned his eyes to the further end of the railway carriage, and was relieved to see that his fellow-passenger was, to all appearance, deeply interested in his evening paper. I say, to all appearance, for the truth is that he was listening to all that passed; and it is from him that I heard this story, which is no fiction.

Still, though satisfied that he was unnoticed, Mr. Kingsley did not take the proffered coin. After a moment's pause he said—

"How did you find out that I was coming back this way to-night?"

"I seemed to know as you was a 'season,' sir," Gull answered, "and I watched for you."

"Well, well, man! and now, as to that half-sovereign. I expect it will be of more use to you than to me—eh? Keep it, man; keep it."

Gull's pale cheeks flushed.

He stammered out, "You'd—you'd best take it back, sir." It seemed to him as if this was some new form of that terrible temptation which had been assailing him all that long day; and he thrust the half-sovereign forward again.

"No, no! Keep it, man!" repeated Mr. Kingsley. "I'm not going to say a word about your honesty. You are just as much a man as I am; and a true man is always honest. But keep it, *because* the Christmas bells will ring to-night."

"Thank you, sir."

Written, the words appear cold; but said, as Gull said them, they carried an amount of warmth and gratitude which quite satisfied Mr. Kingsley without the half-involuntary speech that followed, "So there *will* be boots for the little lads, after all!"

"Bless the man! How jolly you look! Did you get your tanner, then?"

This was the ticket collector's greeting as Gull passed.

"Yon gent's a trump, and no mistake!" answered the other as he hurried along, eager for the delight which *such* a story would bring to the little ears now listening for his coming in that third floor front in Pleasant Court.

I wonder what it was that moved Mr. Kingsley to a wider generosity that evening than was at all usual in the money-wise, business man? Could it have been that he was led to it partly by the fact—though he was quite unconscious of it—that there was something similar in the home relations of these two men?

For Mr. Kingsley was also a widower; and it was his little only daughter who was pressing her tiny nose against the window-pane, and trying to guess how many people would go by the gate before daddy set it swinging and came up the drive.

Patsy's greeting was quite as loving and vigorous as the one the "twinses" gave their father every day. The slippers warming at the fire were elegant braided ones, bound round with velvet. Well! what of that? It was the love that thought of putting them there which made them so comfortable; and so, in that respect, Gull's were quite as good to wear as Mr. Kingsley's.

When the two were comfortably settled, Patsy began to rummage in all daddy's pockets.

"It's Christmas present night!" she cried. "Where's my little yellow money?"

Mr. Kingsley felt in his pockets with a musing air.

"I don't know what my little maid will say," he said at last, producing four half-crowns; "but I have no nice half-sovereign for her to-night—only these big ugly white things. It is true they will buy quite as many toys. And I *might* have had 'the yellow money,' only now, I expect, it is turned into shoeleather."

At the opening of this speech Patsy's face had borne an expression of disgust and disappointment; but before it was finished, it changed to one of undisguised interest.

"Oh! I'm *sure* you've been in a fairy tale to-day, daddy! You know I just *love* fairy stories. *Do* begin at once, before nurse comes. Tell me about it quickly—do, *please*."

And so, out of the materials that Gull had given him, Mr. Kingsley pleased his little daughter by weaving a wonderful modern fairy story. He had rather a talent that way, and had learnt by experience the kind of stories that the little ones like best. This time his narrative was "truer" than he knew; and Patsy acknowledged, when it was done, that it was "the nicest and beautifullest that she had heard for a long time."

And while Patsy's father was telling the story in his way, another version of it was being repeated again and again to the twins, high up in that old London house.

They were never tired of hearing it, never tired of asking questions; and all the time the feeling of gratitude in their father's heart—which had been like a little seed, planted there by the kind words and gift of Mr. Kingsley—grew and grew until he *longed* to *do* something. He had only as yet said, "Thank you, sir;" but now he longed to show his gratitude in a more fitting way. So thought the "twinses," too, for Bob said presently—

"Father, shouldn't I just like to do something nice for that gentleman! I wonder whether you're like to see him again?"

"In course, lad. I shall often see him pass, I'll never forget him; but it's not so likely as he'll remember me. Got summat better to do, I reckon. Yes; he'll come most days, seeing as he's a 'season.' But, there—you're right! I don't feel as if I shall be able to rest until I've done 'summat nice for him,' as you says, if it's only to carry his bag for nothing. But summat bigger nor that would *ease* me more. What a rale gent he is, to be sure!"

There was no disguising the tears that stood in Gull's eyes now; and strange to say, he did not try to hide from his "little lads" that they were there.

He made the boys put their feet, now so stoutly booted, in a row upon the fender. How the brass tips shone in the firelight! And there was *such* a jolly noise when the heels knocked against the floor! Bob made the grand discovery that he could dance a hornpipe. And his sturdy feet careered over the floor, clattering, tapping, and jumping, until the quiet Tom was roused into clapping and "hurrahing" with delight.

His "act of irregular charity," as he called it, quickly faded from Mr. Kingsley's mind—so quickly, too, that when one of the outside porters occasionally helped him more readily than usual, or seemed less eager for the accustomed "tip," he never thought that it might have any connection with that Christmas Eve adventure. He was short-sighted, too, and not very quick to recognize faces. He did not know that as he passed out of the station every morning, Gull's eyes followed him with a pleasant *remembering* look, that Gull's hand was always ready to throw back the doors of the hansom if the day was wet and he drove, and that Gull's feet were swift to carry their owner away before the accustomed "coppers" could be offered.

The first question that always greeted Gull when he got home to his boys in the evening was, from Bob—

"Did you see *our* gentleman to-day, father?" echoed by Tom's eager—

"Did you, father?"

A year had nearly passed away. Christmas was coming again, this time dressed in a mantle of thick, choking fog and biting frost. The days seemed to be turned into night. People and things looked queerly distorted and unnaturally large. The street lamps tried to pierce the gloom all day with foolish, blinking eyes; and every one took his full measure of grumbling.

One evening Mr. Kingsley hurried up the steps to Waterloo Junction with a feeling of relief that the unknown perils of the gloomy streets were safely past. He pushed his way through a little group of idlers near one of the doors, and was turning towards the booking-office, when he was startled by a violent commotion close behind him. He turned to find two men—both tall, but one powerful and thick-set, the other meagre and ill-clad—engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle.

His first impulse was to continue his way and leave them to fight it out.

"It is some wretched, drunken tramp," he said to himself. But a second look showed him that there was too much desperate method on the part of both for this to be the case; and he was looking round for a policeman to interpose the "stern arm of the law," when the struggle was ended as abruptly as it had begun.

The stronger man of the two suddenly flung his antagonist from him with an angry oath, and then disappeared in the fog. He left the other lying almost at Mr. Kingsley's feet—flung there upon his back, with one hand hidden beneath him. He lay motionless as death, silenced by the force with which his head had struck the ground. His white face and closed eyes sent a quick fear to Mr. Kingsley's kindly heart as he bent over him, and he turned to the two porters who hurried up, to say—

"The man's terribly hurt, I'm afraid. There was a quarrel, and he was thrown down."

While one of the men answered him the other stooped down to look at the prostrate figure, and then started to his feet again, crying—

"Mate—it's Gull! It's Gull, I tell you! What does it mean?"

With the help of the policeman, who appeared at this moment, and watched by the usual curious crowd of onlookers, they bathed Gull's face with cold water, forced brandy between his lips, and chafed his cold hands. Then it was that they discovered, tightly clasped in the hand upon which he had been lying, a folded leather case. The policeman unbent the convulsive fingers, and examined this with careful eyes.

"However did Gull get hold of *this*, I wonder?" was his exclamation.

Mr. Kingsley looked at it with a puzzled expression. It had a strange resemblance to his own pocket-book! Thrusting his hand hurriedly into his various pockets proved to him, without a doubt, that his it was indeed. And a few words were sufficient to convince the policeman of his right to claim it.

But here a sudden movement from Gull turned all eyes towards him once more.

He raised himself to a sitting position, and with one hand to his poor dazed head, gazed with dim, half-unconscious eyes at the other held before

him—wide open and empty!

As he gazed, a bitter cry escaped his lips.

"Then the brute has made off with it, after all!"

This, you see, was the way in which Gull "eased himself," as he expressed it, and satisfied the demands that gratitude made upon his honest heart.

I have very little more to tell you, and that you could almost guess for yourself.

Gull spent a few quiet days on his bed, attended devotedly by his little lads, who were much over-awed at father's "bein' took bad," and filled with wide-eyed wonder when "our gentleman" climbed the old staircase more than once, to see how father was, and to provide for him some new comfort.

Once again, two versions of a true story were told in two separate homes. It was the version that the "twinses" heard which was the shortest in the telling.

"Tell us all about it, father," said Bob, when Gull was "rested" enough to talk to his boys.

"Nay, lad, there ain't much to tell. I just collared the thief as he was making off with Mr. Kingsley's pocket-book, and he didn't like it somehow, and threw me down. But that's all about it."

"Oh! but you got the pocket-book from him first, you know, father."

"Ay! I did that," Gull answered, with a smile; and there the *telling* of the story ended. I don't know when the *acting* of it will be finished, for there was a difference in the lives of Gull and his "twinses" from that day forward—"all along of Mr. Kingsley's kindness," as they would tell you; but "because I have found an honest man," as Mr. Kingsley himself would say to little Patsy.



THE B. D. S.

The Bill had passed the House of Commons [I mean, you know, that nurse had approved of it], and much anxiety was felt among the little pleaders as to its first reading in the Upper House—*i. e.* would mother say "Yes!"

They all knew that mother had a clear judgment; but it was just her far-seeing power that made them tremble. She might see breakers ahead

which they knew nothing about.

And perhaps mother *did* see a few objections to this new plan. However that may be, as the little ones presented their petition, she smiled.

This was, indeed, a good sign, and more than that, the smile was followed by a ready consent as the plan was unfolded.

The Bill was passed. Hurrah!

The B. D. Society was allowed; and mother had actually agreed to be patroness and prize-giver.

"What a dear, jolly mother she is!"

"She's a duck, and no mistake!"

Rather unbusinesslike language, but very expressive!

Well, but what did it mean, this B. D. S.?

It was only a Bedroom Decorating Society. But it seemed a very beautiful idea to the four curly headed little girls who sat squeezed up together in the large nursery armchair.

Pattie, Mollie, Kitty, and Norah. Four little Irish maidens, with this lovely plan to talk over and make perfect, while a snowstorm kept them indoors to-day.

Pattie. "Don't let's tell each other how we'll do our rooms until afterwards."

Norah. "You'll *never* keep your plans to yourself. You never *could* keep anything in."

Mollie (up in arms for her sister). "Don't be nasty, Norah, or something *bad* will happen to you!"

Norah (looking a little ashamed of herself and wisely changing the subject). "Let's begin now. We'll take all the things out of our rooms first, and then put them back in new places—shall us?"

As you may guess, the B. D. S. was intended to promote a general taste for artistic style in the children's bedrooms, or as Kitty expressed it, simply and to the point, "It is to make us put our things *illigantly*."

Mother determined to let this new idea have a fair trial; though she could not help feeling a little nervous as she heard the scimmaging of the furniture, and thought of possible breakages.

She sat at her needlework, and listened to the distant sounds which reached her faintly from the rooms above. Then she began to wonder whether the excitement and interest would last out the fortnight, at the end of which she had been asked to present a prize.

Suddenly her motherly heart gave a terrible throb.

There was a thud—thud—thud, and that horrid bumping sound, as something soft tumbled over and over down the stairs.

With a white face she rushed out of the dining-room, to see little Norah and a large bolster roll on to the floor at her feet!

A breathless scream escaped from the terrified child.

The three other curly heads were peeping through the banisters, and three pairs of Irish blue eyes were looking horribly scared and unhappy.

But mother did not see them.

She picked up the screaming Norah, and carried her into the dining-room, while nurse came running from the kitchen and her ironing.

All the time that the sobbing little victim of the B. D. S. was being soothed into calmness, and the big swelling wheal on her forehead bathed and tended, Pattie, Mollie, and Kitty—upstairs—looked at one another in frightened silence. Then Mollie said sadly—

"I *knew* something would happen to Norah. It always does if she says nasty things."

"Rubbish, Mollie! That's nonsense! She fell down because her bolster was so big, and she couldn't see where the stairs came!" cried Pattie.

"I'm going to see where she's hurted herself," announced little Kitty; and she trudged off, leaving Pattie and Mollie to sort the heap of odds and ends that lay on the landing.

They went about it in doleful silence at first.

Then Mollie said, "This *is* my counterpane—isn't it, Pattie?"

"No; that's Norah's. Don't you see the corner all crumpled up which she holds in her hand when she goes to sleep?"

"Oh dear! oh dear! I don't think, after all, that it's *easy* having a B. D. S. It seemed just to spoil it all when Norah went thumping down—down, like a big ball."

Pattie gave a little sigh, too, and was putting down the chair she was carrying that she might rest her arms and have room for another deeper sigh, when mother's voice was heard calling—

"Mollie! Pattie! I want you down here!"

Off they ran, feeling down in their little hearts that mother *must* know how to put things happy again.

First of all they looked with interested and pitying eyes at Norah, whose head had become an odd shape, and whose face was white and patchy. Then they stood side by side with Kitty, watching mother's face, and waiting.

"The B. D. S. has had a bad beginning, dears," she said. "I don't think it was a good plan to pull everything out of your rooms to start with. But never mind that now."

As mother spoke she kept one hand behind her chair, and she smiled.

She was sorry for her little girls.

"I am going to propose," she went on, "that you should alter your society a little bit. The *letters* will be the same. It will still be the B. D. S.; but the work will be different and easier."

The little faces all brightened as she continued—

"I like my little girls to be tidy and neat in their rooms; but I think mother knows best how the furniture should stand, and where the things look nicest. So I suggest that we call our society the Bedroom *Dusting* Society. I will give you each a little cloth, and you shall dust your rooms every morning after nurse has made the beds. And *once a week* I will award a prize."

Then mother drew her hand forward and held before their eyes a Japanese fan, with a long handle, to which was tied a dainty bow of blue ribbon.

"This," she said, "shall be given next Saturday to the tidiest of the four members of your society. Now, what do you think of my plan?"

"It's just splendid, mother darling!" was the unanimous cry of the listeners; and a tangle of soft loving arms nearly throttled her in a sudden embrace.

"And you *know*," came in a plaintive voice from Norah, "if you always give us a pretty thing like that for a prize, it *will* be the Bedroom *Decorating* Society, too!"

THE END.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

*Most of these Works may be had in Ornamental Bindings,
with Gilt Edges, at a small Extra charge.*

s. d.

Adventurous Voyage of the "Polly," and other Yarns.

By the late S. W. SADLER, R.N. With four page illustrations.
Crown 8vo

cloth boards 3 0

All is Lost save Honour.

A Story of to-day. By CATHERINE M. PHILLIMORE,
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo

cloth boards 1 6

Alone Among the Zulus.

By a PLAIN WOMAN. The Narrative of a Journey
through the Zulu Country. With four page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

An Innocent.

By S. M. SITWELL. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Baron's Head (The).

By FRANCIS VYVIAN. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 0

Behind the Clouds.

A Story of Village Life. By GRACE HAMILTON.
Printed on toned paper, with three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 0

Belfrey of St. Jude (The).

A Story by ESMÉ STUART, author of "Mimi." With
three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Bernard Hamilton, Curate of Stowe.

By MARY E. SHIPLEY. With four page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 0

Brag and Holdfast.

By EADGYTH, author of "The Snow Fort," &c. With
three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Captain Eva.

The Story of a Naughty Girl. By KATHLEEN KNOX.
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Chryssie's Hero.

By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Fan's Silken String."
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Christabel the Flower Girl of Covent Garden.

By the author of "Our Valley," &c. With three page
illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Cruise of the "Dainty," (The); or, Rovings in the Pacific.

By the late W. H. G. KINGSTON. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Engel the Fearless.

By ELIZABETH H. MITCHELL. With four page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 3 6

Fan's Silken String.

By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Northwind and Sunshine,"
&c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Fortunes of Hassan (The).

Being the strange story of a Turkish Refugee, as told by himself. By the author of "Our Valley," "Rosebuds."
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Frontier Fort (The); or Stirring Times in the North-West Territory of British America.

By the late W. H. G. KINGSTON. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Geoffrey Bennett.

By Mrs. ISLA SITWELL, author of the "Church Farm."
With three page wood cuts. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 3 0

Great Captain (The). An Eventful Chapter in Spanish History.

By ULICK R. BURKE, M.A. With two page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 0

Hasselaers (The).

A Tale of Courage and endurance. By E. E. COOPER.
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Invasion of Ivylands (The).

By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Fan's Silken String."
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

John Holbrook's Lessons.

By M. E. PALGRAVE. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

King's Warrant (The).

A Tale of Old and New France. By A. H. ENGELBACH.
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Lettice.

By Mrs. MOLESWORTH, author of "Carrots." With
three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 0

Little Brown Girl (The).

A Story for Children. By ESMÈ STUART, author of
"Mimi," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Mate of the "Lily" (The); or, Notes from Harry Musgrave's Log Book.

By the late W. H. G. KINGSTON, author of "Owen
Hartley," &c., With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Mike.

A Tale of the Great Irish Famine. By the Rev. E. N. HOARE, M.A., author of "Between the Locks." With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Mimi: a Story of Peasant Life in Normandy.

By ESMÉ STUART, author of "The Little Brown Girl." With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Mrs. Dobbs' Dull Boy.

By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Northwind and Sunshine," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

My Lonely Lassie.

By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Mrs. Dobbs' Dull Boy." With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Our Valley.

By the author of "The Children of Seeligsberg," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Percy Trevor's Training.

By the Rev. E. N. HOARE, M.A., author of "Two Voyages," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Philip Vandeleur's Victory.

By C. H. EDEN, author of "Australia's Heroes," "The Fifth Continent," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Pillars of Success (The).

By CRONA TEMPLE, author of "Griffenhoof," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Reclaimed.

A Tale. By A. EUBULE EVANS. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Round my Table.

By H. L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON, author of "The Topmost Bough," &c. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Steffan's Angel, and other Stories.

By M. E. TOWNSEND. With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Stories from Italian History.

By B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING. With two page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Sweet William.

By Mrs. THOMAS ERSKINE. With three page illustrations.
Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 1 6

Two Shipmates (The).

By the late W. H. G. KINGSTON, author of "Ned Garth."
With three page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 2 6

Una Crichton.

By the author of "Our Valley," &c. With four page
illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 3 6

Will's Voyages.

By F. FRANKFORT MOORE, author of "The Fate of the
Black Swan." With four page illustrations. Crown 8vo.

cloth boards 3 6

LONDON: NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C.

43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.
BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NEARLY BEDTIME: FIVE SHORT
STORIES FOR THE LITTLE ONES ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

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.