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DAISY THOUGHT MORE OF BUTTERFLIES THAN OF BIRDS.

DAISY; OR, THE FAIRY SPECTACLES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"VIOLET; A FAIRY STORY."

BOSTON:
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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

The universal commendation bestowed upon the exquisite little story of "VIOLET," published last year, has led to the issue of this second book, by the same author. It will be found to possess the same delightful simplicity of style, the same sympathy with nature, the same love of the good and the true, which characterized its predecessor. To those parents who would bring their children into contact with a mind of perfect purity, strong in correct principles, loving and liberal in nature, and refined in tastes and sympathies, the publishers commend this little volume.

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DAISY;
OR THE
FAIRY SPECTACLES.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD FAIRY.

There was a great forest, once, where you might walk for miles, and never hear a sound except the tapping of woodpeckers, the hooting of owls, or the low bark of wolves, or the strokes of a woodman's axe.

For on the borders of this wild, solitary place one man had built his little house, and lived there. It was very near the trees which he spent his time in cutting down; and Peter thought this all he cared about.

But when the summer wore away, and the cold, lonely winter months came on, and there was no one to keep his fire burning and the wind from sweeping through his home, and no one to smile upon him and comfort him when he came back tired from his hard day's work, Peter grew lonely, and thought he must find a wife. [Pg 10]

So he went to a market town, a whole day's journey off; for he knew it was a fair-day, and that all the young women of his acquaintance would be there, and many more beside.

At first he looked about for the most beautiful, and asked her if she would be his wife; but the beauty tossed her head, and answered, not unless he lived in a two-story house, and had carpets on his floors, and a wagon in which she could drive to town when she chose.

All this, was very unlike the home of poor Peter, who had nothing in the world but his rough little cabin and a barrow in which he wheeled his wood.

The next maiden told him he had an ugly scar on his face, and was not good looking enough for her; and, besides, his clothes were coarse. The next declared that she was afraid of wolves, and would rather marry one of the village youths, and live where she could hear the news, and on fair-days watch the people come and go. [Pg 11]

So Peter started for his lonely home again, with a sadder heart than he left it; for there was no chance that he could ever grow handsome or rich, and therefore he thought he must always dwell alone; instead of the music of kind voices, with which he had hoped to make his evenings pleasant, he was still to hear only the cracking of boughs, and hissing of snakes, and the barking of wolves.

But suddenly he met in the road some people who seemed more wretched than himself—an old, bent woman, clad in rags, and with such an ugly face that, strong man as he was, Peter could not look at her without trembling, and a girl whom she led, or rather dragged along, through the dusty road. [Pg 12]

The girl looked as if she had been weeping and was very tired; she did not raise her swollen eyes from the ground while Peter talked with her companion. The old dame said she was a silly thing, crying her eyes out because her mother was dead, when she ought to be thankful to be rid of one so old, and sick, and troublesome.

The girl began to cry again, and the woman to scold her loudly. "Just so ungrateful people are," she said; "when I have promised to find a place where you can live at service, and earn money to buy a new gown, you must needs whimper about the old body that's well enough in her grave."

"Perhaps the poor child is lonely," said Peter, who had a kind heart under his rough coat, and knew, besides, from his own experience, what a hard thing it is to live with no one to love us and be grateful for our care.



SHE PUT THE GIRL'S HAND INTO HIS.

The girl looked up at Peter with her pale, sad face; but her lips trembled so that she could not thank him. And he began to think how this poor beggar must have a gentle and loving heart, because she had taken such good care of her old mother, and, notwithstanding she was so troublesome, had been grieved at losing her. [Pg 13]

So he made bold to ask once more what he had been refused so many times that day, and had never thought to ask again, whether she would marry him, and live in his little cabin, and cook his meals, and keep his fires burning, and smile and comfort him when he should come home tired from his work.

And at these words a bright smile came into the face of the old woman, and seemed for an instant to take its ugliness away. She put the girl's hand into his, and said to her, "One who can forget his own trouble in comforting another will make you a good husband, Susan."

All at once the old woman had disappeared; and Peter and Susan, hand in hand, were travelling towards the cabin in the wood. They looked about in every direction; but she was gone. Then they looked in each other's faces, and seemed to remember that they had seen each other before; at least, Peter knew he had always meant to have exactly such a wife as Susan, and Susan was sure that, if she had looked through the world, she could have found no one so manly, and kind, and generous as Peter. [Pg 14]

I may as well tell you a secret, to begin with—that it was no accident which led the young woman into Peter's path, but a plan of the old dame. And she was not the withered hag she seemed, but the youngest and most beautiful fairy that ever entered this earth—the strongest, too, and richest, for the earth itself is only a part of her treasure; and should she forsake it for a moment, our world would wither like a flower cut from its stem, and be blown away with the first wind that came. [Pg 15]

But you must find out for yourselves the fairy's name.

CHAPTER II.

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THE WOODLAND HOME.

To Susan Peter's cabin seemed like a palace; for he had taken care that it should look clean and pleasant when his new wife came.

It was shaded with the beautiful boughs of the wood; and the door stood open, for he had no lock and key. There were inside some comfortable seats, and a fireplace, and table, and some wild flowers in a cup; and on the floor were patches of sunshine that had crept through the leaves, and made the room look only cooler and shadier.

Peter opened a closet, and showed his stores of meal and sugar, and all his pans and dishes; and he took from his pocket the stuff for a new gown, which he had bought at the fair on purpose for his wife, and wheeled from its dark corner an easy chair he had made for her, and hung upon the wall a little looking glass, so that she might not forget, he said, to keep her hair smooth, and look handsome when he should come home at evening.

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Poor Susan could hardly believe her own senses: but a few hours ago she had been a beggar in the streets, without one friend except the old woman that dragged her through the dust and scolded her. Many a night they had slept out of doors, with only a thorny hedge for shelter and the damp grass for a bed; and if it rained, and they were out, had had no fire to dry their shivering limbs; and when they woke up hungry in the morning, had no breakfast to cook or eat.

And now the lonely beggar girl was mistress of a house, and the wife of a man whom she would not exchange for the whole wide world, and who seemed pleased with her, and even proud of her.

So you see, dear children, that it is never worth while to be unhappy about our trials, because we do not know what may happen the next minute. We never can guess what good fortune is travelling towards us, and may, when times seem darkest, be standing outside of our door.

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The poor debtor in jail may suddenly hear that he has been made a prince; the dear friend that is sick, and seems almost sure to die, may arise all the stronger, and the dearer, too, for the illness which frightened us; the sad accident that causes such pain, and perhaps mutilates us for life, may have kept off from us some more dreadful pain—we cannot tell.

But of this we may always be sure, that the good God, who never sleeps nor grows tired, loves and watches over us, and sends alike joy and sorrow, to make our souls purer, and fitter to live in his beautiful home on high.

Susan never was sorry that the strange old dame had put her hand in Peter's; for he led her through the pleasantest paths he could find, and when the way grew rough, he was so careful of her comfort, and so grieved for her, that she almost wished it might never be smooth again.

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They were very poor, and worked hard from morning until night, and often had not quite clothes enough to wear nor food enough to eat; but they were satisfied with a little, and loved each other, and enjoyed their quiet, shady home.

Many a time they talked over the strange events of their wedding day, and wondered if they had really happened, or were only the recollections of a dream; and Susan would declare that she had not yet awakened from her dream, and prayed she never might; for the cold, cruel, lonely world she always knew before that day had changed to a beautiful, sunny home, where she still lived, as merry as a bird.

Susan was not so ignorant as you might think; for before her old mother was taken sick, she had lived at service, and though unkindly treated, had learned to do many things, and could prepare for Peter little comforts of which he never dreamed before.

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She had, too, a pleasant voice, and she and her husband sang together of evenings; so that it happened, after his wife came, Peter never heard the snakes or wolves again.

Ah, and there were more cruel, more fearful snakes and wolves that Susan kept away. Suppose she had been ill natured or discontented, and instead of enjoying her house, had tormented Peter because it was not a more splendid one; and when he came home tired, instead of singing pleasant songs to him, had fretted about her little troubles, and they had vexed and quarrelled with each other; do you think the far-off voices of snakes and wolves outside would have made the poor man's home as doleful as those angry, peevish voices within, which no lock could fasten out?

CHAPTER III.

[Pg 21]

DAISY.

Perhaps by this time you are wondering what has become of the fairy. This is exactly what Susan used to wonder; and when, at evening, she went out to tell Peter that supper was ready, and it was time for him to leave off work, if a leaf fell suddenly down, or a rabbit ran across her path, she would start and look about cautiously; for it seemed to her the old woman might at any time come creeping along under one of the tall arches which the boughs made on every side, or even she might be perched among the dusky branches of the trees.

Peter used to laugh at her, and ask if she could find nothing pretty and pleasant in all the beautiful wood, that she must be forever searching for that ugly face.

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But, to tell the truth, when he walked home alone after dark, and the wind was dashing the boughs about, and sighing through them, and strange-looking shadows came creeping past him, Peter himself would quicken his pace, and whistle loudly so as not to hear the sounds that came thicker and thicker, and seemed like unearthly voices. He could not help a feeling, such as Susan

had, that the old fairy was hidden somewhere in the wood, and that her dreadful face might look up out of the ground, or from behind some shadowy rock.

He did not know what a lovely, smiling face was hidden beneath the dame's wrinkles and rags; he did not know that this spirit, he dreaded so much, was his best and kindest friend; and that, while he feared to meet her, she was always walking by his side, and keeping troubles away, and it was even her kind hand that parted the boughs sometimes, to let the sunshine stream upon his little home.

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It is very foolish to fear any thing, for our fears cannot possibly keep danger away; and suppose we should sometimes meet living shadows, and dreadful grinning faces, in a lonely place, it is not likely they would eat us up; and it is a great deal better and braver for us to laugh back at them than to be frightened out of our senses, and run into some real danger to escape a fancied one.

The fairy was not to be found by seeking her, but she came at last of her own accord. When Peter came home from his work, one night, and passed the place where Susan usually met him, she was not there; he walked slowly, for it was a beautiful evening, and he did not wish to disappoint his wife, who thought more of her walk with him than of her supper. No Susan appeared, for all his lingering; and when his own door was reached, who should stand there but the old woman, her ugly face bright with smiles; and in her arms a little child, as small, and helpless, and homely as you would wish to see.

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But it belonged to Peter and Susan; and if children are ever so homely, their own parents always think them beautiful. You never saw a person so pleased as Peter; he hugged his little girl, and danced about with her, and went out to the door, when it was light, to look at her face, again and again. It seemed to him as if a miracle had been wrought on purpose for him; and already he could fancy the little one running about his home, building up gardens out of sticks and stones, and singing with a voice as musical as her mother's, and even pleasanter, because it would sound so childish and innocent.

Of course Susan was pleased with what delighted Peter so much; and neither of them minded the little homely face, except once, when Peter declared it looked like the old woman herself, and he was afraid it had caught her ugliness.

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"What's that—what's that?" exclaimed the fairy, whom he supposed to have gone away; for he was too happy to think much about *her*. Up she started from Susan's easy chair, with her great eyes glittering at him, and her wide mouth opening as if she would devour the baby.

"I said she looked like her godmother," answered Peter, holding his child a little closer, and moving towards the door to look at its face again.

"Then," cried the old dame, "I must christen her. There is nothing rich or beautiful about her looks, and it would be foolish to call her by a splendid name. She will live in lonely, lowly places, and grow without any one's help, and always have a bright, fresh, loving face, that looks calmly up to heaven: we must call her Daisy. Take care of her heart, now, Peter; and this gift of mine will be a more precious one than ever was bestowed upon a queen."

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So she fumbled a while in her great pocket, and brought out a pair of rusty spectacles, which she offered Peter: but he did not know this, for he was looking at Susan; and the fairy laid them upon the little, sleeping bosom of the child, and hobbled off into the dark, and was not seen in Peter's house again for many a day.

"What folly is the meddling old dame about, I wonder?" said Peter to himself, taking up the spectacles, and about to throw them away; but the child opened her eyes, and took them in her little hand in such a knowing way, he must needs have her mother see it.

"Dear soul!" exclaimed Susan; "she will be such a comfort to me, when I am here alone all day with my work! What shall we name her? It must be something bright and pleasant; and it seems to me there is nothing prettier than Daisy."

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Now, while Peter and the old woman were talking by the door, Susan had been fast asleep, and had not heard what they said.

"The dame has talked you into that fancy," answered Peter. "I should call the little one Susan."

"What dame?" asked the wife, in surprise. "You cannot mean that the old woman has been here."

If he had ever heard Susan speak an untruth, Peter would have thought she was deceiving him now; but he felt that she was good and true, and thought, perhaps, after all, she had been so drowsy as to forget the dame's visit; so he patiently told about it, spectacles and all.

Susan took them in her hand with some curiosity, and even tried them upon Daisy's face; they were large and homely, besides being all over rust. While Daisy wore them, the moonlight broke through the boughs again, to show her little face, looking so old, and wise, and strange, that Susan snatched the spectacles off, and threw them into a drawer, where she quite forgot them, and where they lay, growing rustier, for years.

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You would not suppose that Susan's home could be any different because such a poor little thing as Daisy had come into it; but bright and pleasant as it was before, it was a hundred times brighter and pleasanter now.

The child was so gentle and loving, and so happy and full of life, that Susan and Peter felt almost like children themselves, in watching her. No matter how tired Peter was at night, he would frolic an hour with Daisy, tossing the little thing in the air, lifting her up among the boughs till she was hidden from sight. And Susan would leave her work any time to admire Daisy's garden, or to dress the wooden doll that Peter had made for her.

As for Daisy's self, she was the busiest little soul alive, after she once learned to walk; for at first she could only lie and look up at the leaves, and the great sky, so far, far off, and see the slow, white clouds sail past the tops of the trees, and watch the birds, that hopped from branch to branch and looked down at her curiously, wondering if she were any thing good to eat. [Pg 30]

Daisy would hold up her little hands, to tell them they'd better not try, and then the bird would turn it off by singing away as if he had no such thought, and watch her as he warbled his gay little song, that said, "O Daisy, I'm having a beautiful time; are you?"

Then Daisy would coo, and laugh, and clap her hands, which was her song, and which meant, "Yes, indeed; only wait till I can use my feet, and have a run with you."

Peter made a rough kind of cradle out of willow twigs, and hung it in a tree, so that the fresh, green leaves shaded it, and kept away the flies, and fanned Daisy's face, as she lay there swinging, when the day was warm, like a little hangbird in her nest. [Pg 31]

No wonder the child was always fond of birds, when she began so early to live with them and listen to their songs.

But Daisy learned to walk in time; and then she was constantly flying about, like the butterflies she loved. For the little girl thought even more of butterflies than of birds; they seemed to her like beautiful flowers sailing through the air, and making calls upon the other flowers, that were fastened down to the earth,—poor things!—as she used to be before she learned to walk.

She would pick the flowers sometimes, and toss them into the air to see if they didn't fly, and tell them they were silly things to fall back on the ground and wilt, when, if they only would not be afraid, they might float off, with all their wings, and see a little of the world.

Daisy's hands were always full of flowers; and she brought some to the cabin which Susan had never seen before; for the good woman could not leave her work long enough to go in such out-of-the-way places as they chose to blossom in. [Pg 32]

Daisy had no work except to amuse herself; and she never tired of trudging under the trees, crowding her way among the tall weeds by the river bank, and creeping behind great rocks, or into soft, mossy places in the heart of the quiet wood; and here she was sure of finding strange and lovely things.

These were the little girl's books; she had no spelling and history like yours, but studied the shapes of leaves and clouds, and the sunshine, and river, and birds.

She did not know all their names, but could tell you where the swallow lived, and where wild honeysuckles grew, and the humming bird hid her little eggs, and how many nuts the squirrel was hoarding for winter time, and how nicely the ant had cleaned her house for spring, and when the winged seeds on the maple tree would change to broad green leaves, and the leaves themselves would change to colors as gay as the sunset, and then all droop and wither, and leave the bright little stars to wink at her through the naked boughs. [Pg 33]

The birds all knew Daisy, and were not afraid of her; they would bring their young ones about the door, that she might feed them with crumbs and seeds. And even the sly little rabbits, that started if a leaf fell, came quietly and nibbled grass from Daisy's hands, and let her stroke their long, soft ears.

You may wonder that Susan was not afraid the snakes and wolves would devour her little girl; but, as I told you before, she never could help thinking that the old woman was somewhere in the wood, and remembering how she had smiled at looking into the baby's face, thought she would not let Daisy come to any harm.

And she was right; for the fairy only lifted her finger when the little girl passed, and the wolf that had begun to watch and growl at her would crouch back in his den, and fall asleep. [Pg 34]

But he would not have frightened Daisy, had he come forth; she did not know the name of fear, and, glad to see a new play-fellow, would perhaps have climbed on his back, and, patting his mouth so gently with her little hand that he forgot to growl, would have told him now he might gallop along, and take her home to her mother.

TROUBLE FOR DAISY.

It was fortunate that Susan was so happy while she could be; for the poor woman little dreamed how soon her sunny home was to become a sad, dark place for her.

Peter used to go forth in the morning, whistling as gayly as any of the birds; and Daisy following him, proud enough that she could carry his little dinner basket for the short way she went.

She did not know that what was such a heavy load to her was only a feather for the strong man to lift, and so delighted in thinking she had grown old enough to help her dear father.

Still Peter had to watch his dinner closely; for Daisy would espy some beautiful flower or vine looking at her from away off in the shade; and down the basket would go, and the little girl was off to take a nearer look, and see if she could not break off a branch to carry home to her mother. [Pg 36]

Sometimes Peter walked so fast, or Daisy staid so long, that they lost each other; and then the father made a call that could be heard for miles, which frightened all the birds home to their nests, and must have startled the old dame herself, wherever she might be lurking in the wood.

But the call was music to Daisy; and before many minutes, she would come bounding into her father's arms, almost hidden in the waving white blossoms with which she had loaded herself.

And all this while, unless Peter himself took care of it, what would become of his dinner!

When Susan went to meet her husband at evening, now, Daisy was sure to be with her—one moment holding her hand, the next skipping away alone, or kneeling to gather bright pebbles and sheets of green moss, to make banks and paths in her garden. She fluttered about in the sunshine like the butterflies she loved, and was as harmless and gentle. [Pg 37]

But, alas! one night, no Peter came to meet them; and though Daisy kept thinking she heard his step or his voice, it could only be the fall of some dead limb or the hooting of an owl.

The night grew darker, and it lightened so sharply that Daisy clung to her mother's skirts, and begged her to hide somewhere under a rock until the storm should be past, as the little girl felt almost sure her father had done.

But Susan groped her way on, with the wind blowing the branches into their faces, and the dead boughs snapping and falling about them, and the snakes, that they had never seen before, gliding across the path, hissing, and running their forked tongues out with fear.

And at length they found poor Peter, dead, on the ground. The tree which he had been cutting down had fallen suddenly, and crushed his head so under its great trunk that they only knew him by his clothes. [Pg 38]

CHAPTER VI.

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THE SWEETEST FLOWER.

Small as Daisy was, she saw that her father could never speak to her again; she remembered how kind he had always been; how many good times they had had together; how, that very morning, he had waited, on his way to work, and climbed a tall tree, only to tell her whether the eggs were hatched in the blue-jay's nest.

She thought, too, how he had let her go farther than usual, and then walked back with her part way, to be sure she was in the right path, and how gently he had kissed her at parting, and told her to be a good girl, and help her mother.

Ah, she would take care to do that now, and never forget the last words which her dear father spoke to her. [Pg 40]

When our friends are taken away, we remember every little kind word, or look, or smile they ever gave us—things we hardly noticed while they were alive; and Daisy could remember only kindness, only smiles and pleasant words. She thought no one could ever have had so good a father as Peter was to her, and that no little girl could be so lonely and wretched as she was now.

Who was there left to call her up in the morning before the birds, and to make her garden tools, and swing her in the boughs, and listen to her stories at night about the rabbits and flowers? It seemed as if her heart would break.

But Daisy had one pleasant thought to comfort her—it seemed like a sweet flower that her father had dropped down from his new home in paradise, and which she would always wear in her bosom; and perhaps he would know her by it when, after a great many years, she should go to live with him there. [Pg 41]

This dear thought was, that when Peter lived, she had done every thing in her power to please him and make him forget his weariness, and that he had known of this thoughtfulness, and loved her for it, and had always felt younger and happier when she was by his side.

If your brothers and sisters or parents die, whether by accident or sickness, are you sure that they would leave you such a comforter as Daisy had? Think about it; for when you stand by their coffins, and it is too late to change the past, and the cold lips have spoken their last word, this little flower will be worth more to you—though no one may see it except yourself—than all the treasure in the world.

But if you have been cold and cruel, there will come into your heart, instead, when you think of them, a dismal shadow, which all the light of the blessed sun cannot drive away.

CHAPTER VII.

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THE WOODMAN'S FUNERAL.

Daisy did not see the lightning, nor hear the snakes, nor feel the drops of rain that began to patter down; she only felt the cold hand that would never lead her through the wood again; for when she lifted it, it fell back on the ground, dead—dead!

She asked her mother if they were not going home; but Susan said her home was with Peter; and if he staid out in the dark wood, she must stay there, too. She was frightened, and wild with sorrow, and did not know what she was saying, and began, at last, to blame the old woman, who had brought her there, she said, to be so happy for a little while, and always afterwards lonely and wretched—the old hag!

"What old hag!" said a voice close to Susan's ear, that brought her senses back quickly. "Is this all your gratitude, Susan? And are you going to kill your child, out here, with the cold and damp, because your husband's gone? Come! we must bury him; and then away to your home, and don't sit here, abusing your best friend."

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Daisy, you know, had never seen the woman, and she had never looked so dreadfully as now; she was pale and starved, and her great eyes glittered like the eyes of the snakes, and her voice was sharp and shrill enough to have frightened one on a pleasanter night than that.

With Peter's axe the fairy sharpened two stout sticks; one of these she made Susan take, and there, by the light of the quick flashes of lightning, and a little lantern that the woman wore like a brooch on her bosom, Daisy watched them dig her father's grave.

The fallen tree was one of the largest in the wood, and the two women could not lift it; so they dug the earth away at the side and underneath the trunk; and when the place was deep enough, poor Peter's body dropped into its grave. While her mother and the fairy were filling it over with earth, Daisy went for the moss which she had gathered to show her father, and, by the light of the fairy's lamp, picked the sweetest flowers, and fragrant grasses, and broad leaves that glistened with the rain, and scattered them on the spot.

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Then, with one of Susan's and one of Daisy's hands in hers, the old dame hurried them out of the wood. They stumbled often over the broken boughs, and stepped, before they knew it, on the snakes, that only hissed and slid away among the grass. Susan was crying bitterly, and their guide kept scolding her, and Daisy heard the wolves growl in their dens.

She had heard of great funerals, where there were carriages and nodding plumes, and heavy velvet palls, and bells tolling mournfully; but Daisy thought it was because her father had been such a good man, that his funeral was so much grander.

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She knew that all about his grave, and on, on, farther than eye could see, the great forest trees were bending and nodding like black plumes, and sounds like groans and sighs came from them as they dashed together in the wind; the lightning was his funeral torch; and the thunder tolled, instead of bells, at Peter's grave; and the black clouds swept on like a train of mourners; and the great, quick drops of rain made it seem as if all the sky were weeping tears of pity for the little girl.

Ah, and Daisy could not see how the dreadful old woman only seemed such, and was, in truth, a good and gentle fairy, who meant still to watch over the little orphan with tender care, as she had always done; whose soft, white wings, even now, were spread above, to shelter her from the cold rain and wind, and whose kind heart was full of pity for that little aching heart of hers.

You and I, and all the people we know, walk through the world with this same strange fairy; who seems to frown, and scold, and force us on through cruel storms, and yet who is really smiling upon us, and shielding our shrinking forms with tender care, and leading us gently home.

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Have you thought yet what can be the fairy's name?

CHAPTER VIII.

[Pg 47]

DAISY'S MISSION.

No sooner had Daisy stepped inside of her mother's door, than there came such a crash of thunder as she had never heard; and the little house shook as if it must surely fall.

The old trees ground their boughs together, and, blown by the wind, the night birds dashed with their wet wings against the door; the screech owl hooted, for the young were washed out of her nest; and the rain leaked under Susan's door sill, ran across the floor, and put out the little fire of brushwood which was burning on the hearth.

And Daisy thought of her father, out alone in this fearful night, and how the cold rain must be dripping into his grave.

She peeped through the window. The sharp, jagged lightning made the sky look as if it were shattering like a dome of glass. She wondered if that lightning might not be the light of heaven she had heard about, and whether, if the sky should really fall, heaven and earth would be one place, and by taking a long, long journey, she could find her father, and live with him. And she thought that, for the sake of having him to take her by the hand again, she would walk to the end of a hundred worlds. [Pg 48]

Then the sky seemed to Daisy like a great black bell; and the thunder was the tongue of it that tolled so dismally over her father's grave.

She was startled by a bony hand laid upon her shoulder, and looking up, heard the old woman say in her sharp, shrill voice, "Come, little girl! don't you know I am hungry after all this work? Fly round, and get me something to eat."

And when Daisy noticed her poor, starved face, she wondered that she had not thought to offer her some food. [Pg 49]

So she went to the closet,—the same one which poor Peter had shown to his wife with so much pride,—and pointed to bread and a dish of milk,—for the shelves were so high that Daisy could not reach them,—and drew her mother's easy chair into the driest place she could find, and begged the dame to seat herself.

She did not wait to be asked twice, but hobbled into the chair, and, to Daisy's wonder, ate all the bread at a mouthful, and drank the milk at a swallow, and then, looking as hungry as ever, asked for more.

So the little girl brought meat, and then some meal, and some dried fruit, and even cracked nuts; but the more she brought, the more the fairy wanted.

If Daisy had feared any thing, she would have trembled when, at last, the old dame fixed her glittering eyes upon her, and began to talk.

"Couldn't you do any better, Daisy, than this," she said, "for your mother's friend and yours? Are you not ashamed, when I am so hungry and tired, to give me such mean food?" [Pg 50]

"I am sorry, if you do not like it," said Daisy; "it is the best we ever have."

"Don't tell me that," and the dame began to look angry. "Do you call it good food that leaves me thin as I was before, and as hungry, and my clothes as ragged, and does not rest or soothe my poor old aching bones?"

"If you wait till mother has done crying, she can make a drink out of herbs that will stop the aching—I am sure of that," said Daisy, looking up in the fairy's face.

"But I want it now; and, O, I am so cold! and she will cry all night. Do, Daisy, find me something else to eat."

The poor old woman shivered as she spoke, and tears came into her eyes.

"If it were daytime, I could find you berries and nuts out doors, for mother says I have sharp eyes." [Pg 51]

"Have you—have you? And could you find my hut? There is a beautiful loaf of bread and a flask of medicine on the table. O, dear! this dreadful pain again!" and the ugly face grew uglier, as its wrinkles seemed all knotting up with agony.

"I am almost sure I could find it, and I am so sorry your bones ache; pray, let me try."

"What! go out into the dreadful night, with the owls, and wolves, and snakes, and with bats flapping their wings in your face, and the thunder rolling and rumbling overhead?"

"None of these things ever hurt me, and I don't believe they will now. May I try?"

"Just listen to the wind and rain, and see the lightning cut through the darkness like a sword; and think, Daisy, if you should see your father, just as he lay in the wood, with his head all crushed."

"My father has gone to heaven," said the little girl; "that is only his body out in the woods, just as that is his coat on the wall; and I shall see nothing except the nice loaf of bread and the medicine, and think only how they will cure your pain." [Pg 52]

Without another word, the fairy took the lantern from her bosom, and fastening it to Daisy's, led her to the door, and pointed out into the black night.

"Who could see to hurt me, when it is so dark!" the little girl exclaimed. "Now, tell me which way I shall turn, and see if I am not back soon."

"Walk only where the light of the lantern falls." She was saying more; but the wind slammed the door suddenly, and Daisy found herself alone.

CHAPTER IX.

[Pg 53]

FAIRY FOOD.

The lantern made a little pathway of light, sometimes leading straight forward, sometimes turning, running among thick bushes or over the rocks; and Daisy went bravely on, never minding the frightened birds that fluttered through her light, like moths, nor the sad sigh of the wind, nor the dripping trees.

She looked for pleasant things, instead of frightful ones; and let me whisper to you, that, with fairy help or without it, we always find, in this world, what we are looking for.

The mosses seemed like a green carpet for her feet, and the pebbles like shining jewels; and the little flowers looked up at her like friends, and seemed to say, "We are smaller and weaker than you are, Daisy; but we stay out here every night, and nothing harms us."

And the trees bowed, and folded their leaves above her, as she passed, so gently, that she thought they were trying to shelter and take care of her.

At length the light paused before a rock; but Daisy could find no house, until she parted a clump of bushes, and then saw the entrance to a cave.

She crept in; and as her lantern filled the place with light, she saw what a damp, uncomfortable home the old dame had, with only some stones for seats, and a table, and a ragged bed, and a smoky corner where she built her fire.

There, however, upon the table stood the loaf and flask which Daisy had come to find; she took them and hurried away, for it seemed as if the old dame's face were looking at her out of the rocky wall on every side.



THE LOAF AND FLASK.

It was a heavier load for the little girl than her father's basket had been; but she had a strong heart, if her hands were weak. She ran along, trying to get before the light, that was always just

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in front of her, and singing the merriest songs she knew, so as not to hear the wind nor think about the faces on the wall.

She reached home safely, but could not open the door; for the latch was high, and the dame had gone fast asleep. Daisy thought she must wait until daylight out there in the cold, and sat on the step, feeling disappointed and sad enough.

But one of her tame rabbits, awakened, perhaps, more easily than the dame, hopped out of his burrow, and nestled in Daisy's lap, and looked up at her with his gentle eyes, while she warmed her hands in his fur, and did not feel so much alone.

At last the old woman started from her sleep, and wondering what had become of Daisy, went to look for her.

She seized the bread with a cry of joy, and breaking a morsel, ate it eagerly, as she led Daisy towards the fire, which she had built up again. [Pg 56]

"Now, see the difference between your food and mine." As the fairy spoke, Daisy looked up, and saw, to her surprise, the wrinkles smooth away, and a beautiful light break over the old brown face, the wide mouth shrink to a little rosy one, all smiles, and pearly teeth inside. The fairy's eyes grew brighter than ever; but the dreadful glittering look had gone, and they were full of joy, and peace, and love.

"Wait, now, till I take my medicine." Her voice had changed to the softest, most silvery one that Daisy ever heard.

And when she had tasted the drink, her poor old crooked hands grew plump and white, her bent form straightened, and, what made Daisy wonder more, even her clothes began to change.

First they looked cleaner, then not so faded, then the rags disappeared, and they seemed new and whole; and then they began to grow soft and rich, till the ragged cotton gown was changed to velvet and satin, the knotted old turban to delicate lace, that hung heavy with pearls, but was not so delicate and beautiful as the golden hair that floated about the fairy wherever she moved. [Pg 57]

"Poor child!" she said; "you are tired and cold; come, rest with me;" and taking Daisy in her arms, began to sing the sweetest songs, that seemed to change every thing into music, even the wailing tempest and her mother's sobs.

And all the while that tender, loving face bent over her, and the gentle hands were smoothing her wet hair, and folding her more closely to the fairy's heart.

Upon this pillow our tired Daisy fell asleep.

CHAPTER X.

[Pg 58]

DAISY'S DREAMS.

Strange and pleasant dreams came to Daisy as she slept; and in all of them she could see the beautiful fairy floating over her head, and her father walking by her side.

It seemed to her that, as she watched the lightning, the sky really broke like a dome of glass, and came shattering down, and that after it floated the loveliest forms, and odors and music came pouring down, and light which was far clearer, and yet not so dazzling as the light of earth.

The clouds came floating towards her, and all their golden edges were bright wings, that waved in time with the music; then came falling, falling slowly as snow flakes, what seemed little pearly clouds, but blossomed into flowers and then changed into sweet faces, that all smiled on her as they passed by. [Pg 59]

Among these the little girl searched eagerly for her father's face, when all at once he took her in his arms, and said, "Ha, my Daisy! is it you?" in his own merry, pleasant way.

This startled her so much that she awoke, only to fall asleep again, and dream another dream as wonderful.

But at length the morning sun had crept around the side of the cottage, found its way through the window, and fell so full on Daisy's face, that she could dream only of dazzling, dazzling light, which seemed burning into her eyes, and made her open them wide, at length.

And then, alas! how every thing was changed! Her first thought was of the fairy; but she had gone, and Daisy had been sleeping in her mother's easy chair, and felt cold and lonely as she looked around upon the silent room.

No music there, no flowers and angelic faces, and clouds like chariots of pearl, with golden wings to hurry them along; no father to take her in his arms, and call her his little Daisy. [Pg 60]

She closed her eyes, and tried to sleep again, for it seemed to her a great deal better to dream than to be awake in such a dreary little world as that. But suddenly Daisy thought of her mother, and almost at the very moment was aroused by a moan from another part of the room.

She ran to Susan's side, and found her sick, and wretched as she was the night before; so Daisy bathed her head, and brought her some fresh water from the spring; and when she could not comfort her in any other way, began to tell her dreams, how she had seen her father again, and felt sure he must be still alive.

As Susan listened, she dried her tears, and kissed Daisy so fondly that the little girl no longer wished to be asleep, but was glad that she had power to run about, and prattle, and amuse her lonely mother. [Pg 61]

For she remembered Peter's last words now, that she must be a good girl, and help, not herself, not sit still and have pleasant dreams, but help her mother.

And this Daisy felt resolved to do, if only for his sake.

CHAPTER XI.

[Pg 62]

THE DAME'S BUNDLE.

As soon as her mother smiled once more, Daisy asked her what had become of the splendid fairy, and when she would be back again, and how it happened that the light and music had gone with her from their home.

Susan had seen no fairy, and could not believe that Daisy was thinking of the poor old wrinkled dame. When she told the story of her journey to the cave, and the loaf of fairy bread, and the old dame's sudden change, the mother stroked Daisy's hair, and said that this was only another of her wonderful dreams, and that, instead of going to the rain, the rain had come to her, pelting upon the window so hard, it had, perhaps, sprinkled her face—that was all; and the light of the fairy was, she supposed, the light of the morning sun, that had pried her little sleepy lids apart, at last. [Pg 63]

Daisy felt bewildered and sorrowful at this, for she did not like to give up her new friend; but her mother told her how long she had known the dame; how she had put her hand in Peter's, years ago; and afterwards put Daisy in his arms, a little thing, no larger than her wooden doll, that could only lie in the grass or swing in its nest among the boughs, and look up at the sky.

Daisy thought, if she could have such another dear little thing to play with, and love, and tell her stories to, she should be contented with her home, and willing to wait for her father, and forget the vision of the fairy that had folded her so tenderly in her arms.

So she went on asking questions about the dame; and then her mother remembered the gift of the iron spectacles. Of course Daisy wished to see them; but where they were no one knew. And Susan consoled her by saying they were but homely and worthless things. [Pg 64]

"All things are worthless unless we make use of them," said the shrill voice of the dame, who in her sudden way appeared all at once in the room.

"I only wonder that I don't grow tired of helping you," she said; "for you give me nothing except ingratitude. Here, take this, and see what fault you can find with it."

She tossed a bundle into Susan's arms, put a loaf on the table, and pointed Daisy to the rubbish heap outside the door; then frowning angrily at Susan, "Pretty extravagance! to make believe you are poor, and throw away what is worth more than all the gold on earth. Why didn't you make the child wear my gift?"

"She was homely enough, at first, without it," Susan answered; "and after she grew better looking, why should I waste my time looking up those old rusty spectacles, to make her a fright again?"

"You will have no such trouble with the other one." As the fairy spoke, a lovely little face peeped out from the bundle in Susan's arms. "Now, tell what I shall give her, with her name." [Pg 65]

Susan had never seen such a beautiful child, and, poor as she was, felt grateful to the dame for this new gift; but she begged for leave to name the little one herself.

"I will call it Peterkin, after my husband. Ah, how the dear man would have loved it!" And Susan began to cry.

"Then her name will not match her face; if you want a Peterkin, I will bring you one instead of this; but her name must be Maud."

So Susan gave up the name for the sake of the child's good looks, and begged the dame to keep her always so beautiful, and to make her rich.

"That's easy enough; you should have asked me, Susan, to make her heart rich and beautiful. Yet rich she shall be; and no one in all the earth shall have so handsome a face. But, remember, it is on one condition I promise—that Maud and Daisy shall always live together, rich or poor; that they shall never spend a night apart, until Daisy goes to live with her father again." [Pg 66]

Susan promised, and was thanking the dame with all her heart, though looking at the lovely little face that nestled in her bosom, when Daisy flew into the room.

"O mother, mother! I've seen her again, and prettier than she was at first. She smiled at me, and stroked my hair, and then went floating off among the trees, like all the faces in my dream."

"Then she and the dame are not one; for, look!"

"Look where? Has the dame been here again?"

"To be sure; I was talking with her when you came; and the door has not been opened since."

But no old woman was in sight; Daisy looked under the table, and in the closet, and every dark corner; but she was not there; and the little girl told her mother that she must have been dreaming, now. [Pg 67]

But Susan showed her what the dame had brought, and even put the little thing in Daisy's arms. It was hardly larger than a bird, and pretty as a flower, and as helpless, too.

And Daisy almost forgot the fairy in this new delight; she thought that all the visions in the air were not so sweet and lovely as her sister's face. She could not look at it enough; and at length taking out from her pocket a pair of spectacles, gravely put them on, and looked at her sister again.

Susan laughed; she couldn't help it, Daisy looked so drolly. She saw that the spectacles were the very ones the dame had brought; for she thought there could hardly be another pair so old and rusty in the world.

The little girl said she had found them in a dust heap, where Susan remembered that she had emptied the rubbish from some old boxes, the day before. Daisy had but just cleaned the glasses with her apron, and was holding them up to find if they were clear, when she saw, through them, the beautiful fairy floating by, and smiling on her as she passed. [Pg 68]

She thought, after all, it might have been the glasses that had changed the sour old woman into a smiling fairy; but when she looked at her sister's sweet little face through them, it was not half so beautiful—it seemed cold and hungry, and the smile was gone.

Susan felt very sure that the dame was real, for all about her were the care and trouble she had brought; and had she not dragged her on through cruel storms, and scolded her when she was trying to do her best? And if the beautiful smiling vision was real, why did it always float away?

Susan forgot that the dame, too, floated away when her errands were done.

So Daisy did not know but she had been dreaming again, though with her eyes wide open; and yet she could not forget how softly she had been folded once in the fairy's arms. [Pg 69]

Perhaps it was because the little girl believed in her, and was always watching and hoping to see her again, that the beautiful bright form sometimes floated past her eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

 [Pg 70]

A LEAF OUT OF DAISY'S BOOK.

After a great many days of rain, the storm ceased; and glad enough was Daisy, for she had grown tired of staying in the house, or of being drenched and almost blown away when she ventured out of doors.

The sun came out, one morning, and did not hide in clouds again, as usual, but poured its beautiful beams down on the earth, till the dark forest trees seemed touched with gold, and the little drooping flowers lifted up their heads once more.

Daisy, as she looked from the cabin window, and saw and heard the raging storm, had often wondered what would become of her friends the birds—if their nests would not be shaken from the trees, and their little unfledged young ones would not shiver with cold. Then, too, the butterflies, she feared, would have their bright wings washed away or broken; and the flowers would have their petals shaken off, and be snapped from their slender stems. [Pg 71]

But we are apt to dread a great deal worse things than ever happen to us; and though Daisy did find some fallen nests and dead birds scattered on the ground, she could see that the storm had done more good than harm.

For every bird there were hundreds of insects lying dead—not bees and butterflies, but worms and bugs, that bite the flowers, and make them shrivel up and fade, and that gnaw the leaves off the trees and all the tender buds, and sting and waste the fruit.

The toads were having a feast over the bodies of these little mischief makers; and the birds were swinging on the tips of the leafy boughs, and singing enough to do your heart good; bees came buzzing about as busily as though they meant to make up for all the time they had lost; and a beautiful butterfly, floating through the sunshine, settled upon a flower at Daisy's feet, and [Pg 72]

waved his large wings, that looked soft and dry as if there had never been a drop of rain.

Then the trees were so bright and clean, with the dust all washed away, and fresh as if they had just been made; they waved together with a pleasant sound, that Daisy thought was like a song of joy and praise; and every little leaf joined in the chorus, far and wide, stirring, and skimming, and breathing that low hymn of happiness.

The wood was fragrant, too; and in all its hollows stood bright little pools, that reflected the sky, and sparkled back to the sun; the grass and flowers had grown whole inches since Daisy saw them last, and the mosses were green as emerald.

Quite near the cabin, though hidden from it by the trees, was a wide river, that had swollen with the rain, and was rushing on with a sound so loud that it shook the leaves, and seemed like a mighty voice calling to Daisy from a great way off.

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So she found her way to its shore, and saw that the bridge across it had been swept away; and as it went foaming and tearing along, whole trees, and boats, and rafts were whirling in the tide that was rushing on, on, on, she wondered where.

Then the little girl remembered how long she had been away from home, and hurried back to tell her mother about the bridge, stopping now and then to snatch a flower as she passed. Her hands were full when she bounded into the cabin; and she looked as bright, and fresh, and full of joy as any thing out doors.

But her mother sat in a corner, feeling very sad, and hardly looked at Daisy's flowers, and said it was nothing to her how bright the sun shone so long as it never could rest again on Peter's face.

"Why," said Daisy, "I thought father was happy in heaven, and where he did not have to work so hard, and there were never any storms, and the flowers were prettier than these."

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"That is true enough," Susan answered; "but it will not keep us from being lonely, and cold, and hungry, too, sometimes."

"But we are not hungry now, and perhaps the queer old dame may bring us some more of her bread, or else I'm pretty sure the fairy will take care of us. Who feeds the flowers, mother?"

"God."

"What, ours—up in heaven?"

"There is only one God, Daisy; he gives us meat and milk, and gives the flowers dew and air."

"Then I suppose they were thinking about him this morning."

"Why?"

"Because, when I first went out, they seemed as if they were dreaming—just as I felt when I dreamed; so that I wondered if they hadn't seen the fairy pass, or if their eyes were sharper than ours, and they could see faces floating in the air when there were none for us. It was damp, at first, and there were great shadows; but presently the sunshine poured in every where, and still they kept looking straight up into the sky—a whole field of them, down by the river bank; and, do see! even these I've brought you are looking up now at our wall as if they could see through it. If God can see through walls, can't we, when we are looking after him?"

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"I don't know but we might, Daisy. You ask strange questions."

"Just answer one more, mother. If the flowers have the same God with us, why do they always look so happy, and beautiful, and young? Does he think more of them than he does of us?"

"No, child—not half so much. We suffer because God made us wiser than the flowers."

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"Why, they get trampled on, and beaten in the wind, and have their stems broken, and have to stay out doors in the cold all night, (Daisy was thinking of her midnight walk,) and sometimes they don't have any sunshine for a week: we should call that trouble, and I know what I think about it."

"Tell me."

"Why, you see, the flowers are always looking at the sky, and don't mind what is happening around them, nor wait to think who may step on their pretty faces. Suppose we are wiser; why can't we live as they do, mother, and think about God and heaven, instead of always ourselves?"

"I know a little girl who lives very much like them now," said Daisy's mother, kissing her. "But, my dear child, how strangely you have looked ever since you put on those old spectacles!"

"Why, am I not the same Daisy? Am I changing to a fairy, like the dame?"

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"I fear not; they leave a sort of shadow on your face, and make you homely. It seems to me, Daisy, I'd throw the old things away."

"O, don't say that—not if they make me like the old woman herself. I guess it doesn't matter much how we look down here."

"Down where?"

"Why, on the earth; for you know father was not handsome; and when I saw him in heaven, in my dream, O, he had such a beautiful face!"

So Daisy went on prattling about her father until Susan dried her tears; for when she thought of Peter now, it was not the poor crushed body in the wood, which she had wept about, but the beautiful, smiling angel in paradise.

And when cares gathered thicker about her, and want seemed so near that Susan grew discouraged, Daisy would bring her flowers; and the mother would remember then how they were always looking up to the kind God, and so look up herself, and thinking about him, forget her sorrows and her cares.

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CHAPTER XIII.

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MAUD.

The little Maud grew more beautiful every day; she was fair as a lily, except that you might think rose leaves had been crushed to color her cheeks. Her bright eyes were shaded by long, silky lashes; and her pretty mouth, when it was shut, concealed two rows of delicate, pearly teeth. Her hair hung in a cloud of dark-brown curls, touched on the edges with a golden tinge.

The old dame took care that her dress should be always fine; and while she gave Daisy the coarsest woollen gowns, brought delicate muslins for Maud.

But Daisy did not mind this; she was glad to see her beautiful sister dressed handsomely; and, besides, how could she crowd through the bushes by the river bank, or sit on the ground looking at grass and flowers through her spectacles, if her own dresses were so frail?

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It was not, after all, so very amusing as Daisy had hoped, to take care of Miss Maud, when she began to run about and play. She did not dare to go in the wood, for fear of bugs and snakes; she did not like to sail chips in the river, and make believe they were boats; she tossed away Daisy's wooden doll, and called it a homely thing; she pulled up her sister's flowers, and always wanted to go in a different place and do a different thing from her.

The little girl found it hard to give up so many pleasures; but she kept thinking that Maud would be older soon, and would know better than to be so troublesome.

And Maud was no sooner large enough to run about than Daisy wished her young again; for she took pains to tread on the prettiest flowers, and call them old weeds, and would chase every butterfly that came in sight, and tear his wings off, and then laugh because he could not fly; she pinched the rabbits' ears until they grew so wild they were almost afraid of Daisy, and seemed to have no pleasure except in making those about her very uncomfortable.

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Yes, Maud had one other pleasure—she loved to sit beside the still pools in the wood, that were like mirrors, and watch the reflection of her handsome face.

But after this, she was sure to go home peevish and discontented, telling her mother and Daisy what a shame it was to live in such a lonely place, and have no one admire her beauty; and to be so poor, and depend on the charity of "that hag," as she called the dame.

Then she loved to tell Daisy what a common-looking little thing *she* was, and how the mark of those ugly spectacles was always on her face, and every day it grew more homely and serious, and as if she were a daughter of the dame. "As for myself," Maud would end, "I am the child, I know, of some great man; the dame has stolen me away from him, I feel sure, and then thinks I ought to be grateful because she brings me these clothes."

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At this, Daisy would look up through her spectacles, and say, meekly, "It doesn't matter much who is our father here; for God, up in heaven, is the Father of us all, and gives great people their fine houses, just as he gives these flowers to you and me; for mother told me so."

Then Maud would toss her head, and ask, "What is mother but an old woodcutter's wife, that has worked, perhaps, in my father's kitchen?"

"God doesn't care where we have worked, but how well our work is done," said Daisy.

"O, nonsense! Who ever saw God? I want a father that can build me a fine house, all carpeted, and lighted with chandeliers, and full of servants, like the houses mother tells us about sometimes."

"Why, Maud, what is this world but a great house that God has built for us? All creatures are our servants; the sun and stars are its chandeliers; the clouds are its beautiful window frames; and this soft moss is the carpet. Look, what dear little flowers grow among it, and gaze up as if they were saying, 'Yes—God made us all.'"

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"Who wants a house that every one else can enjoy as much as we, and a father that is not ashamed to call every dirty beggar his child?"

Daisy thought her home all the pleasanter for this, and loved her heavenly Father more, because

he had room in his heart for even the meanest creature; but she could not make her sister feel as she did, nor try, as Daisy tried, to be patient, and gentle, and happy.

CHAPTER XIV.

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THE SPECTACLES.

Ashamed as Maud was of her mother, she found new cause for unhappiness, when, one day, Susan died.

"Who is there, now," asked the beauty, "to make my fine dresses, and keep them clean, and to pet me, and praise my beauty, and carry me to the fair sometimes, so that every one may look at my face, and wish hers were half so handsome?"

"Poor, dear mother, your hard work is done," said Daisy, in her gentle way, bending over the dead form that Susan had left. "You will never see the old dame's face again, nor hear the wolves growl in the wood, nor tire yourself with taking care of us."

The corpse's hands were hard and rough, but they had grown so with working for her children; and Daisy kissed them tenderly, and filled them with fresh flowers, and bore her mother's body far into the still wood, and buried it under the same great tree that lay still, like a tombstone, across Peter's grave.

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Though Daisy was no longer a child, she could not have done this without fairy help. All the way, she felt as if other arms than hers were bearing her mother's form, and as if new strength were in her own when they handled the heavy spade.

As Daisy worked there alone in the wood,—for she could not see the fairy, who was helping her,—the little birds sang sweet and tender songs, as if they would comfort their friend.

For Daisy had loved her mother dearly, and remembered her loving, parental care, and could not but be sorrowful at losing her, even for a little while.

Yet she tried to calm her aching heart, because Maud, she knew, would need all her care now, and must be served, and entertained, and comforted more carefully than ever, so that she might not constantly miss her mother, and spend her days in weeping over what could not be helped.

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The young girl did not think how much more toil, and care, and unhappiness was coming to herself; for it was always Daisy's way to ask what she could do for others, and not what others might do for her.

And, children, if you want your friends, and God himself, to love you, depend upon it there is no way so sure as this—to forget yourselves, and think only whom you can serve. It is hard, at first, but becomes a pleasure soon, and as easy and natural as, perhaps, it is now for you to be selfish.

You must not be discouraged at failing a few times; for it takes a great deal of patience to make us saints.

But every step we move in the right way, you know, is one step nearer to our home in heaven—the grand and peaceful home that Christ has promised us.

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We left Daisy in the wood, with the birds singing above her, as she finished her pious work; perhaps, with finer ears, we might have heard angels singing songs of joy above the holy, patient heart that would not even grieve, because another needed all its strength.

But the birds' songs ceased; they fluttered with frightened cries, instead; the wind rose, and the boughs began to dash about, and the night came on earlier than usual. Daisy saw there was to be another fearful storm; and her first thought was of Maud, alone in the lonely wood.

How she wished for wings, like the birds, that she might fly home to her nest! But, instead, she must plod her way among the underbrush, which grew so thick in places, and the wind so tangled together across the path, that she went on slowly, hardly knowing whether she were going nearer home or deeper into the wood.

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"Silly girl, where are your spectacles?" said a voice by Daisy's side; and the old woman seized her arm, and dragged her over the rough path, as she had done once before.

"There is no need of them, now I have your lamp," said Daisy in a sad voice; for she was thinking of dear faces that her eyes would never rest upon again.

"That's as much as you know. But you cannot cheat me, Daisy. Have my glasses been of so little use that you put them in your pocket, and choose rather to look through tears?"

"I did not mean to cry; but how can any one help it when——"

"I know—I know; you needn't tell me of your sorrows, but take out the spectacles."

So Daisy did as she was told, and never had the glasses seemed so wonderful; for, besides that now the old dame's lamp gave a clearer light, something made Daisy lift her eyes, and, instead of

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two poor bodies lying asleep in the storm, she saw a splendid city far, far up upon the tops of the tallest trees, and Peter and Susan walking there, hand in hand, and smiling upon her as Peter had smiled in her dream.

"Well," said the shrill voice of the dame, "will you give me back my glasses now, and keep your tears?"

"O, no!" and Daisy seized the old woman's withered hand, and turned to thank her; but she was not there: one moment Daisy felt the pressure of a gentle hand in hers, and then the beautiful fairy floated from before her sight, far up above the trees, and stood, at last, with her father and mother. All three were smiling upon her now, and pointing upwards to the trees, whose leaves were broader and more beautiful than any in the wood.

But the young girl stumbled, and fell among the thorns, and seemed all at once to awake from a dream; for, the dame's lamp gone, her path had grown narrow and dark again; and she found it would not do to look any more at the city of gold, until she should find her own poor cabin in the wood.

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CHAPTER XV.

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THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

At length Daisy knew that her home was near; for, above all the howling of the storm, she heard her sister's sobs and frightened cries.

Very tired she was, and cold, and drenched with rain, and sad, besides, for she could not enter the door without thinking of the burden she had borne away from it last.

But, instead of rest and comforting words, Maud ran to meet her with whining and bitter reproaches, and called her cruel to stay so long, and foolish to have gone at all, hard-hearted to neglect her mother's child, and would not listen to reason nor excuse, but poured forth the wickedness of her heart in harsh and untrue words, or else indulged her selfish grief in passionate tears and cries.

Alas! the wolves and snakes that Susan kept away from the cabin had entered it now, and our poor Daisy too often felt their fangs at her sad heart.

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She gave her sister no answering reproaches back, and did not, as she well might, say that it was Maud's own fault she had been left alone; for she had refused, when Daisy asked her help in making their mother's grave.

When we see people foolish and unreasonable, like Maud, we must consider that it is a kind of insanity; they don't know what they are saying. Now, when crazy people have their wild freaks, the only way to quiet them is by gentleness; and we must treat angry people just the same, until *their* freaks pass.

You would not tease a poor crazy man, I hope; and why, then, tease your brother or sister when their senses leave them for a little while?

As soon as Maud would listen, Daisy began to tell about the beautiful city she saw through her spectacles, and how the dreadful old dame had changed to a graceful fairy, and floated up above the trees.

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But her sister interrupted her, to ask why she had never told before of the wonderful gift in her spectacles, and called her mean for keeping them all to herself.

She knew very well that the reason was, Daisy had never found any one to believe in what she saw, and that even her mother laughed at her for wearing such old things.

Maud snatched them eagerly now from Daisy's hand, but said, at first, she could only see the lightning and the rain, and then suddenly dashed them on the ground, with a frightened cry.

For she had seemed, all at once, to stand out in a lonely wood, by night, and to look through the ground, at her feet, and see as plainly as by daylight the dead form of her mother, with the rain drops, that pelted every where, dripping upon the flowers which Daisy had put in her folded hands.

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Maud would not tell this to her sister, but said peevishly, "Your old glasses are good for nothing, as I always thought; and you only want me to wear them so as to spoil my beauty, and make me as homely as you. Tell me again about the place you saw our mother in, though I don't believe a word of what you say."

Daisy knew better, and answered, "It was a more beautiful city than any we ever thought about in the world. This earth seemed like its cellar, it was so dull and cold here after I had seen that glorious light; the trees looked in it as if they were made of gold."

"O, you are always talking about light and trees; tell me about the people and the houses."

"The houses were so bright, I cannot tell you exactly how they looked; the foundations of them were clear, dazzling stones, of every color; even the streets were paved with glass; and the walls were gold, and the gates great solid pearls!"

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"What nonsense, Daisy! Didn't the shop-keeper tell us, at the fair, that one little speck of a pearl cost more than my new gown? Now, what of the people?"

"You didn't look at the houses, after once seeing them; they had such lovely faces, and such a kind, gentle look, I could cry at only thinking of them now."

"Don't cry till you've finished your story. Were any of them handsomer than the rest? And what kind of dresses did they wear?"

"Their clothes were made of light, I should think; for they were softer than spider webs, and kept changing their shape and color as the people moved about."

"How could they?"

"Why, all the light poured from one place, that I could not look into; and even the heavenly people, when they turned towards it, folded their wings before their faces."

"That is where I should build my house."

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"O, no, my sister; that is where our heavenly Father has built his throne; and it is the light from him that makes the whole city splendid, without any sun or moon. You cannot tell what a little, dark speck I felt before God: I trembled, and did not know where to turn, when one of the people came and took my hand."

"How frightened I should have been! Did he have wings?"

"I can't remember; but he moved—all in the heavenly city move—more quickly and more easily than birds. They want to be in a place, and are there like a flash of light; and they can see and hear so far, that the beautiful man who spoke to me said he saw me kiss our mother's hands, and put flowers in them, and carry her into the wood."

"Did he say any thing about me?"

"Yes—that some time you would love him better than any one else. And he told me why the people's clothes kept changing: when they went nearer our Father, their faces, and every thing they wore, became more splendid and lovely, but as they moved away from him, grew darker and coarser; and yet, Maud, the commonest of all the people there is beautiful as our fairy, and wears as splendid clothes."

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"What was the man's name? I hope he was not common, if I must love him."

"No, he was the greatest in heaven; all the men and angels bowed to him, and they called him Christ."

"O, I would give every thing to see him; you never shall go through the wood alone, Daisy, for fear he will come again when I'm away."

"He could come to our house as well as to the grave. And I'll tell you another strange thing about the city, Maud: some of the roads, you know, are glass, and some are gold; and there is a beautiful river, like crystal, shaded with palm trees, and sweeping on till it is lost in the great light."

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"I don't see any thing wonderful in that, if the rest of your story be true."

"I have not finished: these broad roads ended in narrow paths; and from the river trickled tiny streams, that somehow came down over the golden walls of the city, and over the clouds, and the tops of trees, into this very earth we are standing on."

"O Daisy! are you sure? Could I find one of the paths, and so climb up to heaven, and find the beautiful Christ I am to love?"

"Yes, he told me so himself, and pointed to all the people on earth that were in those paths; and I saw a brightness about them, and a calm look in their faces, such as God's angels have. And then Christ told how all who tasted of the streams grew strong; beautiful, and glad; sick people, that stepped into them, were healed; and those who washed in the water were never unclean again."

And Daisy did not tell, because she feared it might make her sister envious and sad, that the Beautiful One had kissed her forehead, and said, "Daisy, you have picked many a flower beside these streams, and they have soothed your father's weariness, and healed your mother's aching heart; and when you come to live with me, and I place them all on your head in a wreath that shall never fade, no angel in heaven will wear a more beautiful crown."

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Daisy looked up at him then, and asked, "But will you take them away from my mother? And shall not Maud have some? Only let me live near you, and give her the crown."

Christ smiled, and then looked sad, and said, "It will be long before your sister is willing to walk in such straight, narrow paths, and dwell beside such still waters, as she must in order to find these flowers; but you will always be pointing them out to her; and, in the end, she will love me better than she loves any one else. I would gladly help her, Daisy, for your sake; but only they

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CHAPTER XVI.

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THE WATCHMAN.

So tired was Daisy, after all the labor and excitement of the day, that as soon as she had finished her story she fell asleep. Maud tried until she was tired to arouse her sister, and make her talk some more; but Daisy, except for her quiet breathing, was like one dead.

Maud could not sleep; she listened to the howling of the storm, and then remembered the grave she had seen through Daisy's spectacles, out there in the night; and then her sister's vision of the beautiful, shining city, whose people were clothed in light, and thought of the highest among them all, the King, who waited for her love.

"He will not care for Daisy, with her wise little face, when once he has seen mine," thought Maud. "I shall wear my finest garments, and put on my most stately and haughtiest look, to show him I am not like common people. I hope he does not know that every thing I have comes from that wretched old dame." [Pg 102]

Here there sounded a rattling at the door latch, as if some one were coming into the cabin. Maud's heart beat loud and fast for fright; she imagined that dreadful things were about to happen, and scolded poor Daisy, as if she could hear, for pretending to be asleep.

Then came quick flashes of lightning, that made the room like noonday for one instant; and then thunder in crashing peals, that sounded more dreadful in the silent night; and then a stillness, through which Maud could hear the voices of the wolves, and the heavy, pelting drops.

Sometimes she thought the river would swell, and swell, till it flooded into the cabin, and drowned them both; sometimes she thought the lightning would kill her at a flash, or the wolves would break through the slender door, and eat her up, or the wind would blow the cabin down, and bury her. [Pg 103]

Wasn't it strange that the thought never came to her, as she lay there trembling, what a poor, weak thing she was, and how good the fairy had been to keep all mischief from her until now?

She did think of the fairy, at length, and resolved to call her help, if it were possible. She lighted a lamp, and held it so near Daisy's eyes as almost to burn the lashes off; this she found better than shaking or scolding, for Daisy started up from her pleasant dreams, and asked where she was and what was happening.

"That!" said Maud, as a still sharper flash of lightning ran across the sky, and then thunder so loud that it drowned Maud's angry voice.

Daisy covered her face, for the lightning almost blinded her, and then first found that she had fallen asleep with the fairy spectacles on.

"Come, selfish girl," said Maud, "look through your old glasses; and if they are good for any thing, you can find what has become of the dame, and if she is still awake and watching over us." [Pg 104]

Then Daisy told how she had been once to the old woman's cave; and if it were not for leaving her sister alone, would go again to-night.

Maud would not listen to this at first, but told Daisy that she was deceiving her, and only wanted to creep off somewhere and sleep, and leave her to be eaten by the wolves. As she spoke, Daisy's face lighted all at once with the beautiful smile which Peter saw, the day that she was born.

"O Maud, listen, and you will not be afraid," she said in her gentle voice. "I seemed to see, just now, the night, and the storm, and our cabin, and myself asleep—all as if in a picture. The lightning flashed and thunder rolled; the wolves were creeping about the door, and sniffing at the threshold, and the cabin rocked in the wind like a cradle.

"But just where you are standing, Maud, was an angel bending over me, and shading my eyes from the dazzle with her own white wings. She had such a quiet, gentle face as I never saw any where except in my vision of our Father's house." [Pg 105]

"Were her eyes black, or blue like mine? I wonder if Christ ever saw her."

"I do not remember the color; but her eyes were full of love, and pity, and tenderness; and when I seemed to awake, and look up at her, she pointed out into the night."

"And there, I suppose, you will pretend that you saw something else very fine—as if I should believe such foolish stories! But talk on, for it keeps you awake."

"No, Maud, nothing seemed beautiful after the angel's face; but I saw a strong city, with walls, and towers on the walls, and with watchmen walking to and fro to keep robbers away. And I saw a great house, as large as a hundred of ours, with heavy doors, and bolts, and locks, and many servants—strong men, sleeping in their beds, for it was night." [Pg 106]

"And in one of the inmost rooms, where all was rich and elegant, and the carpet was soft as moss, and the muslin curtains hung like clouds, lay a girl about my age, but a great deal more beautiful, asleep."

"Was she handsomer than I?" interrupted Maud.

"I had not time to ask myself; for, as I looked, the door opened softly, and two thieves crept in, and snatched the jewels that lay about the room, and then, seeing a bracelet on her white arm, went towards the bed.

"I was about to scream, when the fairy softly put her hand before my mouth, and pointed again.

"As soon as the thief touched her arm, the girl awoke, and shrieked aloud; and, when they could not quiet her cries, the men struck at her with their sharp knives, and left her dead.

"Then the angel whispered, 'Daisy, there is only one hand that can save; there is one eye that watches, over rich and poor, the crowded city and the lonely wood, alike. That eye is God's; unless he keep the city, the watchman walketh in vain.' [Pg 107]

"So, Maud, the angel will take care of us, if we only trust in her."

Maud's fears were quieted so far by Daisy's words, that she urged her sister now to go and seek the dame, and leave her there alone.

The truth was, Maud had a feeling that, if poor little Daisy had an angel to watch over her, she, who was so much more beautiful, could not be left to perish. Perhaps, even the glorious Christ would come; and if he did, she would rather not have her sister in the way.

CHAPTER XVII.

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THE FAIRY'S CAVE.

The old dame had built a fire in the corner of her cave, and sat, alone, watching the embers.

Presently she heard a sound unlike the storm—a parting of the bushes outside, a crackling of dry sticks upon the ground; and, all at once, Daisy's bright face appeared, seeming to bring a sunshine into the gloomy den.

Daisy was dripping with rain, and felt a little afraid that the dame would scold her because her feet made wet tracks on the floor.

But the fairy seemed in a merry mood to-night—perhaps she was glad of some one to keep her company. She laughed till the old cave rang again, when her visitor told that she had been frightened by the storm; for she said it was music in her ears, and ought to be in the ears of every one. [Pg 109]

So she drew a stool before the fire for Daisy, and, while wringing the dampness from her dress, asked what had become of the spectacles.

"O, they are safe enough," answered Daisy. "I know now how much they are worth, and what a splendid present you gave me, though it seemed so poor. You are very good to us, dame."

"Better than I seem—always better than I seem," she muttered, looking into the fire still. "Now, if you think so much of your glasses, put them on."

Daisy wiped the water from them on a corner of the fairy's dress, for her own was too wet, and did as she was told.

And, down, down miles beneath the cave, she saw fires burning, blazing, flashing, flaming about, and filling the whole centre of the earth; beside them the lightning was dull, and the old dame's fire seemed hardly a spark.

She saw whole acres of granite—the hard stone that lay in pieces about the wood, half covered with moss and violets; acres of this were rolling and foaming like the river in a storm, melted and boiling in the fiery flames. [Pg 110]

"Why, in a few minutes, the cave itself, and all the earth, will melt, and we shall be burned up," said Daisy, alarmed.

"O, no," laughed the fairy. "The fire was kindled thousands of years before you were born; and the granite your violets grow upon has boiled like this in its day; but we are not burned yet, and shall not be. There's a bridge over the fire."

And, surely enough, when Daisy looked again, she saw great cold ribs of rock rising above the flames and above the sea of boiling stone, up and out, like arches on every side. Upon this rock the earth was heaped, layer above layer, until on its outside countries, and cities, and great forests were planted, and fastened together, it seemed, by rivers and seas.

In the beds of rivers, in crevices of rock, in depths of the earth, were hidden precious stones and [Pg 111]

metals; and where the rocks rose highest, they formed what we call mountains, that buried their soaring heads in the sky, and stretched along the earth for many hundred miles.

"What can this rock be made of?" asked Daisy. "Look!" and, to her wonder, she saw that it was all little cells, crowded with insects of different kinds. She asked the dame how many there were in one piece of stone which she picked up, and which was about an inch square.

"About forty-one thousand millions of one kind, and many more of another," she answered carelessly.

"You could not make Maud believe that," thought Daisy; and the dame, as if seeing into her mind, continued,—

"But it is only the one little world we live in which you have seen thus far: look above."

The roof of the cave seemed gone; and Daisy beheld the stars, not far off and still, as they had always seemed, but close about her, whirling, waltzing, chasing each other in circles, with such tremendous speed that it made one dizzy to watch. [Pg 112]

And they were no longer little points of light, but worlds like ours—many of them larger than our earth, which was whirling too, and seemed so small that Daisy hardly noticed it amidst the beaming suns.

There were no handles, no fastenings, no beams, or ropes, or anchors to those flying worlds, that dashed along at such mad speed; she wondered they did not strike against each other, and shatter, and fall.

"O, no," said the dame; "the Hand which made these worlds can keep them in their places. But how many stars do you suppose there are?"

"O, I could not count them in a week."

"No, nor in a lifetime. It takes more than that to count one million; and there are more than twenty million worlds." [Pg 113]

"There will be no use in telling that to Maud," thought Daisy; "she'll never believe me."

And again the fairy saw into her heart, and answered, "Only the pure in heart can see God, and believe in him. Maud thinks there is no truth, because her weak mind cannot grasp it.

"Now, Daisy, think that all these worlds are God's—made, and watched, and loved by him. You see in many of them mountains such as the piece of stone you looked into; you see rivers, earth, and sky; and I tell you the truth when I say, that all of these are crowded, fuller than you can dream, with creatures He has made. And cannot He who made the lightning govern it? So, do not fear the howling of the storm again; it is your Father's voice."

"How great he is! I am afraid of him!" said Daisy.

"You may well be afraid to offend him, but only that; for God is a gentle, loving Father. He feels when the tiniest insect in this stone is hurt; and the same mighty Hand that guides the stars, and roofs over the fires that might burn up our earth,—the same Hand led you through the storm to-night, or, Daisy, you would not have found my cave." [Pg 114]

The dame's last words reminded Daisy that she had left her sister alone; and though Maud had surprised her by saying that she need not hurry back, Maud might have changed her mind, and complain of the very thing she asked an hour before.

She flew home, therefore—falling many a time, and wounding her hands with the sharp sticks in her path. Great trees were torn up by the roots, and came crashing down, in the dark, scattering earth and pebbles far and wide; but Daisy walked among them all unharmed, and was not even frightened; for she knew some kind hand must be guiding her, and thought of the Watchman who never sleeps. [Pg 115]

Reaching the cabin, she found Maud in a quiet slumber; and, lying down beside her, Daisy was soon dreaming over again all she had seen through the spectacles.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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DAISY ALONE.

The sisters lived together comfortably enough in the wood, for the old dame still supplied their wants; and Daisy grew so accustomed to Maud's complaints and reproaches, that she did not mind them so much as at first.

Then it was such a joy when, sometimes, Maud would be pleased and satisfied, and speak a kind word or two, that her sister forgot all the rest.

The fairy had been in the habit, after Susan's death, of taking Maud to the fair sometimes, where she could see the people, and choose handsome gowns for herself, and hear what was going on in

the world.

Meantime Daisy would remain at home, cleaning the house and washing Maud's dresses, and baking some nice thing for her to eat when she should come home tired from the fair.

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You may think this hard for Daisy; but you are mistaken, this time, for she was never so merry as when working thus alone. There was no one to meddle and complain when she was trying to do her best. Let Maud depart, and all was peace in Daisy's home.

Maud seemed to think that Daisy was made for her servant; and when she wished to enjoy herself alone, or to do some kind deed,—for other people lived, now, in the neighborhood of the cabin,—her sister would always interfere, and complain and whine so grievously that Daisy yielded to her.

But Maud away, and her work all finished in the house, Daisy would clap on her spectacles, and then such a wonderful world as stretched around her! Nothing was common, or mean, or dead; all things were full of beauty and surprise, when she looked into them.

The insects that stung Maud, and made her so impatient, would settle quietly on Daisy's hand, and let her find out how their gauzy, glittering wings were made, and see all the strange machinery by which they could rise and fly, and the little beating hearts and busy heads they had.

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Then they would go slowly circling to their homes; and Daisy would softly follow, and find how they lived, and what they ate, and what became of them in winter time, and all about their young.

The birds, meantime, would come and sing to her about their joy, their young, their fairy nests, their homes among the shady summer leaves; the poorest worm, the ugliest spider, had something in him curious and beautiful.

Then she would study the plants and trees, see the sap rising out of the ground, and slowly creeping into every branch and leaf, and the little buds come forth, and swell, and burst, at length, into lovely flowers.

She would sit upon the mossy rocks, and think how far down under the earth they had been, and how full they might be of living creatures now; and then bending over the violets that had grown in their crevices, would count their tiny veins, and find how air and sunshine had mixed with the sap to color and perfume them.

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All these works of his hands made Daisy feel how near the great God was to her, and that she could never go where he had not been before, and where his eye would not follow her.

And then, amidst her troubles and toils, she had but to think of the beautiful city above, where Peter and Susan were waiting for her, where the spirits clothed in light would be her teachers and friends, and she would see as far, perhaps, as they, and learn more a thousand times than even her wonderful spectacles could teach her now.

But, one day, the dame took a fancy in her head that she was too old to go to the fair again, and, in future, Daisy must go instead, and take care of Maud.

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This pleased neither of the sisters; for Daisy now must lose her only hours of quiet; and Maud, instead of the old crone who had passed for her servant, must appear with the shabby little Daisy, of whose meek, serious face, and country manners, she was very much ashamed.

Then there was the mark of the spectacles to attract attention, and make every one ask who it could be that had such a wise look on a face so young.

But the two sisters started, one morning, for the fair, on the selfsame road on which Peter had met his wife, and along which he had led her home, to make his cabin such a happy place.

It was not so bad for Maud to have Daisy with her as she had feared; for the good natured sister carried all her parcels, found out cool springs where they could drink, and pleasant spots where they could sit in the cool grass and rest sometimes, instead of hurrying on through the dust, as the dame had always done.

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Then Daisy had a cheerful heart, and was pleased with every thing she met, and so full of her stories and cheerful songs, that the way seemed not half so long to Maud as when she went with the dame.

Ah, but Maud didn't think how much shorter and brighter her sister's path through life would have been had *she*, instead of her selfish temper, a good and gentle heart like that which was cheering her now.

Daisy took her spectacles along, you may be sure; and besides that she saw through them many a flower, and bird, and stone, and countless other things to which her sister was as good as blind, Maud found them very useful at the fair.

For the glasses showed things now exactly as they were—in the rich silk, rough places or cotton threads; calicoes, gay enough to the naked eye, through these looked faded and shabby. Was any thing shopworn, moth eaten, or out of fashion, the spectacles told it as plainly as if they had spoken aloud.

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And just so, seen through these magical glasses, the people changed. A man with a smiling face

and pleasant words would appear dishonest and cunning, when Daisy put on her spectacles. A maiden with a proud and beautiful face looked humbled, all at once, and sad, and dying of a broken heart. People that walked about in splendid clothes, and looked down on the others, seemed suddenly poor beggars, hiding beneath their garments as if they were a mask.

The dame would never carry bundles for Maud, nor allow herself to be hurried or contradicted in any way; but Daisy bore all the burdens of her own accord, and yielded to Maud's caprices, however foolish they might be, if they troubled no one except herself.

But on their way home, something occurred in which Daisy resolved to have her own way; and Maud was so angry that she would not walk with her sister, and hurrying on, left her far behind. [Pg 123]

CHAPTER XIX.

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THE QUARREL.

It was the old dame that caused the sisters' quarrel. A few miles from the cabin she appeared, creeping through the dusty road, with a bundle of sticks three times as big as herself on her head.

"Pretty well!" exclaimed Maud. "The old creature could not find strength enough to walk a little way with me; but she can pick up sticks all day for herself, and carry home more than I could even lift."

The dame made no reply; perhaps she did not hear the beauty's words; but Maud was so vexed that she brushed roughly past, and upset all her sticks, and the poor old dame in the midst of them.

The fairy lifted her wrinkled arm, which was covered with bleeding scratches, and shook her finger angrily at Maud, who only laughed, and said, "It is good enough for you; take care, next time, how you stand in my way. I am the one to be angry, after you've scattered your sharp old sticks all over the road to fray my new silk stockings. Come, Daisy, make a path for me through them." [Pg 125]

Daisy helped the dame to her feet again, and wiped away the dust and blood, and bound the arm up with her own handkerchief, and then began patiently to pick up all the sticks, and fasten them in a bundle.

She did this while Maud and the fairy were quarrelling and reproaching each other. We could often make up for a fault or accident in the time which we spend mourning over it and deciding whose was the fault.

Maud, in her heart, was not sorry for what her sister had now done, because she feared the fairy, and knew, if she went too far in offending her, that she might never appear again; and then Miss Maud would eat coarse food, and wear shabby clothes, like her sister Daisy. [Pg 126]

Still she pretended to be angry, and scolded Daisy well for undoing what she had done, and comforting the old woman when she chose to punish her.

Yet more vexed was she when Daisy took the sticks on her own head; for the dame seemed tired and faint, and trembled like a leaf from the fright and pain of her fall.

Maud drew herself up haughtily, and asked if she was expected to walk in a public road in company with a lame old hag and a fagot girl. Her eyes flashed, and the color glowed in her delicate cheeks, as she spoke; Daisy thought she had never seen her sister look so beautiful, and even took out the glasses that she might look more closely at the handsome face.

Alas, what a change! Serpents seemed coiling and hissing about Maud's breast; her eyes were like the eyes of a wolf; the color on her cheeks made Daisy think of the fires she had seen burning so far down in the centre of the earth; and the ivory whiteness of her forehead was the dead white of a corpse. [Pg 127]

It was not strange that, Maud's beauty gone, her sister grew less submissive; for Daisy, even with her spectacles, had found nothing except beauty to love in her sister. She thought a lovely heart must be hidden somewhere underneath the lovely face.

But now she had looked past the outside, and all was deformed and dreadful.

"I should like to know if you mean to answer," said Maud pettishly; "I told you either to throw down the sticks, or else I would walk home alone."

"I must help the poor dame; and as for our walk, we both know the way," was Daisy's quiet answer.

So they parted; and Daisy began to cheer the dame, who groaned dreadfully, by telling of all the fine things at the fair, and the use she had made of her spectacles, and how grateful she must always be for such a wondrous gift. [Pg 128]

It pleased the dame to have her glasses praised; and so she forgot to limp and grumble about her wounds, and walked on gayly enough by Daisy's side, telling sometimes the wisest, and sometimes the drollest, stories she had ever heard.

But their mirth was interrupted by the sound of sobs; and Daisy's quick eyes discovered, sitting among the bushes by the way, a little girl, all rags and dust, crying as if her heart would break.

"Never mind her; she will get over it soon enough," said the dame.

"I wonder how you would have liked it, had I said that about you, an hour ago," thought Daisy, but made no reply, except to turn and ask the child what she could do for her.

"O, give me food, for I am starved, and clothes, for I am cold, and take me with you, for I am so lonely," sobbed the child. [Pg 129]

"Then don't cry any more, but take my hand; and here are some wild grapes I picked just now—taste how fresh and sweet they are."

The little girl laughed for joy, with the tears still glistening on her face, and soon leaving Daisy's hand, skipped about her, flying hither and thither like a butterfly, filling her hands with flowers, and then coming back, to look up curiously in the strange old face of the dame.

"You are a good soul, after all," said the fairy, when Daisy returned to her side. "See how happy you have made that little wretch!"

"Yes, and how easily, too! O, why do not all people find out what a cheap comfort it is to help each other? I think, if they only knew this, that every one would grow kind and full of charity."

Daisy did not dream that the child listened, or would understand what she was saying; but the little girl, tears springing into her eyes again, answered softly, "O, no, not all." [Pg 130]

"Why, have you found so many wicked people, my poor child?"

"Perhaps they are not wicked; but they are not kind;" and the girl's voice grew sadder. "Some time before you came, a beautiful lady passed; she was not dressed like you, but a hundred times handsomer; and I thought she would have ever so much to give away; so I asked her for a penny to buy bread."

"And did she give you one?" asked Daisy, who saw that the lady must have been her sister Maud.

"Not she; she called me names, and pushed me away so roughly that I fell into a bunch of nettles; and they stung till it seemed as if bees were eating me up. Look there!"

So she held up her poor little arms, that were pinched with poverty, as the dame's with age; they were mottled, white and red or purple, with the nettle stings; and only looking at them made her cry again. [Pg 131]

But Daisy comforted her. "There, I wouldn't mind; she did not mean to hurt you. And, besides, you must blame me; for I offended her, and made her cross. She is my sister."

"O, dear, then I don't want to go home and live with you; let me go back and die, if I must. That lady would beat me, and pull my hair, I know. When you met me, I was not crying for hunger, though I was so hungry, nor for cold, though my clothes were all worn out, but because she was so unkind. Don't make me live with her."

Here the fairy drew the little girl towards her, and whispered, "Daisy has to live with her, and be fretted at and worked hard all the time; if you go, Maud will have another to torment, and will leave her sister in peace sometimes."

Then the tears were dried at once; and the child, taking Daisy's hand, said firmly, "Wherever you lead me I will go." [Pg 132]

Daisy never knew what made her change her mind, for she had not heard the fairy's whisper; but angels in heaven knew it, and saw how, at that moment, the child unconsciously stepped into one of the golden paths that lead to the beautiful city on high.

For no good deed, no good thought or intention even, is lost. Few, perhaps, behold them here; but hosts of the heavenly people may always be looking on.

And even if they were not, it is better to be good and kind: the good deed brings its own reward; it makes our hearts peaceful; it makes us respect ourselves, so that we can look serenely in the face of every one, and, if they blame us, answer, "I have done the best I could."

CHAPTER XX.

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TWILIGHT.

When Maud had gone far enough to lose sight of Daisy and the dame, she slackened her pace, and looked about to see how beautiful the path had grown.

The trees met in green arches above her head; the road side was sprinkled with lovely flowers, fragrant in the evening air; and the breeze, stirring freshly, gave motion and a sweet, low sound to every thing. Insects were chirping merrily, and stars began to twinkle through the boughs.

Even Maud did not feel lonely; she had much to remember about the fair—all her purchases, all the compliments she had heard paid to her beauty, all Daisy's usefulness, and how sure she would be to make her go again.

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But the scene about her grew every moment quieter and more beautiful; so that, leaving her worldly thoughts, a solemn feeling came over Maud, and she began to think of the still more beautiful place which was some time to be her home,—

And then of that Glorious One whom she was to love; mean and coarse seemed her earthly lovers when she thought of him, and their compliments vulgar and idle beside his gracious words.

"Ah, if I could but see this Christ once," thought Maud, "so that I might know what would please him, and could always remember him just as he really is! It is strange that he does not come when he must know how I am longing to behold his face."

And, in truth, Maud had never for an hour forgotten her sister's vision, but was constantly thinking what more she could do to make herself attractive when the Beautiful One should come.

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She would not go out at noon, for fear of tanning her complexion; she hardly ate enough to live, because of a fancy that angels have very poor appetites; she gave up the sweet smile which she had preserved with so much care, and looked serious, and even sad. And the foolish girl made it an excuse for not doing her share of the household work, that she could not go to heaven with the stains of labor on her hands.

"What more can he require of me?" thought Maud. "Let him but say, and I will do any thing to serve this greatest of all the angels—will die—will be his slave!"

In the twilight, Maud saw, all at once, beside her a being more beautiful than she had even thought her Christ. He was thin and pale; he looked tired, and there were drops of blood on his forehead and tears in his eyes.

Yet was there something noble and good about him, that seemed grander than all the beauty of this earth, and melted the heart of the haughty Maud; so that she asked him to come to her cabin for food, and promised to make the old dame give him clothes.

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He shook his head, and answered, "I have come to you before, naked, and hungry, and tired, and sad; but you drove me away."

"O, no, you are mistaken," said Maud; "I never saw you in my life before."

"When you refused food and shelter to the poor, old, and wretched, you were starving and freezing me."

"How could I know that?" said Maud, a little peevishly. "But, come, take my hand, and I will lead you where there is shelter and food."

He drew back from the hand she offered. "I cannot touch these fingers; wicked words are written over them."

"No such thing!" said Maud, thoroughly vexed. "There is not a man at the fair but would be proud to take my hand. Read the wicked words, if you can."

"Waste, weakness, indolence, selfishness, scorn, vanity," he read, as if the hand were a book spread out before him.

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And then the beautiful being disappeared; and Maud, never dreaming that she had spoken with CHRIST, and hearing her sister's voice not far behind, hurried on quickly, so as to be in the cabin first.

CHAPTER XXI.

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THE FAIRY LETTERS.

Maud was so tired of being alone, and so anxious, besides, to ask if Daisy had seen the stranger who disappeared from her, that she ran good naturedly enough to the door, to welcome her sister.

But when she saw the dame's wretched old face, and the little beggar whom she had thrust away so scornfully, and Daisy herself bending under the heavy load of sticks, Maud's wrath came back again.

"Here I shall have to wait an hour for my supper," she complained, "because you chose to lag behind, and tire yourself with bringing burdens for other folks. I should like to know where you will put your precious friends: not in *our* house—be very sure of that."

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But the dame quickly silenced her by asking, "Who has fed, and clothed, and taken care of you and all your kith and kin? Who gave you the gown on your back and the beauty in your cheeks? And when you found your sister lying half dead by the roadside,—as you would have been but for my care,—what were you willing to do for her? O Maud, for shame!"

"She is no sister of mine," answered Maud, making way; however, as she spoke, for the beggar to enter her door.

"Ask Daisy," was the dame's reply.

"O Maud, I was so sorry that you left us," Daisy said; "for the beautiful man I saw in heaven, whom you are to love, came and spoke to me, with a look and words I can never forget in all my life."

"Where was it?" asked the sister eagerly.

"In that part of the road which our father used to call the Church, because the trees made such grand arches overhead, and it was so still and holy, with the stars looking through the boughs. You remember the elm, with the grape vine climbing up among its boughs, and hanging full of fruit: I met him there."

"But he could not be half so beautiful as the man I saw in that very place," boasted Maud. "I talked with him a while; then I suppose he heard you coming, for he went away."

The old dame's bright, sharp eyes were fixed upon her; and Maud cast her own eyes down in shame, as Daisy continued,—

"The dame's bundle of wood was very heavy, and this little girl dragged so upon my skirts as we toiled on, that I knew she must be tired. I was feeling glad that I happened to meet them, because I am both young and strong, you know, and used to work, when, as I told you, Christ appeared, standing beneath the elm."



AND HE LOOKED INTO MY FACE.

"How ashamed you must have felt! I suppose he thought you the old dame's daughter, or a beggar, perhaps. I'm glad you did not bring him to our cabin; how it would look beside his palace in the golden city above! What did he say to you?"

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"'Blessed, O Daisy, are the merciful,' he said; I was hungry, and you gave me food; thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was sad, and you cheered me; tired, and I rested on your arm.'

"'O, no,' I answered, 'you must be thinking of some one else. I never saw you before, except in my vision once.'

"He took my hand, and looked into my face with such a gentle smile that I did not feel afraid, and pointed at the wood: 'This burden was not the old dame's, but mine; the blood you wiped away was mine; when you fed and comforted this little one, you were feeding and comforting me. You never can tell how much good you are doing, Daisy; poor girl as you are, you may give joy to my Father's angels. Look through your spectacles.'

"So I looked, and there sat the poor little beggar, (see, she has fallen asleep from weariness!)

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moaning and sobbing in the grass, as when we found her first; and an angel stood beside her, weeping, too."

"An angel beside *her*?" interrupted Maud.

"Yes, a beautiful angel, with the calm, holy look which they all wear in heaven, but I never saw upon this earth; he wept because she had no friend; and, just then, I was so fortunate as to come past, and, not seeing the angel, I asked her to take my hand, and run along beside me.

"But now I saw that, when the child began to smile, the angel also smiled, and lifted his white wings and flew—O, faster than lightning—over the tree tops, and past the clouds; and the sky parted where he went, until I saw him stand before the throne, in the wonderful city above.

"And Christ said, 'He stands there always, watching her, unless she needs him here; and when her earthly life is over, he will lead her back, to dwell in my Father's house. For the great God is her Father, and yours, and mine; she is my sister: should I not feel her grief?'" [Pg 143]

Maud's heart fell, for she felt that the being whom she had met must also have been Christ, and asked Daisy if he looked sad and tired, and had wounds in his hands.

"O, no—what could tire him, Maud? He looked strong, and noble, and glad, and seemed, among the dark trees, like a shining light."

"Alas! then it was I who tired him, and made him sorrowful," thought Maud; then said, aloud, "But, Daisy, are you sure he took your hand? See, it is smeared with the old dame's blood, and soiled with tears you wiped from the beggar's face, and stained and roughened with hard work: are you sure he touched it?"

"The whole was so strange, that I dare not be sure whether any part of it was real," replied Daisy, who was so modest that she did not wish to tell all Christ had said. [Pg 144]

"I am sure, then," outspoke the dame. "He took her hand, and—listen to me, Maud!—he said, 'This blood, these tears, these labor stains, will be the brightest jewels you can wear in heaven; have courage, and be patient, Daisy—for beautiful words are written here, that never will fade away.'"

And when Maud asked what they were, the dame replied sharply, "Exactly the opposite of words that are written on somebody's fine hands: self-sacrifice, and generosity, and faith, and earnestness, and love. Such words as these make Daisy's rough hands beautiful."

CHAPTER XXII.

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THE FACE AND THE HEART.

"Can I give up my beautiful face, and become a poor little drudge, like Daisy?" asked Maud of herself. "No, it's a great deal too much trouble. I can find plenty of friends at the fair; and so I will forget the sad, sweet face that has haunted me all these months."

So Maud never told that she had looked upon Christ; though every time Daisy spoke of him, she felt it could be no other.

The winter came on; and the report of Maud's beauty had spread so far, that she was invited to balls in the neighboring towns; and she no longer walked, for people sent their elegant carriages for her.

The dame took care that she should have dresses and jewels in abundance; and Daisy could not but feel proud when she saw her sister look like such a splendid lady; though sometimes she would be frightened by seeing the eyes of a live snake glittering among Maud's diamonds, and something that seemed like the teeth of a wolf glistening among her pearls. [Pg 146]

The beauty had many lovers, but she found some fault with each; until, one day, the handsomest and gayest man in all the country round asked her to marry him.

She refused, at first, because he had not quite so much money as the others; but when she saw how many ladies were in love with him, Maud felt it would be a fine thing to humble them, and show her own power. The old dame could give them money enough; and so she changed her mind, and began to make ready for her wedding.

Then you should have seen the splendid things that the old dame brought, day after day, and poured on the cabin floor—velvets, and heavy brocades, gay ribbons and silks, and costly laces; as for the pearls and diamonds, you would think she had found them by handfuls in the river bed, there were so many. [Pg 147]

Meantime Daisy had come across a very different jewel, though I am not sure but it was worth a cabin full of such as Maud's.

Once she was walking with the little beggar girl, whom Daisy called her own child now, and named Susan, after her mother; before them, climbing the hill side, was a man in a coarse blue

frock, who seemed like a herdsman.

He was driving his cows, and turning back to look for a stray one, Susan chanced to see his face; she broke from Daisy, and with a cry of joy, ran into the herdsman's arms.

His name was Joseph; and Daisy learned that, when the little girl's mother was sick, Joseph had brought her food, and taken the kindest care of her; but his master sent him to buy some cows in a distant town, and before he reached home again, Susan's mother did not need any more charity, and the poor child herself was cast out into the streets.

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They sat on the grass beside Joseph; and Daisy found that, for all his coarse dress, he loved beautiful things as well as herself, and had sat there, day after day, watching the river and sky, and finding out the secrets of the birds, seeing the insects gather in their stores, and the rabbits burrow, and listening to the whisper of the leaves.

And, in cold winter nights, he had watched the stars moving on in their silent paths, so far above his head, and fancied he could find pictures and letters among them, and that they beckoned, and seemed to promise, if he would only try, he might come and live with them.

Then, out of some young shoots of elder, Joseph had made a flute; and Daisy was enchanted when he played on this, for, besides that she had never heard a musical instrument before, he seemed to bring every thing she loved around her in his wonderful tunes.

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She could almost see the dark pine tops gilded with morning light, and the cabin nestling under them; and then the song of a bird, and of many birds, trilled out from amidst the boughs, and the little leaves on the birch trees trembled as with joy, and her rabbits darted through the shade.

Again, she saw the wide river rolling on, the sky reflected in it, and the flowers on its banks just lifting their sweet faces to the sun, and every thing was wet with dew, and fresh, and silent.

And then he played what was like a storm, with lightning, and huge trees crashing down, and the old dame seated before her fire in the cave, and Daisy herself creeping alone through the dark, tired, and drenched with rain.

Daisy told her new friend that she lived in the wood, and what a beautiful sister she had at home, and how she wished that Maud could hear his music.

But Joseph seemed contented to play for her, and could not leave his cows, he said, to look upon a handsome face; he did not care so much for bright eyes and pretty lips as for goodness and gentleness, that would make the ugliest face look beautiful to him.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

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JOSEPH.

What with Joseph's music, and all he had to say to them, Daisy and Susan sat for hours on the hill side, and promised, at parting, to come very soon again.

But they found Maud ready, as usual, to spoil all their pleasure, by fretting because they had left her alone, and had not come earlier, and a hundred other foolish things.

She wouldn't hear a word about the music, but asked her sister if she was not ashamed to talk with a cow boy, and declared that neither she nor Susan should go to the hill again.

But it was no strange thing for Maud to change her mind; so, one day, she told Daisy she had dreamed about Joseph's music, and must hear it, and they would all go that very afternoon.

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Daisy was glad, you may be sure; but she had great trouble with her sister on the way, for Maud would shriek at an earth worm, and start at a fly, and was afraid of bats, and snakes, and owls, and more other things than Daisy ever thought of.

Then the sharp sticks cut through her satin boots; and when she sat a while to rest, the crickets ate great holes in her new silk gown, and mosquitos kept buzzing about her, and little worms dropped down sometimes from the boughs.

When any of these things happened, of course poor Daisy had to be scolded, as if it were her fault. If a shadow moved, or a bird flew quickly past, or a bee buzzed by,—thinking of any one except Miss Maud,—the beauty would fancy that a tiger or rattlesnake was making ready to spring at her, and suffered a great deal more from fright than she would from pain if the creatures she dreaded had really been near, and she had allowed them quietly to eat her up.

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When, after all this trouble, she found that Joseph wore a coarse blue frock, and did not oil his curly hair, and hardly looked at her, while he was overjoyed at seeing Daisy again, Maud began to pout, and say she must go home.

But Joseph brought a kind of harp he had made from reeds and corn stalks; and when he began to play, Maud started, for it was as if she stood under the arching trees again, and the Beautiful Being stood beside her, with his sad eyes, saying, "O Maud, when you despise my little ones, you

are despising me."

She thought it must only be a kind of waking dream, however, and tossing her head, asked Joseph if he could play any opera airs, and where he bought his harp, and who his teacher could have been.

"The trees, and river, and birds, the morning wind and midnight sky, sorrow, and joy, and hope have been my teachers," he answered gravely.

"They're an old-fashioned set, then," said Maud. "We haven't had any of the tunes you play at our balls this year; and you must find more modern teachers, or else be content to take care of your cows." [Pg 154]

Joseph heard not her sneers; he was talking with Daisy; and every thing he said seemed so noble, and wise, and pure, so unlike the words of Maud or of the fretful dame, that Daisy could not help loving him with all her heart.

The more she thought of Joseph the less she said of him to Maud; but whenever her sister was away, they were sure to meet; and the herdsman grew as fond of Daisy as she was of him.

In the long winter evenings, when Maud was away at her balls, she little dreamed what pleasant times Daisy had at home. When floating about in the dance, to the sound of gay, inspiring music, she thought of her sister only to pity her, and did not know that she was listening to sweeter music from Joseph's humble harp of reeds. [Pg 155]

We often pity people who are a great deal better off than ourselves, forgetting that what seems fine to us may be tedious enough to them.

Then it was such a new thing for Daisy to have any one think of *her* comfort, and plan pleasant surprises for her, and even admire her serious face, and—best of all—appreciate her spectacles.

As soon as Joseph came, he wanted her to put them on, and tell him about a hundred things which he had looked at only with his naked eyes. Daisy found so often that he had seen rightly and clearly, and had in humblest paths picked up most lovely things, and every where found what was best, she told him that he must have borrowed the old dame's lantern.

But Joseph said, no, he had only taken care that the lantern in his own breast should be free from dust and stains; while that burned clearly, there was no use in borrowing another's light.

Maud's lover took her to dances and sleigh rides, and gave her jewels and confectionery; Daisy's lover took her to see the old sick mother he supported, and to look at his cows in their neat barn, and brought her a new apron sometimes from the fair, or a bag of chestnuts which he had picked up in the fall. [Pg 156]

But Joseph gave the love of a fresh, honest heart; and Daisy thought this better than all her sister's bright stones and sugar plums.

CHAPTER XXIV.

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THE FRESHET.

The spring came; and Maud's wedding day was so near that she and Daisy went to the town every week to make purchases.

Now, the river which they were obliged to cross always overflowed its banks in spring. Although, in summer, Daisy had often walked across it, by stepping from stone to stone in the rough bed, it had risen now to a height of many feet.

Then, blocks of ice came down from the mountain streams above, and swept along bridges, and hay ricks, and drift wood with them, just as happened once, you may remember, when Susan was alive.

A new bridge had been built; but it jarred frightfully when the heaped blocks of ice came down, or some great tree was dashed against it by the rapid stream. [Pg 158]

Things were in this state when the two sisters reached home, one day, from town. When Maud felt how the bridge jarred, she ran back screaming, and told Daisy to go first, and make sure it was safe.

Daisy was not a coward; but this time she did think of her own life for once, or rather of Joseph—how he would grieve if she were swept away and drowned.

Her heart beat faster than usual; yet she walked on calmly, and soon gained the other side. Then she called back for Maud to wait till she could find Joseph, and secure his help.

But Maud, always impatient, grew tired of waiting, and mustering all her courage, stepped upon the bridge alone.

She had hardly reached the centre when its foundations gave way; and, with a great crash and

whirl, with the trees, and ice, and drift wood whirling after it, the bridge went sweeping down the stream. [Pg 159]

So Joseph and Daisy returned only in time to hear Maud's shrieks, which sounded louder than the heavy, jolting logs, and creaking beams, and grinding ice.

Running across the bridge wildly, she beckoned for Joseph to come to her—implored him to trust himself upon the blocks of ice, or else send Daisy, and not leave her to perish alone.

There came new drifts of ice from above, jolting against the bridge, and throwing Maud from her feet; and so the heavy structure went whirling, tossing like a straw upon the stream.

Joseph turned to Daisy. "If I go to her help, we both may slip from the unsteady blocks of ice, and drown. Yet I may possibly save her; shall I go or stay?"

"Go," she said instantly.

"Then good by, Daisy; perhaps we never shall look in each other's faces again."

"Not here, perhaps; but, go."

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"What's that?" asked the sharp voice of the dame. "Foolish children! Don't you know that, when Maud is drowned, there will be no one to separate you, and, as long as she lives, she will not let you be married?"

"She is my sister," said Daisy. And Joseph, stepping boldly upon the ice, creeping from log to log,—lost now in the branches of a tree, dashed into the water, and struggling out again,—found his way to the bridge, and threw his strong arm about the form of the fainting Maud.

But here was new trouble; for she declared that she would never venture where Joseph had been, not if they both were swept away.

Finding her so unreasonable, the herdsman took Maud, like an infant, in his arms, and, though she shrieked and struggled, stepped from the bridge just as its straining beams parted, and fell, one by one, among the drift wood in the stream.

When Maud stood safely on the shore, she was so glad to find herself alive, that she took off every one of her jewels and offered them to Joseph. [Pg 161]

But the herdsman told her that he did not wish to be paid for what had cost him nothing, and had he lost his life, the jewels would have been no recompense.

"So you want more, perhaps," said Maud, the haughty look coming again into her handsome face. "Well, what shall I give you for risking your precious life?"

"Daisy," he answered.

"My sister? Do you dare tell me that she would marry a cowboy?"

"Ask her."

"Yes," said Daisy.

"Nonsense! you will live with me, Daisy, in my new great house; and if you marry at all, it will be some rich, elegant man, so that you can entertain us when I and my husband wish to visit you."

"I shall marry Joseph or no one," Daisy answered firmly. [Pg 162]

"Well, then, Joseph, cross the river on the ice once more, and Daisy shall be your wife." Maud thought she had found a way to rid herself of the troublesome herdsman; for it seemed to her the dreadful voyage could not be made again in safety; and then she half believed that Joseph would sooner give up Daisy than try.

But, without a word, he darted upon the ice—slipped, as at first; and when Daisy saw him struggling, she flew to his help—slipped where he slipped: a tree came sailing down, and struck them both. Maud saw no more.

But, all the way home, she heard in her ears the shrill voice of the fairy, saying, "I hope you are satisfied, now you have killed them both."

CHAPTER XXV.

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THE FAIRY'S LAST GIFT.

Maud went home to the lonely cabin; there was no one to make a fire, and dry her wet clothes, and comfort her. When little Susan heard what had happened, she ran away to live with the mother of Joseph; and Maud was left alone.

Wearied with fright, and trouble, and remorse, the beauty sank upon her bed and fell asleep.

But hardly were her eyes closed, when she seemed in a damp, cellar-like place herself, but,

looking upward, saw the glorious golden city Daisy told her about, with its pearly gates and diamond foundations, and the river shaded by beautiful palms, and throngs of angels walking on its banks.

The ranks of angels parted, and she saw among them the Beautiful One, who had met her in the wood—only he was bright and joyous now, and his wounds shone like stars; and—could it be? yes—he was leading Daisy and Joseph, not a poor drudge and humble herdsboy now, but, like the other angels, clothed in light, crowned with lilies, and Joseph's harp of reeds changed to a golden harp, on which he still made music.

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She saw two other beautiful ones come forward and embrace her sister: one, she felt, was the father she had never seen, and one was Susan, the good and humble mother of whom Maud had been ashamed.

Then she awoke, to find herself alone in the cabin, which was damp and dark as she had dreamed; and she could only hear the night wind sighing, and the voices of the wolves and snakes.

As soon as morning came, she hurried to the river bank, in hopes, thus late, to save her sister, or to hear, at least, some news from her. But she saw only floating logs and blocks of ice jarring and whirling down the river.

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And from that hour Maud believed herself a murderer, and would gladly have given her own life to forget the dreadful scene, which kept rising before her, of the good, gentle sister drowning in the flood, and the sound of the dame's shrill voice asking, "Now, are you satisfied?"

But Daisy did not drown. When Joseph saw her danger, though almost dead himself, he took fresh courage, and made such bold, brave efforts that both he and Daisy reached the shore.

Long, happy days they spent together on the earth. Determined that she should have no more trouble with her sister, Joseph took his wife over the sea to a pleasant island, where she had a happier, if not so splendid a home as Maud.

When he opened the door to show Daisy her beautiful little house, who should stand within but the fairy, all dressed in her velvet and pearls, and looking as bright as if she too were glad that Daisy's life was to be so happy now.

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Many a gift the fairy brought them: little Peters, and Susans, and Daisies came in her arms, to play before their door, and make the cottage merry with their songs, before *our* Daisy went to wear her crown in heaven. And many a pleasant tune Joseph played to his wife and children on the home-made harp of reeds, before it was changed to a harp of gold, and chimed in with the angels' music, in our Father's home above.

When packing her things, to leave the cabin, Maud left Daisy's dresses, as they were not fine enough for her, and also some little things which her sister had treasured—among them, the spectacles.

But once in her fine new home, and the wedding over, the first things she found, hanging in the fringe of her shawl, were Daisy's spectacles.

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So she thought how queerly Daisy used to look in them, and put the glasses on, to amuse her husband; but what was her surprise to find she could see plainly through them now!

And, alas! the first thing they told her was, that this man, for whom she had left all her rich suitors, did not love her, but her money; despised her because her mother was so poor, and was much fonder of one of the ladies whom he had forsaken than of her.

She told him this angrily; but he only laughed, and said she might have guessed it without spectacles, and asked how he could love any one who thought only of herself.

She hoped he might be jesting, yet his words were soon proved true; for he not only neglected, but treated her harshly, and when she was saddest, dragged her to the balls which she no longer enjoyed, and laughed about her spectacles, which began to leave their mark upon her handsome face.

"At least," thought Maud, "I am very rich; there is no end to my jewelry. I will find out all its value through the spectacles."

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But though there were pearls and diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, set in heavy gold, they seemed only a handful through the glasses; while she saw whole heaps of finer pearls lying neglected under the sea, and rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds scattered about on the sands, or in the heart of rocks, enough to build a house. Melted along the veins of the earth she discovered so much gold, too, that her own didn't seem worth keeping; for Maud only valued things when she thought others could not have so fine.

Do you remember what the dame said, when she placed the spectacles on little Daisy's breast? "Take care of her heart, now, Peter, and this gift of mine will be a precious one."

Here was the trouble: Maud, with all her beauty and wealth, had not taken care of her heart; and so, when Daisy saw bright, and wise, and pleasant things through the glasses, Maud saw only sad and painful ones.

[Pg 169]

The beauty grew tired of life; her husband was so jealous that he would not allow any one to admire her; and she found the palace did not make her any happier than the cabin had done, nor did the open country seem any brighter than the wood.

For it isn't whether we *live* in a palace or a cave, but whether our hearts are cheerful palaces or gloomy caves, that makes the difference between sad lives and merry ones.

So, one day, when the dame appeared with her gifts, Maud said, "O, take them away—take back all the beauty, the power, and money you ever brought, and give me a heart like Daisy's."

"Pretty likely," said the dame. "You asked for money—you and your mother, both; now make the most of it."

But the old woman had hardly left the house when one of Maud's servants brought her in, wounded, and weeping bitterly, for a wagon had run over her. [Pg 170]

"Carry her home to her cave; why did you bring her to me?" said Maud.

But just then she seemed to see the cold, bare cave that Daisy had told her about, with nothing except wooden stools and a smoky fireplace—no soft bed, no child to watch over and comfort the poor old dame.

So Maud called the servants back, and had the woman placed in her own room, and watched with her, and bathed her limbs, and though she was fretful, did not once neglect her through a long and tedious illness.

At last, the dame felt well enough to go home, and bade good by to Maud, who begged her not to go; "for," she said,—and the tears came into her eyes,—"you make me think of dear Daisy, the only one that ever loved me, with this selfish heart."

"No, no; I cannot trust you," said the dame, and disappeared. [Pg 171]

But she came back, with such a bundle in her arms as she had brought to Susan once; and when Maud looked up to thank her, lo! the dame had changed to a lovely fairy, with a young, sweet face—the same that Daisy used to talk about.

Bending over Maud, she wiped the tears from her face, and put the bundle in her arms, and disappeared.

And when the little child learned to love her, Maud forgot her fears and cares, her cruel husband and her selfish self, and found how much happier it makes us to give joy than to receive it.

The little girl was named Daisy, and grew up not only beautiful and rich, but wise and good; she spent her money nobly, and gained the love and added to the happiness of all her friends.

But the one whom she made happiest was her own mother—Maud.

CHAPTER XXVI.

[Pg 172]

WHAT IT ALL MEANS.

Now, dear children, I suppose you have guessed all my riddles, for they are not hard ones; but I will tell you the meaning of one or two.

LIFE is the old fairy, that comes sometimes frowning and wretched, sometimes smiling and lovely, but always benevolent, always taking better care of us than we take of ourselves.

We should be silent, helpless dust, except for Life; and whether we be great or humble, rich or poor, she gives us all we have.

Though she may seem to smile on you and frown upon your sister, be sure it is not because she loves you best; the fairy may yet change into a wrinkled dame, or the dame to a beautiful fairy. [Pg 173]

When you remember her, beware how you grieve or slight any one. If you are passing some poor beggar in the street, think, "Had I on Daisy's spectacles, I should see under all these rags a child of the great God, travelling on, as I am travelling, to live with him in the golden city above. While this man seems humble to me, angels may bow to him as they pass invisibly; for all the titles in this world are not so great as to be a child of God."

When you are tempted to vex or laugh at some old woman, think, "Under these wrinkles, lo! the great fairy, Life, is hid; and she can curse or bless me, as I will."

The old dame's lantern, and the light in his breast by which Joseph saw, were Instinct; which, if we could but keep it undimmed by the dust of earth, would always light our pathway.

And the fairy bread is Kindness, which alone can comfort the poor and sorrowful. They may use what we give in charity, and still be poor and sad; but an act of kindness makes them feel that they too are children of the same great God, and are therefore happy and rich, though they must walk about for a little while in rags. [Pg 174]

For they remember how, like us, they have a glorious home awaiting them in the city whose streets are gold; and then it doesn't seem so hard that they have less than we of the poor gold of earth.

The spectacles are Wisdom, which shows us all things as they are, not as they seem—which we may learn, like Daisy, from insects, trees, and clouds, or, easier still, from words that the wise have written.

Believe me, this wisdom, which may seem but a tedious thing, will show any of you as wonderful visions as those I have told you about.

So, when your lessons are hard, and you long to play, and wonder what's the use in books, think, "They are Daisy's wondrous spectacles, that change our dull earth into fairy land."

[Pg 175]

Wearing these, you need never be lonely or afraid, but will feel God's strong and loving arm around you in the dreariest place. The sun will seem his watchful eye, the wind his breath, the flowers his messages. You will know that all good and lovely things are gifts from him.

And you will not forget that the fairy, Life, is still on earth, and, if we ask her, will lead us all to the wonderful city which Daisy saw far up above the pines—where you, too, may be good and peaceful, like the rest, and wear a crown of lilies and a robe of light.

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